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**CHARACTER'S IDENTITY  
IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S WRITING:  
A TRANSCULTURAL PARADIGM**

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The monograph investigates Asian-American identity in a transcultural discourse, in particular in Jhumpa Lahiri's writing; the author's works created within the limits of a transcultural paradigm which helps to trace features' formation of identity of the modern Asian-American character are considered; the reception peculiarities of Lahiri's writing in literary-critical thought are determined, as well as the features of the Asian component and the transcultural consciousness of immigrant characters, which forms the basis of the author's writing.

Recommended for literary critics, philologists, culturologists, PhD doctorants, postgraduate students, lecturers, students, whose research interests are Asian-American literature.

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## SUMMARY

The research is the first attempt in the Ukrainian literary studies to carry out complex analysis of Asian-American identity in a transculture discourse, particularly in Jhumpa Lahiri's writing. Author's writing, created within the transcultural paradigm that helps to trace the features of formation of modern character's identity of Asian-American literature are considered. The specifics of problematic and poetics of author's writing is analyzed, the significant influence of Asian-American literary tradition is emphasized. General tendencies in the reinterpretation of the problem of "otherness" are discovered: from "poor" position to cultural "brand". The research demonstrates author's innovation especially in transculture terms; hybridity (duality) of the text is seen in the connection of Indian cultural code and American experience.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a prominent figure in the Asian-American tradition. The complex semantics of characters' images, the interweaving of plot lines, intertextual connections, the simplicity of presentation, and the dynamic plot development are characteristic features of her writing.

The first part of the monograph is structurally expedient and theoretically motivated, which presents the historiography of literary and critical studies about Jhumpa Lahiri's writing; the genesis of foreign and domestic criticism, which is divided into certain areas of research is traced. Particular attention is focused on the development of Asian-American literature, from "melting pot" metaphor to the emergence of a new concept of American transcultural identity – "bright rainbow", which means that the person does not refuse any of the cultures.

The evolution of Asian-American literature, as well as the most significant studies of a separate period is analyzed. It is indicated that the problem of definition of modern Asian-American literature is synonymous with exoticism discourse. The complexity of building

process of a transcultural world of Asian-American consciousness in a planetary context is basic in its literature studies.

One of the distinctive features of contemporary Asian-American literature is the “refusal” from established stereotypes as well as interpretations of national and cultural identity. Today, the transcultural matrix appears as a new vision of the world. Usual notions of “home”, “identity”, “homeland” etc. require rethinking; there is a symbolic “deformation” of Asian culture, and the expansion of cultural dialogue, where there is no “pure” language.

The main theme of modern Asian-American writers is the creation of a “new American” whose hybrid consciousness combines different ethnic elements and synthesizes a qualitatively new product. Unlike multicultural character, the one of transcultural is characterized by a greater stability, as he appears as a strong Asian-American who does not experience an internal conflict any more.

In the practical part of the monograph the problem of correlation of cultural and personal identity is analyzed. The “cultural code” notion as an important factor for preservation cultural traditions, which is especially relevant in terms of transculture is analyzed. The author’s narrative manner, particularly in hybridity and duality context is traced; the specifics of Indian elements in Jhumpa Lahiri’s writing is outlined.

Jhumpa Lahiri’s writing shows how immigrants combine different cultural traditions. Most characters consider themselves true Americans, but at the same time something prevents them to be like their American peers completely, as well as to reach their American dream. Their Indian roots are symbolic “barriers”, because most characters try to combine Indian and American cultures simultaneously. They appear to be marginalized in an Asian-American context, suffering from cultural incompatibility (mixed marriages) and inherit Indian traditions at the same time.

The characters are “locked” inside, they are deeply lonely, and seem to be distant not only from others, but from themselves as well.

It is indicated that it is impossible to deny own ethnic origin completely, and the fact that two cultures' mixing leads to the existence of a character with a hybrid consciousness that does not refuse his roots.

Jhumpa Lahiri's works are considered as a text collage, which has ethnic problems in the center. Semantic and poetic analysis of her texts allows us to talk about complicated forms of "hybridity" problem's representation. It is a fiction synthesis of Indian and American features, which there is no new transcultural identity without.

Complex analysis of Jhumpa Lahiri's writing focuses on the theory of Indian immigrants' hybrid transcultural identity. A number of important Indian elements (symbols) that contributed to the formation of writer's prose poetics are pointed out for the first time: rice ceremony annaprazan, name's duality (daknam, bhalonam), precedent phenomena.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a prominent representative of borderland writers, particularly of Asian-American prose. Her poetics features tend to transcultural paradigm. Author's emphasis is on constant search of own identity which is a dynamic structure. Jhumpa Lahiri does not only express the nature of thinking of Eastern culture people, she nicely combines Eastern and Western written traditions' elements.

Perception analysis of Jhumpa Lahiri's writing is focused on a close connection within a cultural context. Literary studies mostly tend to transcultural analysis of her novels. Scientific works of author's heritage are concentrated on "our" / "other" culture and make it possible to identify Asian-American relationship in her writing. Despite considerable interest towards transcultural component of Lahiri's writing, scholars' attention is focused on the analysis of individual aspects of her transcultural character who is outsider, an oppressed one. Lahiri's character is already a "foreign" there in his homeland and even a "stranger" here in a new land.

A great deal of scientific studies is still concentrated on her

debut novel “The Namesake” (2003), while some of her works (a collection of short stories “Interpreter of Maladies”, 1999) lack of attention in terms of transcultural analysis.

The author seeks for identity’s unity of her transcultural character. Jhumpa Lahiri’s strangeness is in her trying to penetrate into her ancestors’ Eastern culture and at the same time into a new American one. The author’s main theme to find own identity is replaced by a symbolic “freedom”. Transcultural poetics allows her character to balance: not to give up his great culture and at the same time to become “our” in a new cultural environment.

Jhumpa Lahiri’s characters feel neither Americans nor Asians completely, but exist between these cultures. Lahiri’s literary world is full of transcultural characters. It is too difficult for them to identify themselves with one culture only. Cultural identity’s question is of great importance for writer’s transculture character who “opens” himself and his own identity again in terms of today’s existence. Lahiri successfully demonstrates interesting trends in the formation of her characters’ transcultural identity who typify fragmented personalities with internal “splitting”.

The immigrant problems are major in Lahiri’s writing. Most of her characters who are two cultures’ representatives find themselves “nowhere”. The text’s “dual perception” due to its transcultural paradigm as well as Indian stereotypes in writer’s poetics are important. The reader cannot ignore the majority of transcultural image of her characters who on the one hand try “to integrate” into American reality and on the other hand to follow their “own” Indian traditions. “Other” character’s image is basic in Jhumpa Lahiri’s writing. It is an Indian one in American literature that is imposed upon various identities. Result in his own “I” is split into several other parts. Lahiri interprets “our” / “other” vision thus showing her personal position on the cultural level of “other”.

Genre accessory of most Jhumpa Lahiri’s writing leads to character-searcher of his home and identity. Therefore, scholars’ focus

tends to main writer`s achievement – to transcultural character who is divided by borders physically, but not with the help of imagination. Lahiri`s transcultural character becomes the main object of the study as well as interpretation; first of all he is interesting in the analysis of cultural boundaries “washing”.

Although Jhumpa Lahiri`s writing drew attention among home and foreign scholars there is no coherent study yet which predetermines further theoretical searches in terms of transcultural paradigm.

*Keywords:* transculture, Indian immigrants, dual consciousness, culture, ethnic identity, marginal character.

## PREFACE

At the end of the twentieth century, the focus of world literary studies were “border literatures”, in particular, the Asian-American one, which deals with the problem of character’s search for his ethnic identity. Authors of modern scientific research (G. Anzaldua, N. Bidasiuk, N. Vysotska, T. Denysova, N. Zhluktenko, M. Epstein, I. Ilyin, Y. Krysteva, V. Seligey, O. Sydorova, R. Takaki, M. Tlostanova and others) pay special attention to the study of the ethnic component of fiction works from the point of view of transcultural processes in recent decades.

Perfect representatives of the border literature are “hyphenated writers”, because the problem of character’s self-identification in the new cultural environment is extremely important in their writing. A significant component of cross-border works is the transcultural tradition, when the person is not identical even to himself: we mean the character’s mosaic “I” and its various interpretations.

The Asian-American cultural tradition remains extremely noticeable in American literature of the late twentieth – early twenty-first century. O. Zverev emphasizes the radically different phase of “melting pot”; the tendency when cultural phenomena, previously perceived as “exotic” and adapted to the “dominant” culture, as a kind of mainstream addition, acquire a new status and weight” [39, p. 50]. New concepts such as “global / planetary identity”, “transculturization” (“transculturation”) and others are emerging.

It is about Asian descent writers who once emigrated to America. Their working is a kind of “reaction to America’s life and its interpretation” [203, p. 150]. All Asian-American works are characterized by the theme of ethnic self-expression, and the key concept remains the native land, home and culture topos. Literary critics classify them as transculturalism; loyalty to the “other” is the key principle, which is focused on preserving and separating one’s individuality in order to “fit” into a complex system of cultural

relations with the “other”.

The topicality of the study of Asian-American literature is explained by the lack of critical one which is dedicated to individual authors' writing. This determines the importance of modern theories of identity not only within the social sciences and humanities, but also in other works of scientific discourse.

A prominent representative of foreign writers is Jhumpa Lahiri, the American writer of Bengali origin, who accumulates the achievements of the Indian national literary situation in a transcultural environment in her writing, as well as appeals to the “torn” consciousness which is inherent to the works of recent decades. “Indianness”, and therefore the difference, which is considered in the works of Asian-American writers as a new value-aesthetic category, is an integral part of Lahiri's works, so the lack of thorough research on the problem of national identity in her writing determines the necessity of study of this phenomenon.

All Lahiri's writing is considered in the aspect of the transcultural component in the US literature of the end of the XX – the beginning of the XXI century, therefore the Asian “accent” research and the study of Lahiri's writing in transculturation context are especially relevant.

**The topicality** of the study of border writer's works is determined by the lack of critical works about them, as well as:

- increased attention of literary critics to new development tendencies of American literature, in particular Asian-American one in order to analyze its ethnic component;
- the lack of scientific and critical works that properly explore the discourse of national identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's writing from multiculturalism to transculturation;
- the need to interpret Jhumpa Lahiri's writing in terms of transcultural processes of the late twentieth – early twenty-first century.

**The research purpose** is to determine the representation



features of character's transcultural identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's writing.

Realization of the set purpose provides the solution of the following **tasks**:

- to systematize the works of literary critics which are relating to Jhumpa Lahiri's writing and to determine the place and significance of transcultural literary author's writing in modern American literature context;
- to characterize modern scientists' views on transculture problem in the US literature of the late XX – early XXI centuries concerning border authors' writing;
- to consider the main Lahiri's writing features in the context of the basic transculture tendencies in the United States;
- to analyze Lahiri's works and reveal the features of character's search for his ethnic identity;
- to find out the peculiarities of writer's poetics in the context of transculture processes;
- to determine the specifics of themes, motives, images, plot features of Lahiri's works compared to other American writers;
- to determine the role and place of transculture phenomenon in Jhumpa Lahiri's writing.

**The research object** is a collection of short stories “Interpreter of Maladies” (1999), “Unaccustomed Earth” (2008) and the novel “The Namesake” (2003).

**The research subject** is character's identity in transculture terms in Jhumpa Lahiri's writing at the end of the XX – beginning of the XXI century.

**Research methods:** cultural and historical (defining the role and place of Lahiri's writing in US literature of the twentieth century), historical and typological (determining the specifics of themes, motifs, images, story features of the writer's works), functional (clarifying the features of Lahiri's poetics), hermeneutic (interpretation of various aspects of the literary text), narratological

analysis (specifics` analysis of J. Lahiri`s narrative manner), biographical (revealing the reflection of author`s personal experience), the principles of postcolonial and decolonial criticism (rethinking the problem of the “otherness” in transculture discourse).

**The theoretical and methodological basis** of the monograph are critical works of Ukrainian and foreign literary critics on the analysis of modern transculture literature in the United States (Z. Aliyeva, M. Anastasyev, N. Bidasiuk, K. Butenina, N. Vysotska, T. Denysova, N. Zhluktenko, G. Zaporozhets, O. Zverev, T. Lazarenko, V. Lipina, T. Naduta, K. Postnikova, V. Seligey, O. Sydorova, M. Tlostanova, B. Adams, H. Gunter, F. Jussawalla, K. Katrak, E. Kim, H. Kitano, N. Lape, W. Sollors, D. Sommer, C. Tapping, S. Wong, W. Xu), character`s duality and precedent phenomena (P. Artemyeva, S. Yeliseyeva, I. Zakharenko, I. Kosheleva, J. Ammons, A. Dobrinescu, S. Kasbekar, J. Large, R. Lee, S. Lim, A. Ling, L. Lowe, R. Lutz, V. Mishra, D. Nagpal, B. Noelle, S. Raj, S. Rana, V. Rao, S. Shanthi, A. Stoican, S. Taylor), the problem of the “other” (G. Anzaldua, E. Erikson, M. Epstein, I. Ilyin , E. Said, R. Takaki, K. Appiah, H. Bhabha, Du Bois, M. Fludernik, W. Mignolo, S. Rushdie, T. Trinh).

**The research scientific novelty.** Study analysis of Jhumpa Lahiri`s writing in transculture paradigm and the problem of character`s identity is carried out for the first time in Ukrainian literary criticism. Lahiri`s writing is examined from the point of view of national identity, through the “border consciousness” prism. The novelty also lies in the analysis of Indian and American elements` interaction in the writing.

**The theoretical significance** of the monograph lies in the issues` development related to the study of Asian-American literature and contemporary US transcultural literature at the turn of the millennium, including Jhumpa Lahiri`s writing. Besides, a comprehensive interpretation of the writer`s works within the national identity`s discourse and in the transculture context is offered

for the first time in Ukrainian literary studies.

**The practical significance** of the work. Its main positions can be applied in the further study and analysis of modern American literature in terms of transculture, in particular when studying Lahiri`s writing. The research results will be useful in the development of lecture courses on the History of Foreign Literature of the late XX – early XXI centuries, Theory of Literature, Theory and Practice of Translation, Country Studies Through Language, special courses on Asian-American literature focused on the phenomenon of marginality and dual identity, when compiling methodical manuals on these disciplines, and also when writing scientific articles, course projects and diploma papers.

\* \* \*

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## **CHAPTER 1.**

### **THE PROBLEM OF TRANSCULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE US LITERATURE OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE XX – THE BEGINNING OF THE XXI CENTURY IN IMMIGRANT WRITER'S FICTION**

#### **1.1. Jhumpa Lahiri's writing in the mirror of literary criticism**

Recently, the literary vector has focused on “hybrid literatures” related to the ethnicity and the transculture era. Transcultural narrative becomes important when both the reader and the narrative change and cross borders.

The main features of “hybrid” literature are cultural codes' interpretation, borders crossing, cultural and literary boundaries overcoming, and cultural differences' exchange. The scientists' works (M. Tlostanova, N. Vysotska, T. Denysova, R. Takaki, V. Du Bois, S. Rushdie, D. Sommer, etc.), focused on the study of transculture and hybridity phenomenon, are the theoretical basis for mastering the transcultural American identity's “hyphenation”.

Ethnicity in multiculturalism and transculture context is traced in “An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature” (edited by King-Kok Cheung, 1997), as well as in “The World Next Door: South Asian American Literature and the Idea of America” (Rajini Srikanth, 2004) and “The Fiction of South Asians in North America and the Caribbean” (Mitali P. Wong, Zia Hasan, 2004), relating to Asian authors' works.

L. Jh. Trudeau's “Asian-American Literature: Review and Criticism of the Works of American Writers of Asian Origin” (1999), D. Palumbo-lu “Asian-American Historical Crossroads of Racial Boundary” (1999) where the emphasis is on ethnic component as an integral part of the American identity of that time are noteworthy as well.

T. Naduta notes that in many researchers' works “the key

qualities of Asian-American literature as a holistic “multiculturalism” system are outlined [67, p. 7]. A significant monograph, edited by R. Jh. Davis and S.-I. Lee, “Literary Gestures: Aesthetics in Asian-American Works” (2009), presents the main categories used by American critics when studying of Asian-American literature.

The appearance in the US of writers (the second generation of Indian immigrants) has aroused great interest among scholars and critics. J. Lahiri is also included in this list. Jhumpa Lahiri is the literary pseudonym of the American writer of Bengali origin Nilanjana Sudeshna. Back in the kindergarten in Kingston (Roy Island) a teacher used to call the future writer by her pet (home) name, Jhumpa, because, unlike Nilanjana, it was easier to pronounce.

The writer notes: “I have always felt embarrassed by my name... Feeling like you are hurting just by being who you are” [121]. Such writer’s attention to her own identity will later reflect in Gogol’s image, the novel “The namesake” protagonist, who was distinguished by his own unusual name.

The daughter of Indian immigrants, J. Lahiri was born on July 11, 1967 in London, in librarian family. The writer will reflect father’s image in the story “The Third and Final Continent” from her debut collection “Interpreter of Maladies” (1999). Jhumpa’s family moved to the United States when the girl was two years old. While living in America, Jhumpa’s mother raised her children according to Bengali cultures traditions. It was confirmed by frequent visits to relatives in Calcutta.

Indian heritage, along with autobiographical elements, will later be reflected in the writer’s works, as the characters, like Jhumpa’s mother, will live Indian life in America. Farther, the writer will say the following about her work’s subject: “When I first started writing, I did not realize that my subject would be the Indo-American experience. What led me to this theme was the desire to reconcile the two worlds I live in, to combine them on the pages, because I was not

brave enough to do it in life” [152]. “In the fiction, I will continue to interpret the “Indo-American” notion and as well as violate this “equation” no matter what the answer may be” [152].

When Jhumpa was three years old, the family decided to move to Rhode Island (USA), where the writer spent her childhood. Later, in many interviews, J. Lahiri will say that she was not born in the United States, but she could. After graduating from high school in Kingston in 1989, the writer received a bachelor’s degree in English literature from Barnard College. Then she earned a master’s degree in three majors (English, Comparative Literature and Art Studies, and Writing) and a doctoral degree from Boston University, successfully defending her dissertation in Culturology and Renaissance studies.

While studying, J. Lahiri also worked on her debut collection of short stories “Interpreter of Maladies”, which was published in 1999. She received the Pulitzer Prize for the collection in April of the following year, which was the first time in award history for Asian origin writer. The collection also received a number of other awards, including Foundation Hemingway awards / PEN and “New Yorker” magazine for the best year’s debut.

Despite the American citizenship that the writer accepted at the age of eighteen, she was always an Indian woman for her mother. The writer will say later: “Because I am an American because I was raised in this country, I am an Indian thanks to the efforts of two people. I consider myself an Indian not because of my time spent in India or because of my genetics, but because of my parents’ constant presence in my life” [152].

J. Lahiri never denied her involvement in the East culture. She was always embarrassed when she heard the question “Where are you from?”. She says: “I never know how to answer the question “Where are you from?”. To say that I am from Rhode Island, it will not satisfy anyone. Because of my name, appearance, etc. they want to know more. To say that I am from India, where I was not born and

never lived, it would be untrue. I don't care so much now. But I was very worried about it in my youth, the feeling that there is no specific place that I could call my own completely" [190, p. 114].

The writer's popularity is confirmed by the fact that her debut collection of short stories was sold more than 15 million copies. Translations of the novel "The Namesake" (A. Gall's translation, published by "Inostranka", 2010), collections of short stories "Unaccustomed Earth" (A. Gall's translation, published by "Inostranka", "Atticus Alphabet", 2011), some stories from the collection "Interpreter of Maladies" ("Foreign Literature", 2003, # 1) were published in Russia.

J. Lahiri is one of the most successful writers of her time; she can not be considered the author of ethnic literary periphery only. This is confirmed by many writer's awards:

- 1999 – "Interpreter of Maladies" (1999) received O. Henry Award and Hemingway Award for the best fiction debut;
- 2000 – "Interpreter of Maladies" (1999) was recognized as the best year's debut in New York and was awarded the prestigious Pulitzer Prize;
- 2003 – "The Namesake" (2003) was on "The New York Times" bestseller list for several weeks;
- 2008 – "Unaccustomed Earth" (2008) was awarded the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Prize.

These are not all writer's awards.

It is known that J. Lahiri taught Creative Writing at Boston University and the School of Design in Roy Island. Now the writer lives with her husband and two children in Italy. J. Lahiri is a modern Indian-American writer, who belongs to the second generation of "hyphenated Americans" [36, p. 43].

J. Lahiri differs from the other writers by her own "other's" vision and she brings it to a new interpretation level. The writer "moves off" from the traditional "other's" interpretation in direct dependence on the dominant culture to the ethnic dignity and

ethnocultural affiliation's interpretation. All this makes it possible to identify Asian-American relations in Lahiri's writing.

"Although J. Lahiri's works easily fit into the immigrant literature context, as they represent cultural dichotomy, but common feelings and emotions take them beyond this category, and her works are read by people far from the immigrant world" [10, p. 168].

Despite the considerable interest in the transcultural component of J. Lahiri's work, the attention of literary critics is focused primarily on the analysis of certain typological characters' features. This is an outsider – an oppressed character who is already "other" (alien) there and stills "other" here.

Critics' attention to J. Lahiri's writing is like a symbolic "curve": a significant amount of scientific research focuses on "The Namesake", while some stories ("Interpreter of Maladies" collection) lack attention in terms transcultural processes.

At the same time, special attention to Lahiri's works proves the admission of their fiction value, as well as the special mediator role between "our" and "other". The "other" in Lahiri's writing is not deprived of cultural codes' constant manipulation; on the contrary, he acts as a cultural "mediator".

The identification matrix of the "other" J. Lahiri's character is characterized by a complex multilevel structure, as it consists of different cultural layers components. The matrix is subjected to a systematic study of "our" Indian and "other" American. This is seen as an innovation in Lahiri's writing study in the context of a comprehensive analysis of the cultural components of transcultural character's identification matrix.

J. Lahiri is called "one of the most famous writers in popular Asian-American literature" [124, p. 184]. Her literary work consists of various genres' works: from stories and novels to some fiction essays. There is a wide range of fiction pursuits in the center of view of many researchers, but the main focus is on the Asian-American identity problem. The Asian-American is viewed from the



marginality and ethnoculturalism position, which marks the writer's special achievements in the field of transcultural literature.

Scholars and literary critics characterize Lahiri's writing as one of the most successful; her works – as one of the best, because they do not leave the bestsellers list in America. All this is due to the fact that J. Lahiri “explores the deep-rooted racial components that underlie modern (*transcultural* – our italics) society” [49, p. 133].

The writer does not try to represent the “other's” stereotypical narratives from direct dependence on the dominant culture. Cultural pluralism and the race problem perfectly fill her writing.

Literary studies of Lahiri's writing deals with the writer's Indian heritage analysis in terms of transculture. First of all, it is Asian-American stories study, their poetic features and problem-thematic specifics.

The writer belongs to the Asian-American literary canon, and her sudden fame after receiving the Pulitzer Prize and her Indian experience focus made her an important voice of the Indian diaspora in America. T. Bhalla has an interesting thought in this point: “I claim that for ten years no other Asian origin writer has borne the burden of a “speaker”, as it did Lahiri” [124, p. 183]. “Lahiri speaks of an American culture of individualism that opposes the traditional Bengali one of interdependence, family protection and commitment” [111].

Each of the critics defines Lahiri's writing theme in his own way. Some of them see the marital relations problem. S. Raj, studying her debut collection of short stories “Interpreter of Maladies”, notes that “many Lahiri's stories focus on marital relations, in particular on marriages by arrangement within the Indian community” [175, p. 459].

At the same time, “Lahiri tries to show family “boredom”, which is usual for American society, where the marriage itself becomes a temporary matter” [175, p. 460]. “The writer explores strong family ties and emotional relationships. Her complex

dialogues make her stories powerful and universal” [182].

N. Bidasiuk notes that “J. Lahiri has no special literary preferences; her stories are unpretentious, not marked by sharp plot twists, lack of adventures or melodramatic collisions. Her stories tell about ordinary people’s everyday life and even marginals, mostly Asian-Americans” [10, p. 162].

The researcher V. Meshkova characterizes Lahiri through identity problem and refers her to those for whom “neither the hyphen presence nor its absence can affect the person’s need to know his own origin” [66, p. 187]. A. Pendharkar has a similar point of view and he notes that “such writers as J. Lahiri are important for modern research because they bring the Indo-English writer’s “diasporic” image” [174, p. 122].

The identity problem in Lahiri’s writing outlines G. Bahadur, noting that “being an ethnic writer, she is expected to insist that she has never been ashamed to answer the identity question” [142].

A. Pendharkar notes that “the diaspora Indian audience connects Lahiri with prominent Bengali-American writers, such as Bharati Mukherjee and Chitra Divakaruni and gives her a place in the South Asian canon” [174, p. 175]. J. Lahiri, who belongs to the modern Asian-American authors’ group, “is less interested in chasing for “the American dream”, as the old immigrant narratives traditionally did” [143, p. 4].

Lahiri’s writing is relevant because of multicultural relations, that is impossible to fully understand modern US transcultural literature without. T. Bhalla notes that “in the field of South Asian diaspora literature published in the United States, no author but Lahiri can claim such attention” [124, p. 181].

It is known that “Lahiri is compared to her “literary predecessors”, such as Bharati Mukherjee and Salman Rushdie; she keeps the status of a new, progressive and innovative Asian-American writer” [124, p. 182].

The writer’s conscious appeal to her genetic (Indian) culture

means her hybrid consciousness as an integral part of her writing. N. Bidasiuk notes that “Jhumpa Lahiri makes a significant contribution to American literature, raising the cultural choice problem and the identity formation of the second generation of Indian immigrants” [11, p. 101].

T. Bhalla agrees, emphasizing that “J. Lahiri means more than a writer for the Asian-American community – she has become a public figure” [124, p. 183]. That is why the necessity of studying transcultural and Indian influences in Lahiri’s writing is extremely relevant and gives an opportunity to understand the dominant component of her works’ transcultural space.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a good example of cultural “crossing”, because all her works’ events take place in both Indian and American environments. O. Zverev emphasizes that some of the writer’s stories “both lyrical and humorous to some extent, prove Henry James and Virginia Woolf’s influence, but Lahiri belongs to the modern school of Naipaul’s followers, who create a special language that conveys dual identity’s drama more convincingly” [39, p. 53].

S. Kasbekar sees the cultural alienation problem, noting that “in most Lahiri’s stories there is an alienation and a cultural gap, that reveal the thought depth of Indians who immigrated to America” [146, p. 73]. P. Artemyeva also sees the cultural mediation problem: “She (Lahiri) is a person of the conditional “cultures’ border”, a binary identity author” [4, p. 37].

Studying Lahiri’s writing, S. Raj notes that “most characters have fluid identities like the other modern postcolonial literary ones. In most cases, Lahiri’s characters are two countries citizens, that is why their cultural identities are not fixed” [175, p. 460].

The writer’s characters “do not look at culture as a frozen heritage, they do not deny it in change and evolution process” [111]. Lahiri’s characters “are neither boring nor extraordinary, but they face real life’s situations and dilemmas” [113, p. 47]. All this means a special interest in her writing, that cannot be given one

interpretation only (Lahiri's stories reflect different ethnic groups' unique experience).

The authors of various critical articles and reviews on Lahiri's writing name her differently: "American writer, Asian-American, South Asian-American, Indian-American, Anglo-Indian, Indian, Bengali, Britain-origin writer, who belongs to the immigrant postcolonial ethnic or diasporic literature" [10, p. 164]. Despite these definitions' plurality, we conclude the notion "Ameraiacan writer of Bengali origin".

O. Karasyk remarks on the symbolic "cultural border" in Lahiri's writing: "Most often J. Lahiri's characters are Indian immigrants, who cannot adapt to their new home, being far from their homeland. Here, the cultures' border often passes between parents and children, husbands and wives too" [45, p. 67].

Some researchers see the immigrant experience in Lahiri's poetics, noting that her writing is an emotionally rich story about the immigrant's personal experience, who is lacked a clear geographical, ethnic and cultural attachment to one place. Studying the contemporary Asian-American writers' works, including Lahiri's writing, A. Alfonso-Forero emphasizes on the following: "What makes them important is their common goal – immigration narratives to the United States" [112, p. 164].

S. Sahni appeals to the immigrant experience, noting that "J. Lahiri feels like at home with a Bengali expatriates community in the Boston area, their single lives and extended families, customs and worldview, their American children's identity and cultural affiliation struggle allow her to see her own daily experience" [180, p. 13].

Like the writer, the characters "reproduce left behind experience and at the same time reborn in the hosting culture" [111]. "J. Lahiri's characters are ordinary people who have exotics because of their parents' choice" [197, p. 78].

N. Bidasiuk notes that Lahiri's characters "move from the extreme circle of everyday and emotional migrants' problems to the

inner spiral of understanding and assimilation” [12, p. 175]. This means the character’s deep emotional background. “A wide range of Lahiri’s characters demonstrates how act and react people from South Asia to the American environment, thus creating their own multiple identities” [127, p. 13].

N. Bidasiuk sees the Indian experience in Lahiri’s works and emphasizes that “her personal position on the cultures’ border and writing talent allow showing the Indian diaspora’s experience vividly. She refers to the paradoxical nature between immigrants and the “new world’s” relationship, the problem of the second-generation identity’s formation, ethnic-American identity’s transition to a transnational, global post-ethnic group. Her special attention draw the complex “I” search of the second generation of immigrants, whose unique path differs from the other generations’ experience” [11, p. 99]. “Lahiri shows that immigrant’s identity is of vital importance” [175, p. 469].

Lahiri’s American career is connected with Indian home education. Close contacts with Bengals, annual visits to relatives in Calcutta, and following Indian traditions inevitably influenced the writer’s “culturally displaced” and “a classic case of divided identity” [150].

The writer considers A. Chekhov, V. Trevor, E. Munro, and T. Hardy to be her fiction mentors. Lahiri’s works easily fit into the diasporic (immigrant) literature context, they touch the cultural dichotomy’s problem and at the same time go beyond this category through feelings, emotions and the characters’ inner world. Her works are clear to anyone, even those who are far from the immigration world.

“Despite the writer’s focus on the diaspora, the Indian Lahiri’s perception differs from the other diaspora writers” [174, p. 175]. She raises personal problems that concern everyone, regardless of ethnicity or cultural background: love, separation, moving and living experience in a new country.

“Cultural disorientation is a central and a constant theme of her stories” [127, p. 9]. I. Kosheleva has the same thought, noting that “the writer skillfully reveals the immigration themes, “exposing” its complex moments, the clash of two ways of life, cultural identity, the assimilation conflict, the tangled connection of generations and paints a portrait of an Indian family, that is torn between the desire to respect and preserve the homeland traditions and the American way of life” [55, p. 76].

The home motif in Lahiri’s stories is considered by N. Bidasiuk: “at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries the traditional (Indian) house’s image has been replaced by a polysemantic concept, which includes moving and a set of real and imaginary places, which is more characteristic of the modern fluid identity of the Asian-American” [12, p. 172].

Lahiri’s characters “experience the moving and the loss trauma, but their immigrant identity is actively developing, and they redefine the home concept” [12, p. 174]. Home means a specific place for a modern immigrant where he becomes himself and fully realizes his potential.

Lahiri belongs to the “hyphenated” Indian writers. Some critics point out that India’s physical “presence” in her works is declining, but the writer continues to be connected with Indian culture because of her origin. D. Ammons notes that “tradition plays an important role in Lahiri’s stories” [113, p. 47].

P. Artemyeva sees Lahiri’s writing in the perspective of precedent phenomena. The researcher notes that “from her works we understand that she knows what are the main milestones / postulates / culture’s attributes, but, being in the East and West’s “border of cultures”, through precedent phenomena she managed to show a person who departs from East culture, abandons the roots, but perceives the West culture superficially, without resorting to its sacred meanings, knowledge elements transmitted through symbols and signs from generation to generation” [4, p. 38].

The subject of Lahiri's works is different: it is often about harmony or spouses' misunderstanding, the pain of losing a loved one, serious illnesses, lovers' romantic relationships, family relationships between parents and children, siblings, all this proves that "Lahiri writes about ordinary people and their affiliation need" [197, p. 50].

The situations where the characters define and express their identity that resonates with everyone's personal events, regardless of ethnicity are common. N. Bidasiuk notes that "Lahiri is one of the most successful prose writers of Indian origin. ... She can not be considered the ethnic literary periphery author. ... Her stories have repeatedly topped "The Best American Stories" list [12, p. 173].

N. Friedman remarked about the novelty of the writer's problematics: "Lahiri is one of the modern ethnic American writers, whose novels and short prose show that assimilation is no longer the main work's problem" [136, p. 112]. "Immigrant experience is not a new literary problem, but Lahiri differs in focusing on the psychological conflicts of immigrants of 1965, who, like their descendants are highly educated" [127, p. 13].

N. Bidasiuk speaks about Lahiri's modern prose: "These are emotionally rich personal stories about the defining moments in immigrants' life, which do not have a clear geographical, ethnic or political framework" [10, p. 168].

The writer's stories are characterized by "a slow but definite cultural shift from "purity" to "hybridity" [111]. N. Friedman notes that Lahiri's narrative "does not aim to achieve "the American dream"; it positions immigrants' ethnic family" [136, p. 111].

Many critics have noted Lahiri's poetics and style, in particular N. Vysotska noticed that "Lahiri's style is marked by presentation simplicity, attention to detail, intimacy" [22, p. 7]. "Characters, places, problems are different in each story, but Jhumpa Lahiri describes such moments in her characters' lives, in which they define or manifest their identity. Every reader, regardless of ethnic origin,

can find situations in her works that resonate with his own life's events" [10, p. 165].

The generation problem is especially important: children leave their parents to study at prestigious colleges; they have new friends, fall in love and become disappointed in people, rebel against their parents and later seek military reconciliation. Children want to change their lives and take advantage of the new culture, refusing to follow their parents' culture.

"The pressure we face makes many of us feel that we need to choose one culture over another. We can either "cling" to our parents' ideology or rebel against it, and try to become true Americans" [152].

Professor N. Zhluktenko emphasizes that "ethnically marked texts of the Asian-American diaspora usually provide a complex family history, characteristic of the same difficult parents-children relations and the history of the hero / heroine's personality formation on this background" [36, p. 43].

N. Bidasiuk emphasizes on the second generation of immigrants, noting that the writer pays a special attention to "the complex "I" search by the second generation of immigrants, whose unique path differs from the other generations' experience" [11, p. 99].

Lahiri's writing has not escaped the modern Ukrainian literary critics' attention. In particular, in a special study, N. Zhluktenko gives a detailed description of the novel "The Namesake": Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake" joins American post-postmodernism works, aimed at reproducing spiritual values, especially those expressed in the Word" [36, p. 45].

I. Kosheleva considers Lahiri's novel in another context, emphasizing the culinary aspect: "In "The Namesake" Lahiri tries to understand culture more deeply through the food theme, using food images, comments on the national meal's features, which symbolize important life concepts" [55, p. 77]. "Lahiri's novel proves that



respecting your culture can be an important part of identity's defining – who you are, who you want to be – and can help you to understand your family better” [55, p. 79].

Lahiri's poetics is simple. N. Vysotska notes that “the story's “traditionality” brings Lahiri's novel closer to the classical realistic literature of the XIX century, which, as you can guess, was part of the author's intention – finally, it awakens the shadow of one of the most brilliant representatives of that glorious cohort” [23, p. 287].

This is a writer Gogol, the symbolic “connection” with whom is postulated through the name's semantics. The sound-semantic “Gogol” complex is an important component of the character's inner state and at the same time creates a cultural associations' palette.

American critics also showed their interest towards Lahiri's writing. Thus, D. Ammons notes that “Jhumpa Lahiri captivated not an Indian society only, but also humanity as a whole” [113, p. 48]. “Lahiri's hyphen identity and her diaspora focus play an important role for the reader” [174, p. 174].

Lahiri's writing is studied in fragments (without the analysis of poetics' eastern component) till today. Lahiri's innovation is not yet fully understood for the ordinary reader. In part, the reader has the opportunity to get acquainted with the author's writing and a style (there are translations of some Lahiri's works into Russian), but the studying Lahiri's poetics will allow as fully and accurately interpret her works and highlight the writer's personal intentions. Lahiri consciously comprehends the classical oriental culture, as she turns to it in adulthood. This is a free choice of poetics' eastern component, but not this tradition's imposition. The decision to turn to one's own culture is stipulated by life in a transcultural American society.

“Lahiri makes a significant contribution to American literature; revealing the cultural choice problem and identity formation of the second generation of Indian immigrants” [11, p. 102]. The writer does not aim to show the character's enslaved life in a new cultural

environment (although some characters identify their lives with captivity), she creates a fundamentally different fiction image – a transcultural character, not limited to one culture only.

Researchers have mastered Lahiri's writing in terms of "postcategorical utopia". The writer strives for the identity's unity of her transcultural character, starting with herself. Lahiri's distinctive feature is that she equally tries to penetrate into her ancestors' Eastern culture, and at the same time, into peculiarities of a new American one.

The main theme of the character's search for his own identity is replaced by a symbolic "freedom". Transcultural poetics allows the character to balance: not to give up his culture and at the same time to be "our" in a new cultural environment.

The characters feel themselves neither American nor Asian, but exist "between" cultures. N. Bidasiuk says the following about Lahiri's characters: "Harmony is found not by one who loses one culture and cannot accept another, but by one who becomes culturally rich twice without giving up Indian heritage and American achievements" [11, p. 102].

Although Lahiri's writing has attracted the Ukrainian and foreign literary critics' attention, there is no complete study till today that would comprehensively consider Lahiri's writing evolution.

## **1.2. The phenomenon of Asian-American literature of the late XX – early XXI centuries: from multiculturalism to transculturation**

American literature has established itself from various positions at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries. Many writers' fiction work of the late twentieth century primarily characterized as multiethnic. First of all, this is cultural problematics and the character's belonging to a certain race, class, ethnicity. Thus, cultural diversity, multiculturalism, tradition are considered as key concepts of modern

American border literature of the late twentieth century.

T. Denysova notes that “at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries there was a multiculturalism splash in America. We are talking about cultural multiplicity of various kinds – racial, ethnic, regional, gender, sexual – that is, a plurality’s wide range, plurality as American mentality and culture’s defining concept, the presence of which characterizes all national development’s stages, starting from the very beginning of the United States” [32, p. 578].

In modern scientific discourse, the “multiculturalism” notion is represented by a significant approaches’ range to its interpretation. The American thinker R. Bernstein writes about multiculturalism aptly: “Multiculturalism is unambiguously an ambiguous concept” [122, p. 4]. Another researcher G. Terborn notes that “today multiculturalism has brought culture as an identity to the forefront” [87, p. 64].

V. Yevtukh distinguishes between “multiculturalism as a tool, the embodiment of someone’s ideas, as well as someone’s policy and multiculturalism as a reality” [35]. D. Stus holds another point: “We should associate multiculturalism absolutely with the United States only” [84].

“Cultures’ synthesis and mutual assimilation, as well as cultural movements and borrowings, are directly related to multiculturalism, in which the phenomenon of cultural border as a culture’s “split”, where the emphasis is on eternal instability, uncertainty, confusion; on the cultural process’s distribution and dynamics, resulting in there is a “hanging feeling” is important” [43, p. 36].

K. Yatsenko speaks of “significant pluralism in multiculturalism’s classification and understanding of its content” [107, p. 20]. N. Vysotska holds a similar point of view, noting that “the fact of the existence of at least a dozen definitions of multiculturalism is not a purely technical terminology’s problem; we are talking about conceptual differences with far-reaching consequences” [24, p. 111].

When analyzing multiculturalism works, the tendency to character's double identity is noticeable. The duality's drama is considered as a key factor, as it is inherent in most works of the multicultural era. Multiculturalism character takes the "lost in literature" image, because he is between cultures and can not "find himself" anywhere.

Multiculturalism writers' works are mainly focused on the cultural conflict's problem. These are the characters that are torn from their roots for various reasons and hope in vain to "reborn" in a new cultural environment. A person who experiences a cultural shift is a person of a new dual identity. The subject, who is integrity deprived, I. Ilyin calls "individual" [41, p. 77]. The "individual" is dual in nature, as he is at cultures' joint.

The cultural paradigm's change, self-identification process; multiculturalism means a common "we", faces "I" and "other" interaction problem, "cultures' dialogue" are the current multiculturalism's problems. M. Tlostanova notes about "cultural wars" [92, p. 3], which occur in the last decades of the twentieth century in the United States. As a result of these "wars", the cultures of different countries are converging, globalization – the process of global integration and unification is spreading and deepening.

According to M. Bogachevskaya-Khomyak, "it is necessary to realize what is multiculturalism and the whole concept of multiculturalism's mosaic – it is a vision from the point of view of a motley mix of heterogeneous, but densely fitted multiculturalism's stones" [15].

As postmodernism's successor, multiculturalism "resuscitates" its character's double life and gives him the right to exist. Multicultural character's life is determined, first of all, by isolation and cultural "betrayal" of his culture. There is not only a connection between the generations in the works, but also a shaky "our" / "other's" compromise. In this way, the writer expands the ethnicity's boundaries, as his work represents the rich dynamics of "his" (Indian,

Chinese, Vietnamese, other) and American cultures.

I. Kozlyk holds a different point of view, emphasizing that “modern cultural and civilizational processes, which are associated with the multiculturalism’s phenomenon, are characterized by quite contradictory intentions” [48, p. 142].

A kind of “pluralistic universe” can be interpreted differently: on the one hand, multiculturalism emphasizes the self-worth of each individual and is loyal to the “other”, and on the other – it leads “to separation, to the nation’s dispersion into numerous isolated communities” [32, p. 578].

A. Yunatska is convinced that “it is in multiculturalism and polylingualism’s conditions a specific situation of cross-cultural contact is created, where a comparative cultures’ analysis can be realized most fully” [104, p. 333]. The “self-identity’s” policy tends to self-affirmation. Serving as a “cultural bridge”, multiculturalism’s policy is characterized by tolerance towards otherness.

N. Belitzer speaks about multiculturalism’s polycemy: “Around this phenomenon, it is often emphasized that each time it is necessary to determine what is meant by this multidimensional notion, because there are different its interpretations. Additional concepts, such as pluralism, polyethnicity, and even cosmopolitanism, are usually identified with multiculturalism, resulting in additional difficulties in elucidating this phenomenon’s nature” [7].

Striving for coexistence within diverse cultural discourses, multicultural literature’s character feels himself “other” / “alien” in the new cultural environment. At the same time, offering a vivid image of the complex cultural relationships of different races and nationalities’ people, most multiculturalism’s works finish on a note of vain hope of “returning home”.

M. Kozlovets is convinced that “at the present stage of society’s development multiculturalism’s phenomenon appears as a problematic strategy, ideology and discourse that assert the importance of various cultural forms’ existence. Integration and

globalization processes objectively lead to the fact that the national organisms are increasingly involved in the “world cycle”, there is a different ethnic groups and ethnic cultures`“mixing” [50].

The text itself becomes plural, because it corresponds to the character`s plural “I”. The idea of multiple identity is undergoing radical changes in the fiction literary discourse. The literary character`s hybridity is perhaps best covered in the migration`s problematics and in the “cultural border`s” concept. It is borderline / transit that deprives the character of a modern border literature of his ethnic roots, attaching the eternal cultural migrant`s image, a nomad, a marginal.

In terms of hybridity, “assimilated sell-out” stereotype manifests itself, the essence of which is in false / fictitious assimilation or “half assimilation”. Asian-American literature turns the best here, as its texts are created by writers with a dual identity, so in its analysis an important role is given to the author`s cultural identity and, accordingly, to the text itself. The living experience of the first and second generation immigrants is in sight, as well as language features, because the language is still own, but the country is different.

The “cultural exile” theme is indicative for a number of Asian (and not only) origin`s authors. The past world holds the characters so tightly that even through generations they feel “superfluous” within the “other” culture. The author deliberately puts his character in a cultural homelessness situation, and at the same time emphasizes the impossibility of returning home.

Daria Mazi-Leskovar has an interesting thought in this point and notes: “Multicultural literature, which presents characters with a dual cultural identity, has a privileged position among the texts devoted to multicultural issues. The peculiarity of literary texts, whose main characters belong to two different cultures, is that intercultural encounters take place not only on the interpersonal but also on the intrapersonal level. Therefore, such literature in two ways

clarifies the issues related to multicultural consciousness, which is considered a success prerequisite in intercultural communication” [163, p. 53].

T. Denysova is convinced that “all the other cultures, mentalities, traditions, languages, which in one way or another were a part of the melting pot as ingredients, remained on the margins for a long time, and acted as “underwater currents”. The role of these components is being studied only now” [31]

In Asian-American literature, the notion of “desh” (literally “homeland” in Bengali) is important because these are “hyphenated writers” who combine two cultures, two identities, and personifies it on their characters. One thematic series includes the figure of Amy Tan, Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Frank Chin and others, whose writing clearly traces the duality theme.

The works, where the characters have a double consciousness, are distinguished by their specificity: the heroes face a number of problems, step by step striving to assimilate fully to the new “desh”. They balance between cultures, living simultaneously in two worlds (not belonging to either of them). Suren Saryan has an interesting opinion in this point; he believes that “Asian identity as such does not exist” [75]. Such cultural uncertainty interprets the characters in two ways, because they are “fighting” with their inner “I” rather than with society. It is difficult for such characters to combine two homes, so they act as a kind of “bridge between cultures”.

V. Budny notes that “in reconstructing the biographies of “homeless people” – migrants, exiles, refugees – the literature raises not only the social problem of expatriation and homelessness, assimilation and identity’s preservation, but also the mental problems of otherness, loss of a center, identity and difference’s dialogue” [16, p. 61].

The mentality of “otherness” in the literature is reduced to deep inner disappointments; it is a kind of prism through which the character looks at the world and at himself in it. Cultural difference

causes him to analyze and interpret, and therefore to behave accordingly, of course, if there is a conscious need to emphasize his difference.

Along with the autobiography's features, the person with multiple identity is central, who seeks to know himself through the "other" and for whom it is extremely important "not to lose himself" in the new cultural environment. Without doubt, the border writers' works are distinguished by their axiological value and do not lose relevance.

Immigrants, along with their families and all the adaptation peculiarities, appear as "eternal" images. An important role is given to Indian culture as a source of cultural experience's enrichment. In analyzing this type of literature, "we are inevitably face a double locus: the "old country", which is constantly mentioned by the person who lost it, but can not fully acknowledge the fact of this loss, and the American scene, as it is perceived by the character who tries and yet cannot accept it as his homeland" [39, p. 51]. The double locus and the values' conflict form the basis of these works.

A. Yunatska speaks about cultural duality: "Two cultures are opposed, and one of them, as a rule, is presented in a positive light, and the other – in a negative one; one is "our", and the other is foreign" [103, p. 141]. N. Vysotska agrees with this, noting that "the wrld's division into "our" and "other" has never been axiologically neutral. To maintain the psychological balance of the tribe / nation / individual, it was necessary to associate "our" with the good and "other" – with the bad" [21, p. 7].

The symbolic transition "traces" from "our" to "other" are reminded by the constant nostalgia for the lost past. It is important for immigrant characters not only to outline (to see) the transition lines ("our" / "other" contours) correctly, but also to understand the importance and necessity of these boundaries' crossing. As a result, their identity is "mobile" / hybridized.

G. Melnikov notes that "the significant influence of "big



neighbors`” cultures leads to the fact that “other” becomes “our” – there is a process of external influences` internalization, which makes the boundaries between “our” and “other” shaky and conditional” [65, p. 55].

Asian-American literature is an excellent example of this is, whose works portray the “cultural experience” of different countries` people, as well as the difficult character`s “transition” from one culture to another. There is a need to “look their own” for them, which often creates an internal “split” into “our” and “other”. The “language wall” problem is relevant, when “foreign” language (in our case American) is opposed to “our” (Indian), which is used to communicate at home, among “ours”.

I. Limborsky speaks about “our” and “other”, noting that “our” is, as a rule, always cultural, civilized, and “other” still needs meticulous verification in order to establish it as close to “our” or such “other”, which does not contradict the civilized “our” [61, p. 57].

In Asian-American literature, the complex “our” / “other” concept, represented by both external and internal aspects, reaffirms that the boundary of “our” / “other” is not defined once and for all.

A comprehensive approach to the study of “hyphenated writers`” works is due to the lack of scientific achievements related to their writings` analysis. Most Asian-American works are characterized by a “rupture” of the author`s consciousness, an emphasis on the “our” / “other” dichotomy, some elements of cultural homelessness, and endless “rehearsals” of identity formation, as a result of which it (identity) acquires hybridity signs. The “culture shock” notion and the “living again” motive are important. That is why the border writers` works have an important role in a national identity`s forming process.

Since the emphasis is on the national identity`s discourse, such works immediately become modern literature`s cult event. This presupposes a comprehensive approach to the study of border

writers' works, so their writings are considered in terms of ethnicity and transculturalism, which allows to reveal the style's features in a different way and offer a new interpretation. An important role is given to modern narratology, aimed precisely at the identity's features.

The impact on these processes' course is directly related to such phenomenon as globalization. The XX-XXI centuries' break is characterized by a radical change of the whole cultural paradigm, the transition to globalization, which "aligns" cultural boundaries, becomes noticeable. It is the globalization processes that have contributed to the phenomenon formation of Asian-American literature, as a result of which there is a "process of creating one's own literary identity in a new territory" [82, p. 247].

As M. Anastasyev rightly assures, "we all face globalism today in all its aspects" [3, p. 559]. In particular, this was reflected in the Asian-American writers' series of short stories, because according to G. Zaporozhets, they are "one of the most important prose forms in American literature of the twentieth century" [37, p. 395].

It is worth emphasizing once again on the genre popularity among the "other" culture's representatives, as border authors (various minorities representatives) tend to short stories cycles compared to novels (for example, in Lahiri's writing stories prevail and there is one novel only).

N. Gumnytska is convinced that, "paradoxically, the globalization processes, which caused mass migration and border crossing between communities, contributed to a deeper awareness of their own national and cultural identity, as well as cognition and respect to other (identity). Being on the national cultures' border (awareness of the border of one's national and cultural field and the identity of another, self-esteem and respect to the other culture's representative) is one of the positive factors in the new world community's creation. In the identities' hierarchy, the new European cultural identity cannot be opposed to national identity, it has a dual

nature and is based on the ethnoppluralism concept, which involves taking into account the interests, rights, ethnocultural communities' differences" [30, p. 6].

T. Denisova assures that in the conditions of modern globalization "culture acquires a leading paradigm status as almost the only preserving means – it is preserving – a unique environment and traditions" [32, p. 575]. Living in the present, transculture character belongs to more than one generation; the presence of the past is not identified with a "cultural prison" which the individual cannot go beyond.

O. Hoschuk is convinced that "today, as never before, culture, and a cultural identity with it, must be understood as a crucial globalization aspect. At the same time, it should not be considered that culture's globalization is only cultural homogeneity's establishment on a global scale. This process includes cultural clashes and contradictions, that can be resolved only on a new philosophy of mutual understanding basis" [28, p. 13]. A "new type of global consciousness" begins, which is entrusted with a role of a symbolic "unifying factor" [61, p. 64].

The interpretation of "globalization" notion is ambiguous. Today, globalization concerns an increasingly intensive process of various industries' integration into a single world matrix. This process's cultural component is no exception; cultural globalization blurs borders as it unites different nations people. T. Denysova emphasizes that "Europe called Americanization the crusade of mass culture, and continues that the word "Americanization" originally meant new qualitative characteristics of the young state unity, formed from "different nations children" [32, p. 573].

Modern America is considered the whole world's model, it "extends to the whole world and makes everyone an American" [187, p. 158]. "Americanization" is the shadow of the future, when the whole world will become like modern America" [187, p. 158].

The hybridity problem acquires special significance in the

fiction. In particular, Asian-American literature represents hybrid identity characters who combine two cultural discourses simultaneously and feel “trapped” between two cultures.

In search of the answer, the characters balance between the past and the present, and each time they are convinced of intercultural barriers' existence. They are in several cultural spaces simultaneously, which allows us to talk about their transcultural identification's formation, which V. Seligey identifies with “a dynamic continuous process of identity's clarification and evolution by borrowing and transforming elements of different cultures, which form a transcultural integrity being in an interaction and interference state” [77, p. 195].

The symbolic “communication” between borders is conditional, in most cases the identity is integral and at the same time is fragmentary. L. Tykhonova holds a similar point of view; the researcher emphasizes that “modern identity is reflexive and maximally plastic” [89, p. 15].

Being in search of yourself and trying to understand your otherness is a constant way of life of “dissolved” identity character. Therefore, the national identity's approval is primarily important for immigrant character's self-identification and the answer to the question “Who am I?”

Identity as a multidimensional phenomenon integrates such triad parts as the person (in our case, this subject is a literary character), society and culture. We emphasize on cultural identity, the essence of which is the conscious recognition by the individual of appropriate behavior patterns, values, cultural norms, and, finally, his “I” understanding in terms of “his” culture.

N. Vysotska speaks about the change of view on personal identity: “In today's conditions it is useful to consider it (identity) as a product of change and interaction of different cultural factors, not as something frozen in its stability, but as a dynamic, multiple and fluid formation. Identity should be the result not of heredity only but

also of “a free choice” [20].

Asian-American literature is of particular interest in this context, which emphasizes the importance of its character's cultural identity, his dual consciousness and inner psychological state. Hybrid characters of Asian-American literature can freely “move” between borders, but each time face misunderstanding on the part of “other” culture's representatives. S. Yachin asserts in this case that “intercultural contacts' intensification leads to the cultural boundaries' erasure” [108, p. 154].

To solve this problem, the researcher proposes “metaculture (*which he identifies with transculture* – our italics) as the art of boundaries' establishing between cultural environments, where the border does not mean a barrier, but the cultures' meeting place” [108, p. 155].

Awareness of their otherness motivates the characters to delve into their inner world, to try to find the meaning of their existence within the “other” culture. The path chosen by the border writers for their characters is full of disappointments and causes individual's mental disintegration, his identity's bifurcation.

It is in the context of Asian-American literature that the study and understanding of the transculture processes as an important phenomenon of globalization becomes relevant. D. Drozdovsky has an interesting opinion in this context: “Today we are talking not so much about multiculturalism but transculturalism as a special cognitive construct, a specific understanding form of our position in a particular culture” [33].

The “transculturation” notion should not be associated with “globalization”. Globalization tends to cultural relief's “level”, when “ours” and “others” merge, and thus the cultural landscape is erased. Globalization is identified with the cultures' exchange, but the problem of preserving cultural identity remains relevant. Transculture calls for “finding oneself” and not being a part of a single whole in globalization context.

M. Tlostanova understands transculturation as “the constant existence of not one but several cultural starting points, many cultures` crossing, the constant plying between them and a special sense of cultural frontier – “not there and not here” or “there and here” [94, p. 212].

There is an idea among scholars about the necessity of further developing of theoretical transculturalism problems. Despite its relevance, the Asian-American component of the literary process remains poorly understood. The prefix trans- is especially important, because it “indicates the moving dynamics to another quality, rather than the result” [76, p. 6].

D. Drozdovsky holds a similar point of view: “A specific feature of transcultural space is dynamism, movement, displacement, mobility” [33]. This dynamic moving form determines the existence of “another”, transcultural character, who removes “our” / “other” opposition.

In this context, K. Sultanov notes the “inexpressibility of a clearly reflected border” [85, p. 109], which is inherent in modern transcultural character of Asian-American literature, who can be personified in a trickster image: a false Asian and a false American. On this basis of different cultural layers a new genre variety of transcultural novel is created, where a multicomponent cultural synthesis is carried out.

Asian-American literature appears as a transcultural phenomenon, and the cultural space`s expansion, due to the hybridity subject of most works, is a characteristic component of Asian-American literature.

In one row here you can put the figures of L. Cao, M.H. Kingston, D.W. Louie, B. Mukherjee, John Okada, A. Tan, J. Hagedorn, F. Chin and others whose writing is a vivid example of the existence of “gap between cultures” literature [76, p. 7].

E. Butenina singles out Rachel Lee, King-Kok Cheung, Elaine Kim, Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong, Shirley Lim as the “female wing” of

Asian-American literature [17, p. 25]. Jhumpa Lahiri is also included in this list. As D. Drozdovsky rightly assures, “the question of the criteria by which one could unmistakably determine the writers’ “cultural” affiliation is considered the most controversial in literary circles” [33].

The works of Asian-American writers have a special subject. A cross-cutting theme is the problem of “desh” loss and the peculiarities of a new identity’s formation. Writers show their characters through the heterogeneity (differences) prism, so their immigrant characters form a kind of cultural enclave.

N. Vysotska sees the symbolic condition of border immigrant in “a way of equality confronting of “one-story America”, because belonging to another national group is prestigious, it sets you apart from a homogeneous mass of people like you” [25].

The concepts of hybridity, conventionality and polyvariance of the new transcultural identity are artistically embodied in the works of Asian-American writers. In particular, for Asian-American writers, the issue of finding the truth and a “conditional” identity’s renewal, devoid of established standards and stereotypes, is important.

N. Vysotska is convinced that “in the context of radical changes that the national concept of self-identity has undergone in recent decades, the dynamics of “scattering” is as follows: a powerful multicultural movement has dealt serious blows to the traditional model of American culture, which led to the multiple cultural stories’ formation, each of which (quite rightly) emphasizes its own originality and aesthetic value” [19, p. 102].

The need to “create a new concept of American literature and culture as a fundamentally comparative within, hybrid and transnational in its origins, formation and dynamics”, becomes relevant [134, p. 589].

The new transcultural identity adopted by the immigrant is not homogeneous. Thus, being on the border of two cultural contacts, the

immigrant is partly American and partly Indian. This is a feeling of dislocation, a symbolic “trap” between cultures. Occupying a position “on the border”, the transculture immigrant character does not belong to any of the cultures, but is on the border between them.

An alternative to the dual / hybrid identity is the character’s multiple consciousness. Creating a modern transcultural image, writers consciously “remove” cultural boundaries and “our” / “own” dual opposition.

D. Drozdovsky is convinced that “the ethnic principle in the global literary space no longer works” [33]. The task of the author of Asian-American transcultural literature is not to show his character’s ethnic component, but to create a free fiction discourse, independent to “our” / “other” established stereotypes.

The impossibility to determine “Who am I?” leads to immigrant identity’s “fluctuations”, as he is in the process of understanding the significance and importance of each of the cultures. Being in America, which continues to maintain “a global frontier status” to this day [53, p. 42], the immigrant keeps “his” / quo status – does not want to change, leaving everything as it is. A. Grytsanov in this case speaks of “an individual who “splits” in his being, actualizing not so much with the “splitting” of himself, as the “splitting” of the culture he belonged to” [29, p. 166].

Combining simultaneously two traditions (being in two worlds), the transculture immigrant does not share any of them completely, and therefore cannot call any of the traditions “his own”. The symbolic immigrant’s “homelessness” is identified with the emptiness he tries to fill by “shuffling” different cultural traditions and striving for mutual dialogue, because he realizes that the dialogue is the link between “our” and “other”.

A. Usmanova is convinced that “the “marginality’s” philosophical concept characterizes the specificity of various cultural phenomena, often antisocial, which develop outside those that dominate in a given time of rationality rules, which do not fit into



their current thinking dominant paradigm and thus quite often they reveal the contradictions and paradoxes of cultural development's main direction" [97, p. 397].

Cultural barriers' overcoming and the existence of intercultural dialogue is especially important, and therefore is determined to the need for further research and critical thinking. It is in the cultures' meeting and interaction the transcultural field of modern Asian-American literature's works can be traced. Within the work and at the poetics level, intertextual (everyday life, habits and traditions) and intercultural (global issues) dialogue unfolds.

M. Anastasyev assures that "postmodernism proposes to "kill" the author, to cancel literary texts, and to replace literature with its critical strategy in the deconstruction form" [3, p. 560].

This means deconstruction, aimed primarily at cultural plurality. In most cases, cultural plurality tends to eliminate literature, which, in turn, leads to the symbolic character's "loss", his "going" beyond both cultures and his marginality's realization.

Postmodernism has convinced its individual of his own abnormality and strangeness long ago. Postmodern individual's dual identity is considered "not a result, not a given, but an eternal process, and the subject can exist only as a result within the discourse through the stitching operation of the imaginary and symbolic" [94, p. 191].

In the postmodernism philosophy, where the symbolic "bifurcation" is considered the norm, the personality's problem is particularly acute. The individual is a mixture of several cultures simultaneously and is viewed through the indigenization prism (independence from the new culture, its rejection).

In the literature, the indigenization processes are appropriate for the characters who consciously refuse to accept "other" as their own and do not want to assimilate. As a result, the characters are characterized by difference, otherness, and marginality.

The "acculturation" concept is the opposite, where there is

cultural characteristics' exchange and the perception of one culture by the representatives of another. Unlike assimilation, acculturation does not erase the boundaries completely, and therefore does not imply a complete integrity loss, allowing the "other" character to maintain his difference. Following home traditions is perhaps the best way to keep the difference, and thus separates "our" from "other".

The "acculturation" concept is different from "transculturation". Acculturation means the cultural values' acquisition, while transculturation is the loss of one culture (deculturation) and the creation of a new one (neoculturation). Acculturation becomes possible when the immigrant has assimilated successfully and adopted a new culture.

In Asian-American literature, postmodernism features are appeared in the duality's problem. The postmodern writing technique experiments with the marginality's marginal phenomenon; the perception stereotype of Asian immigrants, who show the ethnic component the best, is important.

N. Vysotska is convinced that "postmodernism is often referred to in the past as a cultural development's completed stage" [23, p. 103]. The opposite position is taken by transculture / transliteration concept, which is openness and therefore incompleteness. We are talking about post-ethnic literature, which, according to V. Seligey, "is increasingly interpreted as a modern society's new stage, and these processes' study has formed a special interdisciplinary section in modern humanities – "Border Studies" [76, p. 4].

Border writers' transcultural poetics is similar to the postmodernist poetics of "the open text", as well as double coding. F. Chin's writing is a vivid example in this context.

Examining the writer's transcultural poetics, V. Seligey concludes that "the main theme is not the drama of identity's search by a Sino-American, not his rejection of indigenous culture, not finding a balance between ethnic "origin" and "consent"; in the

center of his fiction world – free individuality's self-determination" [76, p. 8].

Not only transcultural characters, but also the writers themselves appear as referents, cultures mediators, "our" and "other" interpreters. Their writing's cross-genre is a reflection of marginality's postmodern category. The text represents the intertext – a certain model of intercultural dialogue in transculturalism, which takes into account the racial component and the difference (otherness) problem.

Transculturalism itself is an intertextual interaction, a kind of various relationships with the "other". K. Yatsenko notes that "in modern conditions, identity, which is actually reduced to the culture, really constitutes transculturalism ontological basis" [106, p. 88].

The above-mentioned writers are united by the national identity's problem, which makes it necessary to study their writing in transculture context. The cultural multi-vector nature of F. Chin's poetics, for example, "takes his writing beyond the ethnic identification's issue, within which, as a rule, the "hypnened" writers' poetics is considered" [76, p. 11].

Border writers' work is viewed from other positions in terms of transculturalism – not limited to "our" / "other" subject, "melting pot" concept's interpretation and the "American dream" notion, which, incidentally, the analysis of most cross-cultural works is leaded.

As a result of cultural borrowing, a "different" third culture is created, where border thinking is born. The character of the new, third culture has no fear of self-identification with one culture only. Successfully regulating cultural variability and heredity, the character is a representative of two cultural discourses simultaneously.

M. Kozlovets is convinced that the "idea of a great synthesis" – Western and Eastern traditions' synthesis – in no way removes the problem of finding a national identity, and vice versa. The fruit of the "great synthesis" can be (and should be) a new world's image and a

man in a modern globalized culture” [51, p. 256].

We are talking about the heterogeneity and openness of Asian-American literature, as well as the conscious portraying of a transcultural character capable of “removing” these cultural oppositions.

In transculture conditions, cultural difference’s boundaries are largely erased, and, as a result, the symbolic stereotypes’ “substitution” becomes significant, when “our” is presented as “other” and vice versa. H. Syvachenko is convinced that “the current state of culture is characterized by interest in representation problem – the problem of the right of an individual to speak on behalf of a cultural group, his or someone else’s, as well as his adapted and represented cultural capacity” [81].

Along with the cross-cutting theme of family, food, homeland, the problem of border equalizing of “our” / “other” (Indian (Chinese, Japanese) / American) comes to the fore. Cultural “alignment” is observed in the writing of J. S. Wong, F. Chin, D. Lahiri, B. Mukherjee, A. Tan, and others.

Large transcultural narratives are created in literary discourse, and a new form of authorial fiction is proposed. There is a new literary character’s form of being – transcultural, composed of postmodern and multiculturalism’s some elements.

The character is shown through the trickster’s metaphor, as he “reincarnates” into new / other fiction images and has a game identity. Such a cultural “game” of the character’s identities is devoid of opposition to victory or defeat. For example, the trans-identity of Lahiri’s character allows him to be “different” both to “our” and “other”.

For a transcultural character, the border becomes a vague place, and the cultural boundary is characterized by conventionality. To some extent, the literary character’s image appears “artificial”, because the hero is outside the “our” and the “other”.

It is not a question of cultural “survival”, – the character

successfully exists within two cultural discourses, and his belonging to two cultures simultaneously affects his boundary consciousness's self-determination.

A. Hordienko concludes that “an alternative model of intercultural interaction, built on the mutual respect principle and tolerance, regardless of ethnic and cultural affiliation, has not yet been found” [27, p. 20].

Being a plural personality and to be different by ethnic ambiguity, the character successfully “cultivates” two cultural discourses: neither “our” nor “other” is leveled by him, on the contrary, cultural contradictions preserve and pass into a new ambivalent quality – transcultural one.

M. Trebin is convinced that “transculturation is a new way of social and linguistic thinking, forming new relations between cultures and languages, a new understanding of modern communication and new subject-object, subject-subject and logical connections” [96, p. 16].

The third transcultural dimension is seen in the character's dialogue with “his”, “foreign” and “another”, not “our” and not “other”, because it is in transculture that there is a “new quality of cultures merging” [69, p. 134].

One time, Yu. Lotman emphasized that, “since the second half of the twentieth century, “cultures' dialogue” issue has become acute, which does not remove the duality in the problem's formulation. The culture's material as a “culture's subsystem as a whole” is indicative [62, p. 333].

The cultures' dialogue clearly manifests itself in border authors' writing, where the dual personality distinguishes between “our” and “other”, while understanding his abyss and distance from the “other”. National and cultural identities have a special importance in border authors' writing, and “our” / “other's” clash is perhaps the most important their works' conflict.

“Other's” cultural images are bizarrely intertwined with

“our`s”, as a result of which their author represents different cultures` collage (mixture). D. Drozdovsky is convinced that “in the modern world the writer is no longer a “cultural orientation`s” hostage determined before his birth. He can change his literary identity” [33].

The works of V. Du Bois [132], V. Sollorz [185], R. Takaki [191], N. Vysotska [23], M. Tlostanova [93], and V. Mignolo [165], S. Rushdie [179], D. Sommer [186], G. Anzaldua [114], M. Epstein [102], W. Mishra [166] and others are devoted to the global problems of intercultural interactions` formation, as well as “other`s” images.

The national identity`s problem is often illustrated on the members of the same family. Lahiri`s works are a good example in this context, in particular, the Ganguli family from the novel “The Namesake”; Ruma`s family, the main character of the story “Unaccustomed Earth”; Sudha and Rahul`s family from the story “Only Goodness”.

Boundary works are characterized by a complex narrative structure. The narrative allows the transcultural character to “reformat” his “I”, because with the help of the narrative “I” is individualized, which, in turn, allows to identify the personality. Narrative identity can realize itself in dialogue with the “other”, acting as a not yet formed process, as a dynamic structure that is possible through communication with “other” only.

Narrative / unformed identity`s exaples are found in novelist F. Chin; the phenomenon is seen from the point of Sino-American literature`s “black sheep” / “white crow”, which “does not fit into the established notions of immigrants` assimilation” [76, p. 9].

There is a modified “other`s our”, directly related to the contradictory tendencies of transcultural space`s formation.

In the image of “other`s our” the border writers` innovation is seen: in the synthesis of distinct cultural elements there is the development of a new transcultural fiction code.

Writers create the “multiple conscious`s” / transcultural character`s image as an alternative to the established hybrid

consciousness in multiculturalism context. In this case, V. Seligey notes that the “ethnic” writers’ work serves as a “transcultural challenge of ethnicity, assimilation, acculturation, hybridization” [76, p. 11].

Transculturalism allows ethnic writers to move away from the established home topos as several generations’ meeting place, traditional root culture’s representatives. A “metaphor of new processes of self-consciousness of one’s own – open to the world – transcultural identity” is proposed” [76, p. 124].

In parallel, there are other (in our case, Eastern) marks of spiritual / cultural search, no less important than the American ones. A new transcultural literature is being created, where an important place is given to the development of “other” problematic and poetics. As V. Seligey rightly assures, “the study of such literature today is marked by crisis features” [76, p. 125].

Writers of Sino-American (F. Chin, A. Tan, M. Kingston, G. Jen, E. Eaton), Indian (J. Lahiri, S. Rushdie, B. Mukherjee), Japanese-American (O. Ruth, D. Moore), Vietnamese-American (L. Hayslip, J. N. Kwang Hyung), Filipino-American (J. Hagedorn, S. Brainard), and other origins have felt themselves like “the world’s citizens”, “multiple / empty identities” writers long ago [76, p. 125].

Transcultural processes problematize “true identity’s” concept. Modern multiple identity “has become a fashionable transdisciplinary brand, which, however, does not prevent it from remaining a diagnosis – a disease of late and finally exhausted modernity and the transition to something else” [94, p. 192]. This is a fundamentally different identity, freed from the need to reconcile two radically different “I”.

The innovation of modern border writers (F. Chin, A. Tan, J. Lahiri, B. Muherjee, S. Wong, O. Ruth, L. Hayslip, J. Hagedorn, etc.) is traced in a new transcultural poetics’ development, when “distant converges and a single image of the human world creates, not divided into West and East, and the man’s otherness is

understood as a transition from one of his qualities to another, but also his own” [76, p. 123].

The “our” / “other’s” dual opposition is transformed into a new “our” / “our”. The “other as our” concept in F. Chin’s writing “is developed in Chinese stratagems’ synthesis and Western culture’s symbols” [76, p. 120].

As a result of postmodernism’s influence (postmodernism’s “virus”), multiple identity’s concept is perceived as a need in transculturalism terms, without any negative connotations or deviations. The writers’ work with transcultural experience cannot be unambiguously attributed to some one national literature.

T. Naduta emphasizes that “such cultural “out of being” leads to the writers’ transcultural identities’ formation and their works’ transcultural aesthetics. Such a reading, first of all, assumes that the world created by the author is not a closed, separated space, but is within all existing cultures” [69, p. 134].

Border writers represent postcolonial literature aimed at summing up colonial rule. Postcolonial literature places man at the center of research because it deals with his identity’s study.

The character of modern transcultural literature “survives” in terms of multiple identities and faces imaginary projects of his “I”. E. Fromm in this context speaks of a person who, “escaping from the existential dichotomy, identifies himself with his social organization and forgets that he is a person. He finds himself in a “negative ecstasy” state, forgets himself, loses his own individuality” [100, p. 294].

The cultural difference in the conceptual name’s field is present in Olivia’s image, the heroine of A. Tan’s novel “The Hundred Secret Senses” (1996). Because of the name’s duality the heroine feels different. Firstly, Olivia identifies herself as an American by Laguni surname, and then she takes the surname of her Chinese half-sister Li, reaffirming the eternity of her transcultural otherness.

The emphasis on the conditional border and the existence of



several character's "I" is seen in M. Kingston's writing (the Sino-American writer). In the novel "The Woman Warrior" (1976), the protagonist oscillates between different duality poles and, as a result, takes the outsider image, a "other" in a new territory.

Disguising "our" / "other" the heroine puts on an "ethnocultural mask", because she realizes her otherness and belonging to several worlds at once. There is a complex transcultural image, composed of layered "our" / "other's" fragments, which K. Karavaeva calls "double bottom" image [44, p. 96].

Asian-American literature is directly related to assimilation. In the process of assimilation to a new cultural environment, the immigrant character goes from heterogeneity (I am not like that, I am different) to homogeneity (I am like others), so there is his identity's renewal.

I. Ushanova is convinced that "the concept of "pure" cultural identity, the threat of which may come from both multiculturalism and globalization, is considered today as a myth that does not correspond to modern cultural reality" [98]. The path from heterogeneity to homogeneity is not common to all immigrants. Some immigrants stay transcultural "others" forever.

For example, in S. Rushdie's novel "The Moor's Last Sigh" (1995), the cross-cutting theme is cultural identity's problem. D. Mazin, studying the poetics of S. Rushdie's writing, emphasizes the existentiality of the writer's characters, as they "often find themselves outside the usual cultural traditions" [63, p. 33].

In "The Moor's Last Sigh" the characters continue to be "others", "eternal" immigrants. According to D. Mazin, "ethnic and cultural characters' ambivalence in Rushdie's novels is expressed by the author's subjective position, who rejects the possibility of unambiguous belonging to one culture only" [63, p. 33], which once again confirms the writer's transcultural worldview.

The assimilation's "external" side is more accessible to detailed analysis: behavior, language, clothing style, everyday life, religion,

while “internal” – thoughts, memories, worries (by the way, often in a nostalgic tone) – needs attention. The loss of “I” is followed by deep inner feelings.

The character is in a state of cultural homelessness and, as a result, has an “empty identity” [76, p. 9]. He understands that he is caught by two cultures at the same time and cannot definitively determine whether he belongs to both or to neither of them. These are trans-diaspora individuals with mixed ethnic roots who are not attached to any place. Outwardly, the characters are little different from the new culture’s representatives (except for skin color), but internally they are “different” because they are two cultures’ hostages.

The moving from multiculturalism to transculturalism / post-ethnicity “does not allow” to limit the analysis of “hyphenated” authors’ writing by “ethnocentric paradigm” [76, p. 127], because it brings them to a new epistemological level of transculture.

N. Vysotska notes that, “feeling constantly “on the border” between states, cultures, languages, literators and critics are particularly active in developing the “border” identities’ theory and literatures that arise in contact areas as a result of (not always desirable) interactions and (inevitable) hybridization” [26]. Merging with all cultures, the modern transcultural character is an Indian / Chinese and an American at the same time, and not an Indian / not a Chinese and not an American.

The transcultural character of Asian-American literature is in a “cultural transformation” state. Being in the process of becoming his “I”, he realizes that he is homeless everywhere and can not become “himself” anywhere, because he has already lost his home without finding a new one. There are destruction processes of the character’s consciousness, who represents several cultures’ “alloy”, which ultimately creates his cultural space’s fragmentary nature.

### **1.3. Discourse of Asian-American literature in historical and cultural perspective**

Asian-American literature is a literary phenomenon that attracts attention in the context of modern globalization due to the mass immigration different cultures' representatives to the United States. This literature covers all literary genres written in English by Asian immigrant writers or Americans of Asian descent.

N. Vysotska notes that "among the branches that now abound the national literature's tree, the ethnic literatures' branch is one of the most magnificent" [23, p. 57].

Among the features that distinguish Asian-American literature, is heterogeneity phenomenon – the character's awareness of his difference / otherness, because characters from different countries of Asian continent are such literature's representatives.

The beginning of Asian-American literature dates back to the 60s of the twentieth century, when the focus was on man, not as an abstract homo sapiens, but as an individual belonging to a particular culture. Therefore, it became important to understand the national and ethnic components, because a transcultural personality, who appears as a kind of cultures' mediator is in sight.

Discussions around the problems of Asian-American literature, which took place in the United States in the 1960s and 1980s-1990s, "were focused on socio-cultural issues that did not affect the fiction and aesthetic originality of the literary phenomenon" [67, p. 7].

In the 1960s, there was a symbolic "struggle" for the equality of all ethnic groups living in American society. We are talking about a person with a transcultural consciousness, who often "switches cultural codes so as not to feel like an outcast in both cultures" [14, p. 125].

Examining the immigration history in the United States, O. Handlin concluded that "immigrants were an American history" [138, p. 3]. According to R. Takaki, "Asian Americans have lived in

the United States for more than 150 years, which is longer than some other European ethnic groups. But as “foreigners” who came from the “other shore”, they were called savages and pagans who could not assimilate” [191, p. 7]. The researcher claims that by 1940 there were only 2,405 indigenous people from India in the United States, 60 percent of whom lived in California” [192, p. 314].

Immigrants from India who came to the United States in the 1960s, G. Kitano and R. Daniels are identified with “a new community that differed greatly in ethnicity, class, profession and birth place from most of their predecessors of the beginning of the twentieth century” [149, c. 36].

R. Lutz offers his chronology, and the Asian-American literature`s formation is divided into four periods:

- “early Asian-American literature;
- World War II and the 1950s;
- uprising, controversy, success;
- immigrants` experience” [162].

In Asian-American literature`s analysing of recent decades, its systematization`s criteria are important. According to S. Wong, the “authentic” Asian-American author is “non-Christian, non-woman, non-immigrant” [199, p. 8].

Thus, N. Bidasiuk is sure that “Asian-American works are systematized according to different criteria: chronologically, according to the writers` ethnic origin, on the author`s belonging to a certain immigrants` generation, thematically” [8, p. 134].

Such classification allows us to see the writer`s individual origin, as well as forms the reader`s idea of the multiple transcultural identity of the modern Asian-American person.

An Asian writer, B. Mukherjee, remembers that it is difficult to overcome the stereotype of an Indian who is identified with an uneducated farmer. That is why B. Mukherjee was criticized for her characters` “falseness”: “Discussing my works, literary critics and theorists expressed the opinion that the author, who comes from

India, must write about India, about Indian women and peasants' plight" [126, p. 6].

Not all critics considered Indian life as a poorness. For example, E. Kim set another goal: "I consciously pay attention to how literature reflects the Asians' social history in the United States. The problem of Asian-American literature's understanding in socio-historical and cultural contexts is important to me, because its ignorance leads to misunderstanding and underestimation of the literature itself. Although my book does not offer a formal literary analysis, this does not mean that I do not see the need for an interpretation of fiction form and style. It was simply not my priority" [148, p. 15].

T. Naduta is convinced that "recently literary studies have faced a crisis in the development of a common approaches' methodology and classification of Asian-American literature's phenomenon, which is due to the diversity and hybrid literatures' heterogeneity in the United States" [67, p. 6].

E. Kim's definition of Asian-American literature is incomplete, as it is "printed fiction works written in English by Americans of Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Filipino origin" [148, p. xi].

The authors of "Empire's Answers" proposed "postcolonial" notion, which included "all the cultures that were under the imperialism influence from the colonization moment to the present day" [117, p. 2]. Later, K. Cheung and S. Yogi in the Asian-American literature's annotated bibliography (1988) expanded the "Asian-American's" definition; these are "the Asian writers' works living in the United States or Canada, no matter where they were born, when they immigrated to North America or how they interpret their experience" [118, p. iii].

Similar difficulties arose with the ethnic writers' classification. N. Bidasiuk asserts that "in the context of global migration there were no universal categories for Indian writers' classification: postcolonial literature, Indian diaspora's literature, Indian literature

in English. Often the authors did not fit into any of them or could easily enter into each” [14, p. 21]. This is clearly demonstrated by J. Laghiri, who was born in London, grew up in Rhode Island, lives in New York, but writes about Indian immigrants.

Indo-American literature was mainly viewed in a postcolonial context: “The very fact they write in English is a linguistic choice that combines such different authors as Ved Mehta, Rohinton Mistry, Bharati Mukherjee, Suniti Namjoshi, Michael Ondaatze, Vikram Seth, Sara Suleri, which is a British imperialism’s direct consequence” [194, p. 286].

Scholars’ thoughts on the Asian-American literature’s beginnings differ. Thus, E. Eaton is considered the first Asian-American writer in America. Her first works, published in 1896, showed “cultural struggle’s” pictures and the aspirations of the first Chinese immigrants to flow into a single stream (although the writer’s younger sister, Winnifred Eaton, did not focus on the assimilation’s negative aspects).

The early period of Asian-American literature’s formation is identified with the painful processes of characters’ assimilation; the fact they are different “automatically determines their immanent inferiority” [23, p. 309], symbolic “inferiority” compared to real Americans. Literature is directly related to colonial experience and political events.

We are talking about Western racism against Asians, as well as Japanese-Americans’ detention who lived in the camps in the western part of the country in 1942-1945. R. Lutz is convinced that “this shameful political event has become a key theme of Japanese-American literature” [162].

Until the late 1960s, the “Asian American” notion was mainly used to express political solidarity and cultural nationalism. Later, the term allowed Asians in America to identify themselves as a subgroup and define their individuality among others. Asian-Americans were abbreviated as “FOB” (“Fresh Off the Boat” – “just

from the boat”, those who refused to assimilate) or “white-washed” (too assimilated)” [152, p. 105]. The first group’s representatives, “real Asians”, continue to “hold on” to their ethnic roots, while the second one – completely deny their Asian origins and pretend to be Americans.

B. Mukherjee is convinced that Indo-American literature is too young and therefore still in the formation process: “Even in Canada, where the Indians’ population is larger than in the United States, there are more famous names... I often teach literary writing in the United States and Canada and I notice many young Americans and Canadians of Indian origin who are serious or semi-professional in literature... But it will be another ten years before Indo-American works take their rightful place in American literature” [170, p. 400-401].

The works of many representatives of that period show the equally immigrant characters’ bitter fate and their adaptation’s peculiarities to the new cultural environment. For example, John Okada’s novel “No-No Boy” (1957) emphasizes the character’s national / political consciousness: the novel represents the fate of two Japanese Americans who said “yes” or “no” as to whether they were ready to abandon Japan in order to join the US military. The novel’s character is looking for “his” place in society and feels an inner “fuss”, not understanding why people around are so hostile.

M. Fludernik distinguishes four groups of Indo-American works: “novels about immigration and cultural exile, multicultural novels, diaspora novels, cosmopolitan novels” [135, p. 265–266].

Asian-American literature became a separate fiction phenomenon in the 1970s. Asian-American writers’ antologies appeared at this time. In particular, K. Postnikova calls three most important and most famous this literature’s antologies: “Asian-American Authors” (ed. By Kai-yu Hsu and H. Palubinskas, 1972), “Asian-American Heritage: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry” (HD Wand, ed., 1974), “Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian-American

Writers” (F. Chin, et al, eds., 1974)” [71, p. 30].

The above anthology contains long-forgotten Asian-American authors’ works and criticizes the popularization lack of this literature. Writers of the time, Sam Tagatac and Toshio Mori, became popular again with new publications. The Asian-American literature’s recognition as a new phenomenon was due to this anthology, where the problem of Asian-Americans’ establishment is one of the key themes.

It is noteworthy that the anthology’s editors were not limited to the dual identity’s problem. At the same time, the book allowed the authors to write about individual identity and to speak out about racism, as well as cultural assimilation, which played a significant role in the Asian Americans’ lives at that time.

“Later” anthologies published in the last decade of the twentieth century are also important. This list includes: “The Big Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Chinese American and Japanese American Literature (1991), as well as F. Chin’s preface to this anthology “Come All Ye Asian American Writers of the Real and the Fake”, which was later published as a separate article; “Growing Up American” (1993).

This list is also continued by “Asian American Literature. An Anthology (2000), edited by Maria Hong and Shirley Geok-Lin Lim. Do not forget about Shawn Wong’s “Asian American Literature. A Brief Introduction and Anthology” (1996), Shirley Geok-Lin Lim and Mayumi Tsutakawa’s “The Forbidden Stitch: An Asian American Woman’s Anthology” (1989), Sylvia Watanabe and Carol Bruchac’s “Home to Stay: Asian American Women’s Fiction” (1990)” [71, p. 30]. The existence fact of these anthologies indicates the Asian-American literature’s rapid development.

In this context, it is worth mentioning the organizations, one of which is “Association for Asian American Writers” or “The AAAS”, established in 1979. Further study of Asian-American authors, in particular, Asian-American literature’s popularization (ethnic and racial problems’ violation, definition of “Who is an Asian-



American?”) is the main association’s goal.

Although the interest towards Asian-American literature has grown significantly since then, the “Asian-American literature’s” phenomenon remains poorly understood to this day. T. Naduta is convinced that, “unlike African-American, no systematic study has been written about Asian-American literature that would include all Asian-American writers’ works” [67, p. 6].

In the article “Asian-American Literature: Ways of Research” K. Postnikova gives the most complete chronology of these anthologies. She emphasizes two factors that contributed to the research interest in this literary writing. The first focuses on the fact that the “Asian-American trend is one of the youngest and least studied literary trends in the United States, the second is due to the multiculturalism’s existence as a trend of cultural unification” [71, p. 31].

Beginning in the 1970s, the identity’s concept in Western science, as well as the very identity’s notion, “begins to undergo serious transformations, and as a result, various models of multiple identities come to the fore” [94, p. 191]. R. Lutz is convinced that “since the 1980s, the growing Asian-American writers’ ethnic diversity has offered readers a new perspective on Asian-Americans who have different national origin” [162].

The work is not limited to the persons’ story who deal with their own border. Crossing the border, the character acquires “cultural subordinate’s” name, but one who resists and fights for his ethnic origin.

In the 1980s, the hybridity theory became widespread in American literary studies. The hybrid, and therefore “split” subject’s consciousness goes through the rediscovery of several of its and other people’s “I”, forming a new synthetic image that constantly balances on the border, without denying either a symbolic “departure” back to the roots or a complete rejection of them.

Border writers write in English, “but their texts reflect different

verbal system, its lexicon and rhythm” [141, p. 106]. Author’s verbal components say about “our” / “other’s” conditional fiction border within the text, and the reader’s experience includes a marginality sense. This is achieved through the author’s verbal definitions, because the ability of an ethnic author to point out cultural contradictions makes his figure special in the conditions of modern transculturalism.

The character is important as an individual, not as an immigrant of Asian-American origin. H. Kostenko emphasizes that, “the writer’s national identity is determined by a number of factors, the most important of which are considered to be linguistic, geographical, cultural, state, ideological, religious and historical memory factors. However, upon closer examination, these factors are not so significant and dominant, they can act only in their unity, reflecting a particular literary context and determining the national identity of a particular literature” [54, p.18].

F. Chin’s play “The Chikencoop Chinaman” (1970) is considered the first play written by an Asian-American writer. This is because “F. Chin’s name is associated with the Sino-American theater’s birth in the United States and the the Sino-American drama’s creating” [76, p. 45]. The real chinaman is “not a Chinese, nor a Sino-American (“assimilated sell-out”), he is the whole world’s new man – “new breed of man” [76, p. 47].

The “chinaman” concept means a symbolic protest-liberation from the established hybridity stereotypes, as well as to “a linguistic parody of all racism forms, it is a kind of antidote – if I “call myself” so, then it is impossible to offend me” [76, p. 47].

The main problem of Asian-American prose of the 70s of the twentieth century continues to be the character’s dual identity, the symbolic “conflict between personal ethnic heritage or roots in the ethnic community and the individual identity of the person” [119, p. 12].

The Asian-American works’ analysis focuses on the

problematic content of the character's hybrid identity, which has a "mixed" cultural background. Characters who live in two realities at the same time, "are forced to be at their junction, as well as forced to learn to switch these modes" [114, p. 37].

B. Parekh thinks that cultural identity is not an individual's free choice, but a predetermined essentialist fact, because "the individual is born in a culture that is the basis of group differences" [173, p. 163].

Like the characters, the author himself feels duality. For example, J. Lahiri "followed her parents' traditions at home, spoke Bengali, and ate rice and daal with her fingers. These simple facts were part of a secret, a completely foreign way of life" [152, p. 103], which she tried to hide from her American friends.

N. Lape is convinced that "writers have created new stories in a border narrative form, whose form and structure mainly reflects the contacts between European colonizers and Indians" [155, p. 60].

Emerson offers his interpretation of the "border" concept: "There is one solution to the old problem of fate, freedom, foresight – a double consciousness. A person must "change" from the private life's horse to the public horse, as it easily done by circus riders" [133, p. 815].

The character becomes a cultural traveller, a nomad who leaves his homeland for various reasons and "formed" in a new cultural environment. Together with the nomadic character, the literature itself becomes diverse and multifaceted.

G. Anzaldua speaks of new opportunities that a person faces on the cultures' border: "I have a feeling that certain abilities – not only in me, but in every border resident, regardless of skin color – and the main consciousness areas are being activated and awake" [114, p. i].

Like the character, the cultural border is also characterized by a symbolic "duality": "on the one hand, the border means segregation, separation, invisible cultural barriers, and on the other – it unites and establishes two-way movement" [164, p. 105]. A. Ahmad,

postcolonialism theorist from South Asia, emphasizes that “cultures’ cross-pollination was inherent in all peoples’ migrations, throughout human history each migration included movement, contact, transformation, hybridization of ideas, values and behavior norms” [110, p. 18].

Not only the character but also the author feels cultural uncertainty. Thus, the Vietnamese-American writer L. Hayslip is convinced that “she was in the middle all life – between the South and the North, Americans and Vietnamese, greed and compassion, capitalism and communism, between no longer peace, but not yet a war” [141, p. 95-96]. J. Lahiri feels herself between cultures like L. Hayslip: “yellow on the outside, white on the inside” [152, p. 106].

Since the 1970s, a group of scholars has been directly involved in the Asian-American literature’s study “as part of the Common Asian Resources Project (CARP), represented by Frank Chin, Jeffery Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada, Nathan Lee, Benyamin Thun and Shawn Hsu Wong; they publish critical reviews of the Asian-American writers’ works” [67, p. 12]. The anthologies of that time “Asian-American Authors” (1972) edited by Kai-Yu Hsu and H. Palubinskas, and “Asian-American Heritage: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry” (1974) edited by D. Wand, deserve attention.

As part of the Asian-American literature’s chronological criterion, it is worth mentioning H. Yamamoto and B. Mukherjee’s works, which touch on “silent / forbidden topics”, as well as the lowest population strata.

For example, B. Mukherjee’s collection of short stories “The Darkness” becomes a symbolic literary “breakthrough”, as it represents Indian immigrants in America and Canada for the first time. B. Mukherjee focuses on the difficulties faced by the characters in the new cultural environment, resulting in the heroine could not become “our” in America.

“Non-assimilation” leads to the fact that the character “hangs”

between the worlds, and cannot cross the symbolic “our” / “other” border, and therefore, remains forever a stranger in both socio-cultural environments. N. Bidasiuk calls such characters “expatriates”, ethnic and spiritual strangers who, unlike immigrants who strive to integrate into the new cultural environment, live in two worlds, not belonging to either of them” [9, p. 64].

There is a chronological-thematic approach, which is used by B. Adams in the monograph “Asian American Literature” (2008). The researcher considers the Asian-American literature’s development and the Asian-Americans’ identity in five sections: “the American view (1880–1920), we are America (1930–50), problems and invasions (cultural wars of the 1960s and 70s), between worlds (1980s), heterogeneity, hybridity and multiplicity (1990s)” [109].

In the works of the XXI century there is a symbolic “accents’ change”: writers are concerned with successful assimilation’s problems and evolution of the character’s cultural identity in the United States, rather than all opportunities to preserve their indigenous culture. The modern character appears as a “new American” who does not care about preserving his ancestors’ heritage. “Immigrants, or at least their children and grandchildren, are absorbed by the national culture, which erases their significant past – autobiography, history, heritage, language and all other cultural baggage” [178, p. 210].

The theme of modern Asian-American writers is a formation of a “new American”, in whom’s transcultural consciousness “different ethnic elements are combined into a single whole, synthesizing a qualitatively new product” [13, p. 11].

Unlike the multicultural character, the character of transculture is characterized by greater stability, as he appears as a strong Asian-American who no longer experiences internal conflict. The character does not feel a stranger in both cultures; the constant state of cultural metamorphosis allows him to acquire “new mestizo’s” consciousness – a man of a mixed race, whose transcultural consciousness is

constantly changing.

G. Kostenko assures that “literature acquires new features and perspectives; the range of its questions and problems expands and becomes more complicated. A text that emerges at two or more cultures’ intersection, that is, a “multicultural”, or more often “cross-cultural” text, requires a different approach. The researcher has to take into account extralingual factors: the author’s personality, his cultural heritage, upbringing and formation as a person who combines two pictures of the world, which seem to reflect each other” [54, p. 18].

Such literature’s characters make a symbolic “escape” from their indigenous culture to a new one, that does not yet have its own language in the transcultural world, “where there is no division of people by skin color and passport – to a place where you can just be people” [76, p. 45]. Such self-reflection enables the existence of a new transcultural theme, when the character is not afraid of internal transformations, ie in the cultural transformation process he is able to abandon “his” principles.

In the second half of the twentieth century the term “Asian-American” ousts the established “East-born” notion. T. Naduta is convinced that “the new concepts have preserved the orientation connotation as an indication of Asian roots and cultural heritage” [67, p. 11]. Modern fragmentary transcultural identity is no longer interpreted as “immutable core” [23, p. 48], it is a dynamic structure. We are talking about a pluralistic awareness of our own “I” and a symbolic process of “creating” oneself “from a set of options that culture and society give us” [115, p. 96].

The view of Asian-American literature from the perspective of the writer’s ethnic origin is also important. N. Bidasiuk is sure that “due to the longer immigration history writers of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino origin dominated on the US literary scene for a long time, but in the 1990s there was a transition from East Asian to Pan-Asian literary dominance” [8, p. 136].

In this context, it is worth mentioning a separate issue of "Position" magazine edited by renowned professors of Asian-American literary studies E. Kim and L. Lowe, published in 1997. The issue is devoted to the experience of immigrants from Asia, mainly their's support despite racial and ethnic limitations.

H. Kim addresses the autobiography as one of the most important diasporic literature's genre forms: "Autobiography is often a critical-fiction hybrid of literary essay, journalism and confession, and the confessional element often prevails, because one of the tasks of the marginal's autobiography is to try to express oneself, develop and reveal one's identity" [47].

A symbolic "new space" is being created for Asian immigrants. Proof of this are numerous awards, bestseller lists, as well as film adaptations. J. Lahiri's writing is a good example in this case, as her works have repeatedly been considered bestsellers (collection of short stories "Unaccustomed Earth" took the first place in the nomination "100 best books of 2008"), were awarded (collection of short stories "Interpreter of Maladies" has received Pulitzer Prize, "Unaccustomed Earth" – an international Frank O'Connor award, 2008) and even screened (the novel "The Namesake", directed by Mira Nair, 2006).

In "Literary Gestures: Aesthetics in Asian-American Works" (2005) a separate section entitled "Asian American Cultural Discourse in Academia" is devoted to the importance of fiction and aesthetic issues of ethnic literature's studying.

Ethnicity in the context of multiculturalism and transculturalism is presented in the study "Asian-American literature's Consideration: from necessity to extremes" (1993) edited by S. Wong [199], where fiction ethnic images appear "as these writers' business card" [67, p. 12].

The writer's belonging to a certain generation of immigrants is important, which allows a deeper penetration into the author's fiction world, because in some diasporas each generation has its own

symbolic name. N. Bidasiuk reminds: “Issei is the first generation of people from Japan, Nisei is the second, Sansei is the third. Manongs is the first (older) generation of Americans of Filipino origin. ABCD (American Born Confused Desi) and ABC (American Born Chinese) are terms used to denote the second and third generation of immigrants from South Asia and China, respectively” [8, p. 137].

R. Lutz is convinced that “in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a significant increase of successful Asian-American writers, whose focus on first- and second-generation immigrant families charmed the readers” [162].

A vivid example in this case is A. Tan’s writing. Her bestseller “The Joy Luck Club” (1989), contains intertwined stories of several generations of Japanese Americans. The work’s ethnic issues expands due to the “generation gap” (opinion differences on beliefs, policies and values) between mothers and their daughters. Conflict arises between the first and the second generations of immigrants whose families have moved from one culture to another (from China to America).

A significant work in the Asian-American literature’s recognition as a literary phenomenon are Maxine Kingston’s works, who belongs to the second generation of Chinese immigrants. Her bestseller novel “The Woman Warrior” (1976) is like an autobiographical story of an American woman of Chinese origin who is forced to overcome American indifference, a self-identification process in a foreign country, and Chinese misogyny. The author’s second novel “China Men” (1980), is a continuation of the previous one, as it is also shows the difficulties of Chinese immigrants assimilation into American culture.

Beginning in the 1970s, young authors “rebelled against the style and themes of classical Asian-American literature” [162]. The assimilation problem and cultural self-denial (refusal) recede into the background; Asians find themselves in an already settled society, “where the combined factors of race / culture (religion, language,



lifestyle, etc.) automatically turn them into (potentially dangerous) Others” [23, p. 303].

David Henry Hwang writes about the negative attitude towards Asian culture. He calls recent immigrants “fresh off the boat”. Among his works, in particular, the well-known play “M. Butterfly” (1988), which goes beyond the immigrant experience and affirms Western-centric views on Asian reality.

Intergenerational relations is one of the most common themes of Asian-American literature of recent decades. Thus, the writers’ works of the first generation mainly raise the issue of exile, loss, homesickness, nostalgia, loneliness, assimilation.

The works tell about complex and often painful adaptation processes to a new country, which is identical to the symbolic “survival” among “others”. Writers mainly focus on “their” country’s features. F. Jussawalla asserts that, despite assimilation, the “home” for the immigrant “is thousands of miles away” [145, p. 17]. “For writers, theorists, immigrants in general from the South Asian diaspora, “home” is determined by the place of origin of their features, appearance, accent” [145, p. 19].

S. Wong calls the first generation of immigrants “big eaters”, whose life is dictated by the need to survive and adapt. S. Lim notes that “writers from ethnic minorities, especially the first generation, who have just got off the boat or a Boeing 747, have a divided view; as an optical illusion, their identity consists of more than one part, – as an image that is both a young beauty and an old witch. Such a double, even triple or multifaceted perspective exists simultaneously... Human vision cannot perceive contradictory images at the same time. So with the identity of the immigrant and the American. Although the immigrant is both a foreigner and an American, his consciousness works either in one direction or in another” [158, p. 22].

The second generation is prone to waste – “they are not so frugal and more demanding” [199, p. 55]. Second-generation writers

resort to American realities and to the character's dual identity who asserts himself through relationships with other Americans.

The author himself feels the cultural duality. Thus, J. Lahiri, who belongs to the second generation of immigrants, accepts two cultures. She writes: "In order not to identify myself with one culture or another, I accept both. ... I understood that one plus one is equal to two, but not zero" [152, p. 104–106].

N. Vysotska is convinced that in the 1970s the "melting pot" metaphor "ceased to satisfy America due to a number of factors, because it meant homogenization – the transformation into a more or less homogeneous mass" [25].

The researcher connects this reason with the demographic situation, the change in the immigrants' group to the United States, racial and ethnic minorities' struggle for civil rights and mentions the "third generation law": what the son wants to forget, the grandson wants to remember. That is, those who came to America, first-generation immigrants, wanted to become Americans as soon as possible. To do this, they changed their names; refused their national customs, traditions, clothing, etc. Their grandchildren are American by birth. They do not need to prove to anyone they are Americans, and so they can afford the luxury of being someone else, of being hyphenated Americans" [25].

Because of the symbolic "luxury" and "fundamental intertwining of beginnings" [19, p. 113] the third generation restores "their" rights because they are interested in their ancestors' culture. Writers raise issues of "their" way of life, which were silenced by the second generation. The third generation symbolically and fictionally "converges" with the first precisely because of the desire to revive "their" ethnic roots.

In this context, the Canadian researcher Charles Taylor defends the right to cultural characteristics, because "every culture contains something that deserves admiration and respect, even if it has elements that cause a negative response" [195, p. 72].

For the modern Asian-American reader, the works preserve cultural memory, support spiritually, and offer the models to follow. Such writers are more attracted to the old culture than the new one. There is nostalgia for the past in the works, because they are full of “their” homeland’s cultural features (J. Lahiri, B. Mukherjee).

The works are thematically identical primarily due to the common themes of the family, racial inequality, generation problem, multiple identities, assimilation / Americanization processes, and so on. Therefore, the thematic principle of works’ classification is no less important.

In researching Asian-American literature, S. Wong uses two metaphors: “necessity and redundancy” (according to different immigrants’ generation) [199].

Asian-American literature after the 1970s is characterized by heterogeneity because it combines many authors of different ethnic origin, religions and ethnicities. Ethnic literature was usually studied outside the “mainstream”, but in the second half of the twentieth century “hyphenated” writers loudly made themselves known, which partially leveled the established “marginalization” of the literary phenomenon.

N. Vysotska is convinced that “the whole corpus of fiction / primary and research / secondary texts appears today as separate rubrics’ conglomeration, clearly delineated by ethnic, racial, gender and other markers. As a result, the very concept of “American literature” sometimes becomes problematic and loses its real meaning” [19, p. 102].

The established ethnicity markers, which considered Asian-American literature as “other” and used in the middle of the twentieth century, are being replaced by a new understanding of this literature “as a multicultural fiction and aesthetic phenomenon in the context of processes that are defined differently: transnationalization, globalization, transculture – but have a common principled platform” [67, p. 13].

N. Bidasiuk is convinced that “it is difficult to single out several key figures who formed the Asian-American literary tradition, because its aesthetics has extensive roots, each branch of which has a unique centuries-old history” [8, p. 135].

Writers can subject their American experience to fiction or critical thinking, thematically “return” to their roots, or propagate American realities. At the same time, there is a separate authors’ group who cannot say for sure which culture they belong to the most, as they are fiction mediators and interpreters of both cultures.

In their characters’ hybrid identity there is “our” / “other’s” symbolic cultural “fusion”, respectively Asian and American. A. Arteaga showed this process mathematically: “There must be  $I + I = 3$ , but not  $i + I = i$  and / or  $i + I = I$ ” [116, p. 157]. The writing of E. Lem, D. Chang, A. Kuo, J. Lahiri and others is a vivid example in this context.

The process of Asian-American literature’s formation continues to this day. A new generation of Asian-American literature’s supporters is being formed, who are trying to revive long-forgotten texts. The reader becomes acquainted with contemporary immigrant writers who contribute their vision to Asian-American literature.

With the new symbolic “turn” of Asian-American studies “the borders of the concept itself have expanded, and now in the Asian-American literature you can often find the authors’ names – not only from Asia but also from Asia and the Pacific diaspora” [8, p. 136].

There is a change in the American literary canon: from the unification policy, known under the “melting pot” metaphor, to the emergence of the concept of modern American transcultural identity. K. Kasumova is convinced that “there are new cultural formations, new forms of culture that require some scientific analysis” [46]. The model of E. Said’s “open canon” becomes relevant – a symbolic “denial” of stereotyped thinking about immigrants.

The study of Asian-American literature’s poetics is important, because both well-known and young writers declare themselves at

this time. T. Naduta is convinced that “the search for new approaches to understanding Asian / Sino-American literature manifested itself in the concepts’ development that are associated with a significant expansion of “literature” notion [67, p. 7].

Let us mention several works devoted to Asian-American literature. These are critical generalization works by A. Ling [160], articles by W. Xu [200] and R. Lee [157] on individual novelists of Asian origin, and the “Asian American Short Story Writers: An A-to-Z Guide” (edited by Guiyou Huang, 2003) and others.

V. Seligey is convinced that “the “salad bowl” theory, as well as M. Tlostanova’s “melting pot” theory, is unable to explain the complexity of Asian-American literature’s phenomenon” [76, p. 10]. This is due to the fact that to the main problems of modern Asian-American literature (family, society, nature, generation, food, religion) add a cultural component, which becomes a decisive factor in the formation of a new transcultural personality capable of mastering several cultures simultaneously. Transculturalism is the main problem layer of modern border writers’ works.

Transculture of the XXI century noticeably goes beyond the previous issues of the immigrants’ traditional study. It addresses modernity and, consequently, the model of cultural contact, cultural asymmetry and diversity.

M. Kozlovets asserts that “the concept of transnational migration is productive in understanding migration processes, according to which migrants, crossing international borders and settling in a new country, maintain socio-cultural ties with the origin country” [52, p. 195]. The works require “close reading” technique, because in the image of a transcultural character a lot of work’s meanings are hidden, the most important of which, of course, is ethnic.

At the beginning of the XXI century Asian-American literature began to be viewed from the point of post-ethnicity’s new theories and transculturalism, which in some way changed the vectors of

study of this literature's study vectors. Such a transcultural space allows not only a wide fiction interpretation of the work, new dimensions of its content due to transcultural poetics, but also the effect of symbolic "text's openness".

T. Naduta is convinced that "the semantics of fiction meanings, which requires complex philological work with texts, remains without researcher's attention" [67, p. 7]. The question arises "about balance stability between globalization and localization as processes that take place in the characters' inner world" [79, p. 163].

N. Vysotska emphasizes that "one of the main results of the officially declared American society's transition to the cultural plurality's rails was the works' selection written by ethnic and other minorities from the American literature's general array, despite all the conventionality of any rubrication of fiction works" [23, p. 57].

Transculture appears as a sociocultural model, and its rethinking is important through the Latin prefix *trans-*, which means "through", "on the other side", "between", "over". T. Naduta is convinced that "the dynamic existence form, hidden behind the prefix "*trans-*", determines the simultaneous interpretation of the cultures' distribution border and their intersection or erasure by writers, artists, philosophers. The process of a literary work's formation, thus, involves a new semiological system's creation" [69, p. 134].

Modern transculturation "cannot be reduced only to local communication processes or its absence between two or more nation-states. This process is systemic today and is directly related to globalism" [91, p. 148].

New concepts such as "American culture at home", "American studies abroad", "European point of view" [137] appeared, paving the way for modern transculturalism and cultural hybridization, and in the 1990s the "Indian diaspora" term becomes more common" [13, p. 10].

In the immigrant authors' writing "Western literature and

culture is Their environment that feeds their fiction creativity, and the problem of another “cultural affiliation”, the connection with their eastern roots is their fiction pursuits’ important component” [67, p. 15].

N. Vysotska, for example, insists on “re-reading” American literature “main stream” in order to reveal in it a more or less hidden, but ubiquitous presence of the Other” [23, p. 80].

Asian-American literature is particularly distinguished in this context, as the problems “related to contradictory trends of transcultural space’s formation” come to the fore [76, p. 4].

Asian-American literature focuses exclusively on the family and the experience of different immigrant generations. N. Vysotska is convinced that “in the scale of traditional values that permeates Asian-American literature, a special place was occupied by the family, the only reliable individual’s refuge” [23, p. 303]. Readers prefer works that tell about the unique experience of people from India.

Ethnicity is synonymous with family. The symbolic “connection” of ethnic and family identity is emphasized by the fact that “through the meaning and content’s understanding of ethnic culture’s certain elements, the novels’ characters realize the meaning, significance and value of family relationships” [79, p. 166].

Today M. Tlostanova speaks about “home” notion change in such literature. In the transculturation concept “home” as a place of scientific theory formation and the anthropologist’s place of birth and residence and other colonial space (or space of exile, diaspora, periphery) and its identity as objects of study, clearly separated from (our) “home”, changed places, became extremely problematic and relativized” [91, p. 145].

The “home” topos is noticeably expanding, as it is being replaced by the metropolis’s chronotope. The metropolis is considered a symbol of modern transcultural space, because in the works “the city appears as a text in which numerous real facts and

literary allusions merge, resulting in a hybrid semi-fantastic metropolis image – a universe model, a kind of transcultural cauldron where time and space limits are shifted” [59, p. 386].

The shift of time limits characterizes J. Lahiri's writing. In particular, in “Unaccustomed Earth” time serves as a conditional return for the main character. Modern Asian-American literature's images differ because they are created in time ambivalence (past and present) and form a new way of thinking about transcultural identity.

In this way “our” (transcultural) philosophy of the “other” is built, priority is given to plurality, which is not reduced to unity. H. Bhabha asserts that “the effect of such mystery is to initiate the insolubility principle in the meaning of part and whole, past and present, oneself and another in such a way that there is no denial or transcendent difference” [123, p. 54].

Modern Asian-American writers endow America with a symbolic metropolis image as the center of another, often different cultures, because America's population today is a heterogeneous “cultural mix”. America is a symbolic “border” that is materially present everywhere. In Sino-American F. Chin, Chinatown appears, for example, as a transcultural topos. Chinatown is presented by the writer as a symbolic “crossing” of cultures.

V. Seligey is convinced that “F. Chin's Chinatown is multifaceted – it is an open space of different cultures' interference (Latin American, African American, Japanese, Chicanos culture), traditional Confucian doctrines and Western individualism's liberalism, it is a marginal closed place and a symbol of reservation, immigrants self-isolation, this is the “Old China's” microcosm” [80, p. 14].

The metropolis space is characterized by duality, as it is conventionally divided into two cultural planes: our America for Americans and “our” India within America. Often there is no common point of view in such parallel planes, a single space exists only within one of the cultures.



The existence of a symbolic “home” does not allow the transculture’s character to feel nostalgia for the lost “his” or feel sick, as was the case in multiculturalism, when the author deliberately put the characters “in a specific homelessness situation and made them feel their dual identity as if sick, constantly playing on a familiar note, repeating “you will not be able to return home”, and offering new connotations to this subject” [39, p. 53].

In the Asian-American works of the home and native land topos is clearly seen in the titles expressiveness. This applies in particular to the American writer J. Hagedorn, who gave her collection of short stories “Charlie Chan is Dead-2” (2004) a clear subtitle “At Home in the World”; J. Lahiri’s collections of short stories “Unaccustomed Earth” and others.

No less important role is given to the “freedom” concept, which can get a character with a transcultural identity. N. Bidasiuk is convinced that, having received the freedom, “which was previously lacking, the hybrid can introduce its own game rules” [14, p. 80]. “Game” is embodied not only in “American dream’s” achieving, it is important to be able to follow home traditions.

Home traditions, for example, are followed by the heroine of J. Lahiri’s story “Only goodness”. She prepares Indian dishes, her house is absolutely clean; unlike her American acquaintances, she sings Bengali songs to her children. Being outside of “their” environment, the characters feel like outcasts in a new culture, and therefore often realize their redundancy.

V. Mishra emphasizes the symbolic “travel and transformation metaphors (adaptation to a new place, internalization of its topography), which replaced the previously common motifs of returning home and rooting” [167, p. 10]. Thus, J. Lahiri’s collection of short stories “Interpreter of Maladies” describes the third generation of Bengal immigrants, for whom India is no longer their homeland.

In this case, the writer’s issues are changing: she describes the

“new” Americans who have completely lost touch with their homeland. We read something similar in the story “Hema and Kaushik” from “Unaccustomed Earth”, where the protagonist refuses to associate himself with one culture only and does not think about where his homeland is. Kaushik’s image is not devoid of transculturalism, because the question “Where do you live?” he replies, “I don’t live anywhere at the moment. I’m about to move to Hong Kong” [154, p. 441].

The character realizes that in fact he is nowhere, in motion, between cultures. He is proud of his mobility and detachment. Kaushik does not associate himself with just one culture and questions the “homeland” and “cultural identity” notion.

Kaushik’s transcultural identity no longer resembles the “suppressed” identity of a multicultural character. The hero feels an inner difference, because his European marginality allows him to try on new identities, and thus feel “our” everywhere. He does not seek a complete cultural merger or “melting” (hence the “melting pot” theory fails), because in modern transculturation several cultures intersection and a special cassation state between them is important. M. Tlostanova in this context speaks of “the state of cultural otherworld – not there and not here, or there and here, depending on the individual experience of this state” [91, p. 5].

This includes not one but several cultural starting points and the character’s symbolic “exit” to other worlds. For Kaushik, both destruction (roots loss) and new cultural phenomena creativity (new culture’s creation) are equally important.

N. Bidasiuk is convinced that “the immigrant identity is no longer talked about, using the America-India (China, Japan, etc.) opposition or outlining a one-vector movement from the East to the New World; the immigrant’s personality is described by new terms: fluidity, national non-attachment, multiple affiliations” [8, p. 141].

Thus, the fixed identity of the modern transcultural immigrant is leveled. The cultural identity of the writer himself is also unstable,

it “can be considered in the aspect of pure “Americanness” [67, p. 14].

At the same time, the polysemantic nature of the “home” concept enables a symbolic “journey with the walls”: the immigrant continues to stay at home mentally, although he has already physically left it. “Geography’s simultaneity” is meant: “the possibility to live here, in the flesh, and at the same time somewhere else in the mind and imagination” [147, p. 130]. Gradually, the image of “our” home loses the reality’s outlines and moves away, because it is already an imaginary homeland, presented in thoughts and memories only.

Due to the symbolic cultural “betrayal” of our home, the homeland begins to turn into a painful burden. To get rid of it, it is necessary “to loose the nostalgic thread that connects immigrants with the mythologized house, go beyond their own fixed “I” and understand the features of a new, hybrid identity” [171, p. 77].

That is why the transcultural characters deliberately refuse to acknowledge the fact of belonging to an already “foreign” Indian culture; “they feel free in American society and know everything about the American way of life, despite the fact that they still nurture naive children’s reasoning and ideas about the Western mentality’s nature” [39, p. 53].

All this clearly marks the modern Asian-American literature’s cross-cultural space, where a new transcultural identity, free from any conventions, is born. “The very state of being between two worlds has its pros and cons. On the one hand, it is compared to a gap or strait between two shores. Then the person is in an indefinite state, either side does not accept him, he does not belong to any of them ... On the other hand, a bicultural person puts one foot on each shore, and thus simultaneously belongs to both worlds. He loses nothing, but on the contrary – he gains. ... A person between two worlds turns into a bridge” [159, p. 177].

Asian-American literature’s character of the transcultural era is

opposed to the multicultural hero, for whom the “desh” concept is key. J. Lahiri’s writing is a vivid example in this case as her works are based on Indian issues. Thus, in “The Namesake” the protagonist’s parents, Ashima and Ashoke, follow their traditions with a special consistency: they speak Bengali, cook only Indian dishes, attend Indian movies, wear Indian clothes, often visit relatives in Calcutta and are friends only with “their”, the same as them, India natives. Living in America, Ashima and Ashoke bring “their” Indian values. In this case, I. Kosheleva notes that in the novel the “immigrant” concept is identified with “a special state of mind” [55, p. 76].

Typologically similar motifs are felt in the story “Unaccustomed Earth”. The technique of historical “reminiscence” noticeable in the work allows Ruma, the main character, “to reconstruct” her ethnic past through her dead mother’s image, who, unlike the heroine, is the personification of everything Indian.

The heroine “takes a step” into the past and subconsciously seeks to find the truth: how important the past is for a person and whether it is possible to completely erase it from human memory. The past is the basis for preserving cultural traditions for the character.

The code of the past is seen in Jason’s image from B. Mukherjee’s “Fathering” (1988). The character will never be able to get rid of his past, “re-face his identity, like any hybrid” [14, p. 79].

The past serves as an “encyclopedia” of traditions and always reminds of itself when conditionally “returning” home. Virtual “meetings” are not always successful, but instead create a sense of existence redundancy and leave the mark of “eternal character on the roadside”.

Eternal “strangers” are Sudha’s parents, the heroine of J. Lahiri’s “Only Goodness”. Unable to “settle down” in the new land, “parents aware that they faced a life sentence of being foreign”

[154, p. 97], that they will never become “our” in any country. Here it is worth emphasizing the “heterogeneity” concept, a kind of awareness of one’s difference, otherness (I’m not like that).

For an individual with a shaky identity, heterogeneity is associated with a strategy of “stealing the past” – trying to “create” his culture within the “foreign” (Indian dishes, style of clothing, Bengali). Without becoming “their’s” in America, parents placed their hopes in their children, especially in Sudha. It was Sudha who “Americanized” the parents, teaching them to put garbage at the gates, and not to take it to the nearest forest, to call for repairs if necessary.

Modern works’ transcultural poetics is expanding due to the usual field of symbolic “timelessness”. The cultural memory’s problem is a unique way of preserving cultural identity, which acquires a special and universal significance.

The symbolic “turn” / “return” to his roots characterizes the dynamics of transcultural character’s identity’s evolution. N. Vysotska proposes to present such a “turn” as a triad, “where the thesis is formed by an all-consuming desire to be perceived as “Americans” (unitary assimilated identity); the antithesis creates a definition of oneself as “hyphenated Americans” (African-Americans, Asian-Americans, etc.) with an emphasis on the first component (which also results in a predominantly unitary identity, but with a shift in focus to the ethnic component), and synthesis, whose formula remains unchanged from the outside, but both elements receive the same emphasis (pluralistic / multiple identity)” [23, p. 329].

Contemporary border authors’ writing is combined with a broader than the Asian-American literary context. V. Seligey is convinced that “an excellent example of such theme’s realization on another “ethnic platform” is the novel of American writer of Jewish origin S. Foer “Everything is Illuminated” (2002), because the novel characters understand memory as a feeling, through which reality is

perceived” [79, p. 166].

Seeking to fully understand the uniqueness of his own transcultural identity, modern Asian-American literature’s character tries to “re-fit” into the page of his national past. The symbolic “struggle” for identity takes place at personal and group impulses’ crossroads” [23, p. 311].

A similar dilemma is faced by “early” authors (Purdy Lowe, Jade Snow Wong, Toshio Mori), who more often reflect the ethnic communities’ tendency to assert their “Americanness” (this was already a paradox, given the relative isolation of their existence in America)” [23, p. 309].

The disappointing fact of non-assimilation with Americans, rejection of their manners and behavior patterns, inner isolation is felt by Ashima, the heroine of J. Lahiri’s “The Namesake”.

Modern Asian-American literature’s character plays a symbolic “cultural game”, because he is both an Indian and an American at the same time. The biculturalism environment forces him “to maintain a balance between two traditions and determine the distance to each of them” [202, p. 166]. He can't say for sure which of the cultures dominates this game and which is used to playing a minor role.

The state of cultural duality is identical to the psychological state of bifurcation, doubt and unresolved internal conflict. “Elements of each system are used in a new way, functionalized, re-evaluated in another system, but without the final reconciliation of opposing views” [184, p. 4].

Thus, all cultures continue to be neutrally identical for the character, which allows his fragmentary transcultural identity to contain several “cultural stickers” at the same time.

A border author can feel free in two cultures at the same time. For example, Bengali-born writer B. Mukherjee has repeatedly emphasized: “I have always felt that I belong to two cultures and can dive into each of them 100 percent. I am not who I used to be, and this little woman in tennis shoes in Dubuque, Iowa, is not the same as

she used to be” [168, p. 50].

A symbolic “hyphenation” is felt by a native of Sri Lanka, writer S. Selvadurai: my writing inspiration does not come from Sri Lanka or Canada, but from the open space between them, marked by a hyphen, where two parts of my identity meet and rub against each other like tectonic plates, thus pushing my works to the surface. From this point of contact, my works appear. From a double vision, from biculturalism. From this hyphenated space, I wrote Canadian novels in which the action takes place in Sri Lanka... My thoughts and views, my writing skills were formed in Canada. My plot lines` conflicts arise on two cultures` collision verge” [189, p. 1-2].

The transcultural character consciously seeks verbal “destruction” because he does not speak Bengali. At the same time, he does not “destroy” completely his obvious difference (he speaks Bengali with “his”). F. Jussawalla identifies all assimilation attempts with artificiality, and compares Indian immigrants with comfortable but synthetic saris: they “try to adapt to the requirements of the new world and at the same time belong to another, old one” [144, p. 583].

Being a biological rather than a symbolic Bengali being, the character insists on the rights of otherness restoration as an important foundation of his transcultural identity.

Along with historical and social motifs (British colonialism, cultural revolutions), the author`s individuality comes to the fore, because despite successful assimilation, writers continue to retain their Bengali roots. The autobiographical motif is a new thematic topos of works written after the 1990s.

For example, take B. Mukherjee`s work “The Tree Bride” (2004). Her novel “The Tiger`s Daughter” (1971) also focuses on an autobiographical journey to India by a Bengal woman who married and was educated in America.

The heroine feels “her” in America, because returning home brings her emotional disappointment. Now she saw “not the Brahmin caste sophistication, but the poverty and filth in Calcutta streets, the

lies of insignificant politicians. That is why she considers her further stay in India impossible and wants to return to America as soon as possible, realizing that America has become a real home for her” [14, p. 46].

There is an author's desire “to bring to the fore the figure of the speaker, his embodied character, a special type of worldview as an important image's object” [99, p. 59]. This refers to a first-person narrative that speaks covertly about itself. Compositionally, it is designed as a personal diary, magazine, autobiography, monologue or direct address to someone in fiction form. The self-narrator has access only to his thoughts and experiences, and can only guess and interpret the rest from the subjectivism point.

By introducing “his” cultural elements into the work, the author thus does not forget about his ethnic origin. As a result, all works become hybrid, and this approach becomes dominant. L. Lowe uses hybridization to express Asian-American discourse's cultural features; the hybridity model performs a “more descriptive than a strictly analytical function” [201, p. 360].

In terms of composition, the works are thematically almost identical, because they tell about the immigrants unique experience in the United States. The difference of hybrid literature is that it portrays “others” / individual characters who, due to their homeland loss, are busy looking for a new home in a new territory. In characters' transcultural consciousness, two cultural discourses collide, “forming a constellation that replaces the categorical “or / or” with a more tolerant, albeit contradictory, “and / and” [184, p. 13].

R. Lutz notes that the authors who “sought to go beyond immigration issues and autobiography did not have such success” [162]. V. Seligey defends another point of view, emphasizing that “the autobiographical form is a proof of “Americanness” [78, p. 130].

According to F. Chin, “reference to the autobiography is due to



doubts about identity, which can not arise in the Chinese, because they always know who they are” [128, p. 402]. In this context we notice a fundamental difference between Sino-Americans and Asian-Americans, because the latter do not know who they really are.

F. Chin seeks to present his characters “not as Americans, but as simply people living in the space of many cultures’ intercection” [78, p. 129]. These borderline, blurred transcultural areas are often invisible. “They have both, but in fact they are neither this nor that. Transitions between established structures such as a nation or a social class are rejected as culturally invisible. Immigrants and socially mobile individuals become culturally invisible because they are no longer where they came from and have not yet become what they can become” [178, p. 209].

This, by the way, is the purpose of the complex and not always obvious poetics and semantics of the Asian-American transcultural work of the XXI century. There is no universal explanation or unambiguous answer, so most Asian-American writers resort to cultural detail (Indian / Chinese or American) depending on the work’s plot line, because the cultural detail most fully highlights the success of character’s Americanization, his integration into American life, or vice versa – self-distancing from all non-American.

D. Mazin is convinced that “modern texts are saturated with a plurality of “voices” [63, p. 85], which allows work’s “double perception” by the reader.

The identity’s interpretation “not as a static mosaic, but as a changing and moving process of collisions and reconciliations between a large number of voices, cultures and ideas, reveals deep connections between multicultural and postmodern projects, embodied in pluralism principle, which is key for both” [23, p. 330].

In modern works of Asian-American literature, “the language of secret codes, understandable only to those who speak it, is important” [59, p. 387]. The writer’s widespread use of “his” words is due to the need to convey transcultural characters’ exact

characteristics.

“Our” words are important for creating emotional color, which is also considered one of the features of modern Asian-American literature. Words such as “bindi” (“third eye”, decoration on the face in the form of a traditional dark red dot); “saris” (traditional women’s clothing) and others describe Indian women’s appearance.

There is code-switching – two or more languages are used in transcultural text. Examples of the simultaneous fiction use of two and sometimes several languages can be found in almost every ethnic author’s writing, who skillfully weaves “his” individual words or even phrases into the outline of a modern transcultural text.

Thus, in J. Lahiri’s writing code switching is manifested through the use of English and Bengali, and in “The Namesake” even some elements of Russian: Russian classic’s surname and works’ titles (Gogol, Elena, “The Brothers Karamazov”, “Parents and Children”, “Fathers and Sons”, “War and Peace”, “Anna Karenina”, “The Overcoat”, etc.).

Not only the reader, but also the character is able to quickly switch from one language to another, because he connects his own identity with “his” language. The reader mentally compares English and Bengali words. Such a transcultural work not only clearly divides “our” / “other’s” border, but also creates tension between several readers.

Most contemporary Asian-American works are characterized by a complex genre and narrative structure, where the main problem remains the age-old question of identity in the corresponding culture – in traditional Indian and modern American.

The works’ themes expands markedly precisely due to the border narrative, which, according to I. Babkov, “characterizes the space topic: it does not mean the movement from one culture to another, but the movement along the border, melancholy movement parallel to existing cultural borders, a gesture of ultimate discrepancy with the existing topic, the strategy of not separating oneself “from”

and not choosing “between” one’s own and another’s, existence in an obscure space where one’s own is alienated, and another’s is still one’s own: existence between homeland and foreign, which are in fact two faces of one whole” [5]. Just as there is no single way to cross the border, there is no common narrative for ethnic writers’ works.

There is a personal narrative as transcultural identity’s textual model, a kind of “life’s diary”, which in order to correctly answer questions about the individual’s identity (originality), goes into the smallest details. Narrative confession helps to understand oneself better, so we can talk about narrative identity, when the reality of the subject and the text are similar and inseparable from life events.

That is why D. Harvey emphasizes the importance of proposing a “continuous narrative” [139, p. 51], which will “linearly” perceive and interpret the border text.

M. Tlostanova notes that “elements of the so-called traditional culture or way of life are not marked once and for all as archaic, but interact with the modernity features (not necessarily positive)” [95]. This means that the modern Asian-American literature’s transcultural character must be “flexible” to adapt to new conditions.

Such “flexibility” is observed in B. Mukherjee’s novel “Jasmine”, whose characters N. Bidasiuk divides into three groups of immigrants: “immigrants who do not want to adapt (refugees), immigrants with a border consciousness (hyphenated immigrants) and immigrants with a hybrid consciousness (immigrant-chameleons)” [14, p. 63].

Immigrants who do not want to adapt include the heroine’s father of B. Mukherjee’s “Jasmine” and Ashima, the heroine of J. Lahiri’s “The Namesake”. The characters do not fit into the new American reality, but instead create a mini-version of “their” India. The father feels nostalgia for his homeland and lives with memories, Ashima follows Indian traditions: prepares her childhood’s dishes, takes into account her husband’s tastes.

Sudha's parents, the heroine of Lahiri's "Only Goodness", feel like exiles in a new culture. Being outside of "their" environment, they realize they are superfluous when faced with the problem of finding an apartment in London. "Her parents told her that half of the rentals in London in the sixties said WHITES ONLY, and the combination of being Indian and pregnant limited her parents" [154, p. 95].

Hyphenated immigrants are Du, another character of B. Muherjee's "Jasmine", and Sudha, the heroine of J. Lahiri's "Only Goodness". Du stays in both cultures: he lives in the present and successfully adapts to American society, while maintaining the past.

While living in London, Sudha gets used to the fact that her husband uses the affectionate form of her name Su when addressing her. Despite her ethnic background, the heroine seeks to "merge" with Americans and at the same time to be an exemplary child for her parents. She partially follows "her" traditions (she goes to an Indian restaurant) and realizes that the lines of "her" are only half erased, compared to third-generation immigrants, for whom this limit is erased completely.

The immigrant-chameleon is the main character of B. Muherjee's "Jasmine", who was able to tell America that she feels "strong as a goddess" [169, p. 9]. The heroine resembles a "nomad" because she is ready to embark on a new journey. The symbolic "journey in the novel is a metaphor of life itself, which is constantly moving and updated" [14, p. 84].

Such cultural alternatives' clash in border writers' works creates the need to portray the changes in character's identity. Of course, a person "constructs" himself as a character, therefore, affects his identity, while showing the readiness or unwillingness to move to another culture. Most attempts to understand "foreign" (other culture's) cultural phenomena end with the realizing of eternal nomadism.

V. Seligey speaks about modern transcultural identification,

which “inherits postmodern metatextuality” [79, p. 163]. This is the cracked / double character’s consciousness, which is denoted W. Sommer’s poor position [186, p. 297]. The dual postmodern consciousness is being replaced by the transcultural hybrid one. N. Vysotska notes that “scientific discourse abounds in epithets and metaphors today, with which they try to grasp the elusive essence of this fluid identity – it is called a hybrid, border, proteistic, amphibious...” [23, p. 314].

This is because everyone who analyzes and interprets this problem offers his own interpretation, and resulting in multiple identities are considered a vague and abstract term.

As for J. Lahiri’s writing, the transcultural identity is presented in the character, who, being on the verge of different cultures’ clash, forms a new cultural alloy, and which is characterized by the existence of “between”. The symbolic “crossing” of the border and the “fusion” of elements of the Western and Eastern cultural traditions is a distinctive feature of J. Lahiri’s writing.

H. Bhabha, for example, emphasizes the need for “non-repressed identity” [123, p. 53]. The character’s new transcultural identity not related to “our” / “other’s” cultural bounds, is synonymous with this “non-repression”.

We see another identity’s interpretation in F. Chin’s writing, where “the Chinese think of themselves as soldiers” [78, p. 130], and this is no accident, because they (the Chinese) identify themselves with soldiers from birth.

That is why the writer always uses the word “soldier” when it is necessary to define Chinese identity. By the way, just like F. Chin, the symbolic military “figure” was chosen by M. Kingston as a symbol of Chineseness, but, unlike F. Chin’s established “soldier”, she uses the “warrior” term. “Family” and “simple man” tokens are “identity’s” indicators in J. Lahiri’s writing.

Such contradictions “are not evidence of a fundamental difference in fiction style or worldview, but rather, F. Chin and

Maxine Hong Kingston's writing – these are convergent extremes” [78, p. 131]. However, despite the differences in poetics, Sino-Americans and Asian-Americans separate views allow us to trace much in common in identity's interpretation.

M. Tlostanova notes that “the task of forming what is called multiple identity, has already been solved mainly by the bearers of such identity” [94, p. 202]. Of course, a transcultural character is perhaps the best person to represent a type of a person with a multiple identity, but we are talking about border author, a bearer of a multiple identity.

V. Seligey uses “intertextuality” term as transcultural consciousness' necessary component and cultures interaction in a hybrid identity's formation” [77, p. 195]. The border author “reincarnates” in the modern trickster and implements various models of complex transcultural identity.

Combining fiction and real spaces and conditionally “existing” with his character, the border author is an example of transsubjectivity; it does not mean cultural dual consciousness, but existence in the real and fiction world.

H. Bhabha emphasizes that “in the postcolonial text the identity's problem returns to a constant question about the text structure, the image plane, where the fiction image – disappeared, invisible to the eye person, Eastern stereotype – faces his difference and otherness” [123, p. 46].

The character is characterized by a symbolic “invisibility” and each time faces a difficult question of his own origin. The strange combination of conditional (Indian) and real (American) contributes to the fact that the character's cultural otherness is questioned and interpreted in a new way in a transcultural environment, because he considers these binary oppositions as necessary culture's components.

In modern Asian-American literature's analysis, it is appropriate to turn to imagology as a branch of comparative

literature, because imagology imbued with the problem of another's image. Imagological research is based on the interpretation and understanding of the "other", so in the eyes of the "other" there is a reflection of our own "I". Through imagology prism the author's reception of "our" / "other" takes place.

A wide range of identities, including transcultural, are on the agenda of imagology. Z. Aliyeva notes that "the subject of imagology study are literary images, mutual cultural ideas of peoples, in particular certain ethnic group's images in the minds and literature of another nation" [2, p. 58].

In our case, the images of a certain people are Indian culture's representatives in the works of Asian-American writers, who are portrayed through the prism of preserving ethnic identity.

Imagology, the interest in which has increased significantly in multiculturalism context, is studying the image of the "other". Imagology comprehensively understands the reception of the "other": from external to internal differences.

The symbolic "border" of "our" / "other" takes place in the inner world of marginalized, whose transcultural identity is so shaky that it can be adjusted. H. Kim in this case notes that "we need to talk not about identity as something complete, but about identification, considering it as a constant process" [47].

The individual "dissolves" into many "I" and, as a result, constantly lives in "tao" (space) paradigm, ie he is "nowhere". Thus, T. Naduta emphasizes that, "unlike Latin American, Asian-American literature does not have a "single linguistic Other" that opposes the literary tradition, but contains many vectors that reach different national roots, cultural codes and languages, different for different Asian-Americans" [67, p. 6].

"Other" means different in "right of blood" and "right of soil" [58, p. 123], which often generates a "distorted" interpretation of the "other". The "other's" notion is also associated with stereotypes – established patterns or images of a particular national cultural

environment.

Being “different”, the transcultural individual tries to “decipher” another culture through his cultural stereotypes’ prism. Such intertwining and cultures’ interaction creates a feeling of “self-loss” and deep inner “splitting”. B. Mukherjee takes a different position on this issue: “Letting go the past, letting the roots wither is natural, because change is natural. It is unnatural to cling to the old world. What’s the point of holding on to a culture that is thousands miles away and that you, your children and grandchildren, are unlikely to see? Why not adapt and settle down comfortably in the world around you?” [130].

In most border writers’ works, the main theme is raised – the immigrant fate in the new American environment. The focus is on the split consciousness of the transcultural character, focused on a cultural dislocation that cannot be overcome.

G. Anzaldua explains the new border identity as follows: “Half and half – both man and woman, each of them – a new sex. To survive on the border, you must live *sin fronteras* (without borders) / become a crossroads” [114, p. 194–195]. “At some point, on the way to a new consciousness, we will be forced to leave the opposite shore; the abyss between two ruthless opponents will disappear, and we will be able to stand on both shores at the same time, look at the world through the eyes of a snake and an eagle at the same time” [114, p. 78–79].

Emphasizing “the dynamic fluctuations and diversity of Asian-American culture” [161, p. 28], L. Lowe shows Asian-Americans “as nomads who have not yet finally settled and are still in a state of intercultural travel” [161, p. 39].

The protagonists’ ethnic “roots” continue to be poetics central problem, as well as a central stereotype of Asian-American transcultural identity in general. “Border” writers’ works claim that they will be “read as “literature” and not as ethnography – that is, without associating with any national markers” [68, p. 101].



N. Bidasiuk notes about “Asian-American stories’ aesthetics, which remains the least studied aspect” [8, p. 143]. It is an author’s appeal to “his” culture’s oral and written traditions. The advantageous position “between cultures” allows the author to successfully impose “his” literature and poetics on the American background.

Interest in Asian-American literature continues to grow, as its fiction and scientific horizons expand significantly. H. Kostenko asserts that “bilingual writer’s work becomes a mirror of the complex intertwining of cultural traditions and at the same time a catalyst for literary processes, global and national, which causes the need for literary critics to go beyond a certain period, a certain national literature” [54, p. 14].

An attempt to classify Asian-American literature “leads to new difficulties, because their multifaceted work writers violate any newly proposed paradigm and challenge attributes labels” [67, p. 6].

Contemporary Asian-American literature is characterized by duality, as “hundreds of threads is connected with the present; it is involved in the East millennial tradition and confidently operates with West modern literary techniques; it is full of paradoxes and at the same time is perceived as a holistic phenomenon” [23, p. 324].

N. Vysotska is convinced that “literary multiculturalism concept is alive, but changes its content – from the “rainbow coalition” (where the colors coexist without mixing), to “melange” [26].

“If previously United States literary landscape dominated, in which the “mainstream” remained unchanged (and central), and the writing created by “hyphenated” or periphery authors (African-American, Asian-American, American-Indian, regional, feminist and etc.) was left aside, now they try to present the picture as all waters merger into a single stream” [26].

We are talking about modern transculturalism, which, according to I. Babkov, “raises the cultural borders problem, their

nature and location, borders that do not coincide with geographical, ethnic or state and which not only limit but also delimit culture along and across" [5].

Showing respect to the "other" world's representatives, transculture forms one collective "we" from two separate "I". Its ideology departs from "center" concept and declares that none of the cultures is a paradigm for all mankind.

The "culture" term is understood as something open, capable of contact and interaction. Transculture encompasses a whole way of life and is identified with a rich and contradictory worldview. There is a huge difference of cultural opportunities.

Transculture tends to races and nationalities "mix", which in turn leads to the inevitable individual's hybridization, whose ideas are also "mixed". A "different" individual is created – a transcultural one, which serves as a "hybrid" and several cultures' "mixture" simultaneously.

\* \* \*

Asian-American literature has been developing rapidly in recent decades: the works are distinguished by thematic, ideological and stylistic diversity; writers do not focus only on their own ethnic experience in the United States.

The works are not limited to cultural and ethnic issues, but touch on universal problems of love, family relationships, loss. The notion of American identity is noticeably expanding; he appears as a cultural mediator, whose authentic identity changes to a transcultural one, devoid of "our" / "other's" border.

Contemporary images are either rethought or developed by the author through the fiction space's symbolic "modernization". The "fluctuation" metaphor (emotional, cultural, between "our" and "other") is the basis of modern ethnic authors' writing.

The symbolic "excursion" from the third world to the first is

accompanied by deep inner disappointments, as well as established stereotypes revision. The transcultural character concludes that the “other” is not always hostile, and calmly adopts this experience. As a result, “our” / “other” border is erased.

The theory of modern transculturalism is not limited to the issue of cultures’ mutual influence or cultural contact. This is a complex cultural interaction and the fundamental impossibility of complete dissolution or symbolic “absorption” of one culture to another.

Transculture does not show the character as an exception, it is characterized by the principle of equal treatment to everybody (color blindness), regardless of ethnic origin. Instead of recognizing cultural otherness, transculture reduces “other” to “our” and thus encodes all types of identity.

The character appears as an individual who is not tied to cultural roots and can “fit” as “his” everywhere. Thus, by allowing diversity in principle, transculture makes cultural differences insignificant and marginal; the character’s inner difference is more significant.

The nonlinear complexity of transculture concept tends to form character’s special identities, which are not “aligned” with time. The Asian-American of the transcultural period acts as a kind of cultural mediator. His main goal is the desire to get rid of from established stereotypes about his own transcultural identity.

The modern Asian-American literature’s work is distinguished by the fact that it does not have a painful duality or longing for the past. Unlike the multicultural character, the modern hero of transculture does not place himself in terms of poor position. He conceives of the new transcultural identity, which includes belonging to several cultures simultaneously, as a brand. This allows us to see new dimensions of transculturalism in the poetics and semantics of modern Asian-American writers’ fiction work.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **TRANSCULTURAL BASIS OF JHUMPA LAHIRI'S EARLY WORKS**

#### **2.1. The character's new transcultural consciousness in the collection of short stories "Interpreter of Maladies"**

The debut collection of short stories, "Interpreter of Maladies" (1999), won several awards, including the Pulitzer Prize (2000) and the Hemingway Prize (2000). The collection was recognized as the year's best debut by the "New York Times" and was included in Oprah Winfrey's list of the top ten books (more than 15 million copies were sold worldwide in 2000).

The collection aroused special interest from critics – Jaya Lakshmi Rao V [177], Jackie Large, Erin Quinn [156], Joshua Ammons [113], Adriana Elena Stoican [188], Brada-Williams Noelle [172], S. Shanthi [183], Shea Taylor [196] and others.

In particular, S. Kasbekar notes: "The "malady's" importance covers all collection stories. Lahiri's attention to the immigrants "maladies" caught between continents' cultures and two different ways of life is obvious" [146, p. 73].

The collection characters are immigrants families from India who are far from home. Each of the characters seeks to "find himself" and faces the challenge of defining a new American identity that is linked to their immigrant experience. Relationships between generations in a situation of a cultural border is the main theme of collection stories.

There is often a cultural gap between parents and children, immigrants of different generations. Having Bengali origin, children behave like one hundred percent Americans and do not think about their own transcultural identity from poor position who cannot answer the question "Who am I?"

Another researcher, S. Raj, notes that "all collection characters

are characterized by isolation in one form or another: men isolated from their wives, immigrants from their parents, people from the communities in which they live. In this isolation, the characters feel they lack something very important for their identity” [175, p. 464].

A. Dobrinescu emphasizes that “the collection can be interpreted as an author’s journey to the new, to acceptance the main adaptation problems to the modern world” [131, p. 101].

D. Ammons also expressed her point of view on the collection, emphasizing that J. Lahiri’s “Interpreter of Maladies” is “a transparent window of Indian culture’s heart. Repetitive themes such as religion, traditions, gender roles, and mysteries underlie the collection, but with an expanded scope; we see that these topics play an important role in everyday life and at the same time go beyond Indian culture” [113, p. 48].

The collection consists of nine short stories, each of which is related to identity problem, the experience of immigrants of different generations, love and family theme. The vast majority of characters are from India, who adapt differently to American realities.

The collection is opened by the central story “Interpreter of Maladies”. The work’s main conflict revolves around several characters: Mr. Kapasi and the Das family. The story’s protagonist, a taxi driver of Indian origin, Mr. Kapasi takes the Das family to the Sun Temple in the Indian city of Konarak.

Das couple, in their early thirties, have three children: a daughter, Tina, and two boys, Ronny and Bobby. The events take place in India, where the Das family goes on a visit to their parents. They visit India only because their parents moved there. The Das look more like tourists than natives or migrants returning home. This is the first time for the Das children, as their parents visit their homeland every three years.

N. Vysotska notes that “the state of being “between cultures” or within several cultures, which in the past led (and still can lead) to internal division, now acquires a new, positive potential” [23,

p. 331].

This is the image of the modern Asian American (in our case, these are Americans of Indian origin, Mr. and Mrs. Das), who through cultural transformation exists in the third transcultural dimension and consciously seeks a symbolic “merger” of cultural horizons.

Analyzing the story, S. Raj emphasizes: “J. Lahiri’s “Interpreter of Maladies” is another story aimed at showing the trauma of losing identity, when there is a gap between the countries” [175, p. 462]. The influence of two different worlds is felt by the Das, Americans of Indian origin whose identity is “far from being something static” [74].

The story shows the cultural “confrontation” that takes place between Mr. Kapasi and the Americanized Das couple. The first conflict happens during the acquaintance: introducing himself to his clients, Mr. Kapasi folded his arms across his chest, as is customary in the Indian community, but Mr. Das shook his hand firmly in the American way, and Mrs. Das only smiled “artificially” in response.

Mr. Kapasi was accustomed to foreign tourists; he often dealt with them because he knew English well. Despite the Indian appearance of Das couple, Kapasi notices American splashes: “looked Indian, but dressed as foreigners did” [151, p. 44].

Mr. Das cannot do without a guidebook where he believes he will find the information he needs about India. Das sees Indian culture artificially, through a camera, a car window, a guidebook. The character resorts to contemplating “frozen” Indian images in the guidebook, not in reality.

Therefore, Das has a distant idea of Indian culture, he forgets that he first goes to visit his parents, and not to take many photos and learn about some facts of Indian culture from the guide.

Mr. Das is little different from the typical American tourist. The author emphasizes the guide, which provides only banal historical information about India, but does not show the harsh reality. As an

Indian, Mr. Das does not look for “his” culture in a guidebook, but like any tourist, reads about architectural monuments and memorizes some phrases.

The character is characterized primarily by belonging to a certain cultural and ethnic environment. Transcultural processes appear to be an important feature of the writer’s poetics, as they “allow to avoid the identification of one’s own cultural center as a whole” [63, p. 102].

Das shuns his Indian origin and proudly emphasizes: “Mina and I were born in America” [151, p. 45], and their parents live in the northeast of India, in Asansol. Kapasi notices that America has completely “supplanted” mentions of the Bengali origin of the Das and has long been a real home for them. This is evidenced by the American form of address: when addressing his wife, Mr. Das calls her wife by name (Mina), not “your mother” as most Indians do. Despite their Bengali roots, the Das speak with the American accent that Mr. Kapasi often heard on American TV shows.

Especially impressive for Mr. Das is a barefoot skinny peasant in a dirty turban with sacks of grain and two oxen (the character is amazed by the exoticism of such Indians, so he asks Kapasi to stop the car). Mr. Das takes pictures of the poor man in memory, because there is no such thing in America.

Like her husband, Mrs. Das is also “closed” from Indian culture, because she looks at the local space through the car glass and sunglasses. Unlike children and her husband, she does not get out of the car to look around.

Following Das couple example, the author departs from “our” / “other’s” established opposition, creating a fiction transcultural character’s image, who contains a multifaceted “other self” and, as a result, feels at home everywhere. The drama of the search for his identity is ousted by cultural freedom in this identity’s defining. For such character, the existence of “between” means a free transition from one culture to another.

Das sees only what he wants to see – an interesting photograph in his own lens, not the suffering of a hungry peasant's suffering on the footpath, whom he perceived as an exotic creature. The photo with the peasant is identified only with the exotic mention of India, which can be flaunted in front of American friends.

A family's photo is just the right opportunity for a greeting card to relatives, where they will later write "Happy Family", and for the Das own family film. It is more convenient for Mr. Das to keep his distance when taking pictures than to face family life's difficulties.

A. Dobrinescu notes that "Lahiri's collection opposes the stereotypes of Indianness and clichés that are associated with East and West inevitable clash" [131, p. 102]. The writer portrays a new perception of Americanized Indians, which is clearly seen in the images of the Das, immigrants of the second (Mr. and Mrs. Das) and third (Das couple children) generation.

Das's children, are one hundred percent Americans, experience cultural amazement during the trip. A symbolic cultural "uncertainty" is clearly seen in children's images. For children, a visit to India is the first, so they perceive this trip as something unusual and mysterious. There is a noticeable cultural alienation of Americans of Indian origin from Native Indians.

The consequences of American upbringing were that when addressing each other, children used their usual vocabulary such as "fool". Tina behaves in an American way when she starts complaining five minutes after Mr. Kapasi picks them up at the hotel.

Kapasi notices that parents behave like older children who have been assigned to look after younger ones for a while. It was difficult for Mr. Kapasi to come to terms with the idea that the couple should be responsible for someone else than themselves. Due to the lack of communication with relatives, Indian culture is alien to both parents and children.

Especially noticeable was the meeting with a goat (for children it was for the first time), tall trees along the road, as well as monkeys.



The children saw monkeys at the zoo only, so Mr. Das asked Mr. Kapasi to stop to take pictures of them. Parents do not pay attention to children who quarrel because of the lack of proper upbringing, but listen to Mr. Kapasi with great interest, who explains that there are many monkeys, which are called Hanumans.

There are many details in the story that point to Indian culture. In particular, it is Mr. Kapasi's car. The children were surprised that the driver was not sitting on the other side, and there was an elephant on the dashboard, an Indian deity that caught little Bobby's eye. The elephant symbol is important in the story because it is directly related to Indian culture. This sacred animal is identified with wisdom, kindness and strength.

The writer's works combine Eastern and Western cultural traditions, which allows for a "double audience" [120, p. 178]. Due to the lack of communication with "hers" Mrs. Das forgot the Bengali language, and therefore she does not respond to the romantic song, which is sung in Hindi by a naked vendor near the teahouse, for whom, like for other Hindus, Mrs. Das is dressed too openly.

While Mrs. Das buys fried pepper rice, which is wrapped in newsprint, the sellers carefully examine her half-naked figure, as they have not seen such looseness in Indian women. Mr. Kapasi, who has never seen his wife naked, is also embarrassed.

Mrs. Das did not like the road, so during a trip to the Sun Temple she sometimes lazily flipped through the Bombay film magazine in English. Mrs. Das leaned back on the car's back seat, ignoring the children sitting on either side of her, chewing bright green gum. The heroine realizes that she can't cope with her children, so she feels isolated. Das does not see herself as a housewife, her apathy and indifference "form" a huge family abyss.

The marital relations problem is raised in the story from the very beginning. Unlike Mr. Kapasi, the Das family is not sympathetic (the author focuses on the camera and guidebook, sunglasses and nail polish, rude behavior, etc.).

There is a tension between Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das: Kapasi hopes for a romantic relationship with Das, which is impossible in reality, because she sees only a psychologist in him who can listen and understand her inner feelings. To Mrs. Das's question "Doesn't it get tiresome, Mr. Kapasi, showing people the same thing every day?" [151, p. 49] he answers that the Sun Temple, where they go, is a reward for him; this is his favorite place, hobby, because he takes tourists only on Fridays and Saturdays (on other days he is busy at work).

Kapasi works as a doctor's assistant. His job is to interpret to the doctor, which is what patients complain about. That is why the language knowledge is very important for him, because the correctness of the patient's diagnosis depends on the translation accuracy.

The Das couple do not understand why the doctor needs an interpreter, but Kapasi explains that he knows Gujarati (many patients from Gujarat), so the doctor invited him to work with him – to interpret the patients' illnesses, citing the fact that few people speak this language. Through the Gujarati language, along with all its dialects, Kapasi appears as "other"; he realizes that this important detail of "his" helps him not only to "stick" to the roots, but also to earn a living.

Kapasi accidentally started working as a translator, his profession was the failed career's result. Being extremely capable of languages, the character wanted to translate for diplomats even before his marriage. Due to the illness of his seven-year-old son, Kapasi meets with a doctor, with whom he will continue to work. Kapasi's son dies, and in order to pay for the funeral, he was forced to stay with a doctor as an interpreter.

Except for Mrs. Das, no one was so enthusiastic about asking Kapasi of his work. It was Mrs. Das who called him an "interpreter of maladies", although he was no longer as capable as before, because he had forgotten many Indian speeches because of his lack

of communication. At that time, Kapasi spoke only English fluently, although he was afraid that he did not speak it as fluently as his children did. The character feels how a “gap” in his knowledge has formed over the years, because he has forgotten more than one language.

Such a “crack” is noticeable in Mrs. Das’s family life, because everyone lives his own, free American life and does not care about the other. The Das family does not communicate (not because of the language barrier): they “hid” behind the magazine (Mrs. Das) and a guidebook (Mr. Das). All attempts to communicate with each other are doomed from the beginning: the couple do not trust each other.

Mrs. Das asks Kapasi to give her the address so that she can send the photos later, and not in order to continue their acquaintance as Kapasi wanted. He asked Mrs. Das when they planned to return to America, and mentally calculated the date of receiving the first letter. Kapasi’s hopes are dashed as Mrs. Das writes the address on a small piece of paper torn from the magazine, which she hastily throws in her big bag and which she inadvertently loses later.

Mrs. Das tells how she met her future husband and how she always wanted to be with him. The heroine realizes that the family life’s reality and three children’s caring has led to the fact that love has faded. Mrs. Das felt lonely: after marriage, she rarely saw her college friends and stayed at home all day, isolated from the world because of little Ronnie. As a result, the heroine betrays her husband with his friend, who once comes to visit them. Now Mr. Das’s friend is married and the only thing that reminds of him are the family photos they exchange for Christmas.

Mrs. Das connects her betrayal with a “symptom of America”. She understands that moral standards in India are very different from American ones. Das realizes that she does not take betrayal seriously, but at the same time her Indian consciousness always reminds her of the marriage prudence. The heroine’s psychological trauma S. Raj considers “the result of her confusing biculturalism” [175, p. 463].

The author emphasizes the female image, which is in a new cultural environment. S. Raj notes that “in this story Lahiri shows the kinship difficulties of Indians with Americans, as well as situations where Indians and Americans are “caught” by two different cultures” [175, p. 463].

Mrs. Das's betrayal's confession shocks Kapasi. Mrs. Das's betrayal “destroys” the driver's Indian views on the “family” concept. Kapasi asks if she feels guilty for betraying her husband. Das feels that it is difficult for her to live with this thought, so she avoids answering and is angry that she was asked about it.

Offended by the driver's behavior, the heroine gets out of the car, scattering her uneaten fried rice. This detail is important: the scattered rice is identified with heroine's split identity, who does not see the Indian reality. The rice symbolizes heroine's inner world, who, despite her Bengali origin, does not appreciate Indian culture and is not attentive to the surrounding reality.

When Mrs. Das approaches her husband with children, she realizes that she is late to warn the child against aggressive monkeys. The child takes a stick and plays with the most aggressive monkey. Little Bobby, the lover's son, is her actions “victim”, who called a stranger the father all his life. He feels great fear, because he is surrounded by monkeys. The mother does not react to the fact that the child is scared. She does not consider herself guilty of betraying her husband, nor does she think about her actions consequences.

Kapasi is shocked to see a child surrounded by aggressive monkeys. None of the parents approach the frightened Bobby, except for the driver who rescues the child and wants to tell him the truth. Kapasi realizes that the main thing for a child is safety, in particular, from monkeys. He gives the child to the mother who pretends to care about her son. Looking for a comb to make the child's hair, Mrs. Das loses a piece of paper with the driver's address, making their further communication impossible and “fleeing” away from Indian culture.

Characterizing the collection, D. Ammons notes that “many

stories show Indians in America, who realize over time that they abandon their traditions” [113, p. 47]. Some characters are an example of traditions lack. In particular, this applies to the Americanized Bengalis Das couple, who perceive the trip to India as an “exotic” adventure.

Mr. Kapasi does not “cure” Mrs. Das, he explains that she has to talk to her husband (who chose the “accessory”, but not his wife) herself and realize her guilt.

A. Dobrinescu spoke interestingly about the collection, noting that “Lahiri’s stories explore human relations in the culture context, but the author’s approach to culture is in two possible paradigms: large and, accordingly, small culture” [131, p. 102].

Despite the same cultural origin, each of the characters chooses “his” small and large culture. If for Mr. Kapasi Indian culture is “big” (Kapasi appreciates Indian traditions, family cult, etc.), and American one is “small” (through American TV shows the character has some knowledge about this country), then for the Das family American culture is “big” (America has become their real home), and the Indian one is “small” (they visit India as typical tourists).

S. Kazbekar notes that “different stories in Lahiri’s collection “Interpreter of Maladies” “paint the gap” that exists between countries, between cultures and between individuals. “Abyss” is deep because of the characters’ different origin. The immigrant’s struggle is described as follows: as he “walks” through two cultures, as one side of his transcultural identity longs for his past homeland, and the other seeks reconciliation with the culture he accepts. J. Lahiri’s characters are real, and their difficulties are palpable. This abyss is difficult to bridge; this is a difficult situation without answers” [146, p. 77].

The gender relations problem is important in the collection. The gender dimension contributes to the development of literary work’s new view, and its interpretation in the light of gender differentiation provides a search for forms that would reflect the symbols of

women's experience, thus forming gender poetics.

As a result of cultures comparison, dissonance is created, mainly among women of Asian origin. Women have a great responsibility: they cook, work about the house and raise children.

Women are Indian traditions' guardians, so they behave like devoted wives and mothers and make their children follow Bengali traditions. Men are responsible for the family's financial situation; they work a lot and therefore spend little time with family. These are the family's breadwinners, whose career success depends entirely on their wives' support.

From another point of view, the gender problem in the story is remarked by D. Ammons: "instead of representing gender roles by tradition, Lahiri offers the reader cases when men and women's "roles" are often challenged" [113, p. 47].

The counterweight to the Bengali woman's image is Mrs. Das, whose adaptation process was not painful. Das is "cold" and "callous" towards her own family, while her husband, Mr. Das, on the contrary, communicates with the children, photographs them and demonstrates his love for them. The heroine refuses to acknowledge her role as a mother and says "my children" as if they are her property.

Mrs. Das's selfishness is seen not only towards her children but also towards her husband. Das breaks the established clichés of a Bengali woman, family comfort's guardian. The heroine quickly transformed from a Bengali woman to an American, as evidenced by her betrayal.

Mrs. Das notes that they married in the traditional Indian way (marriage by arrangement), because their parents "were best friends who lived in the same town. My entire life I saw him [Mr. Das] every weekend, either at our house or theirs...in a way I think it was all more or less a setup" [151, p. 63].

Probably because Mrs. Das didn't have a chance to find a partner, she betrayed her husband. Mrs. Das's relationship with her

husband is friendly rather than romantic: the heroine does not behave romantically towards her husband.

Kapasi observes the “Americanized” Mrs. Das and notices the great differences between her and his wife. Unlike Bengali women, Mrs. Das does not devote herself to children and does not admire her husband. She and Mr. Das live as old friends, not as spouses. Her indifference towards children is explained by her desire for freedom and irresponsibility.

Indifference is noticeable at the story’s beginning, when the Das family is arguing over who should take their daughter to the toilet. In the end, Mrs. Das does, but along the way she behaves selfishly, because she does not hold the child’s hand. Later Mrs. Das confesses to Mr. Kapasi that she is very lonely, and once she even had a desire to throw out of the window everything she has, including children.

The driver notices that Mrs. Das is different from his patients. He interprets her story as purely American, after all, as the heroine herself. Mrs. Das opposes the Bengali traditions of home and family comfort. She is aware of her difference from Bengal women. Mrs. Das’s behavior is opposed to that of a Bengali woman; the heroine is “cold” to both children and her husband.

Mrs. Das symbolically “hides” from her family and admires Mr. Kapasi. Unlike a Bengali woman, she is not ashamed to look the driver in the eyes, offer him chewing gum, ask frank questions and tell her own secrets, just as she is not ashamed to bare her legs and dress openly.

American female half-nakedness obscures Indian men’s minds. Mr. Kapasi, an experienced linguist, is not accustomed to female attention and flirtation, so he misinterprets Mrs. Das’s interest (he thinks she is interested in him as a man, although in fact she is interested in his unusual profession).

American depravity and infidelity go beyond Bengali culture and are therefore not inherent in Bengal men. Their interest in

Americans is only instantaneous, and each of the characters returns to his family.

An important story's theme is the cultural gap between the Indian Mr. Kapasi and the Americans of Bengali origin Das family. Mr. Kapasi is a cultural mediator. For Das couple, Indian culture appears artificial and time-altered.

The characters do not notice the Indian reality, because "their" Indianness was deliberately suppressed in the new American life. After all, there is no final acceptance and understanding of "our" roots.

India is portrayed not only as a mysterious exotic land with ancient sculptures and temples, but also as a poverty, which is so interested in the tourist Mr. Das. The poor peasant in the turban symbolizes the real exotic poverty of India, which Mr. Das then uses as decoration, a Christmas card's background.

The writer follows cultural parallelism. She does not limit her characters' existence to one culture. It is more convenient for the Das to confirm their external Americanness through cosmetics, bare legs, clothing style.

Being in a state of "cultural transit", they try to fit into the new American reality and assert their right to be hyphenated Americans, modern citizens of transcultural America.

The story touches on an important for Indians "family theme". The Indian and American "family" concepts are compared. Kapasi sees fully Americanized Das couple, for whom the family exists artificially: each of them lives his own life.

None of the characters transcends the border of usual, "their" world (Mr. Kapasi Indian, the Das family – American), and therefore, despite the same cultural origin, can not understand each other's inner world. Everyone thinks about their own (Kapasi about his unhappy family life, Mrs. Das about her betraying, Mr. Das – about the next shot). Only in the photo the characters hug and smile "artificially", hiding their inner experiences.



There is a different chronology of cultural realities in the story: the real India through Kapasi's eyes and interpreted through the Das's eyes. In general, the parameters of characters' cultural evolution are due to varying degrees of assimilation: unlike Mr. Kapasi, Das couple assimilated completely and are considered "our" in America.

Another, no less important collection story is "Mrs. Sen's", which tells of Academician Mr. Sen's wife. The woman works as a nanny, she takes care of eleven-year-old Eliot. From the beginning of the school year, Eliot went to Mrs. Sen every day after school.

Mrs. Sen is representative of the old diaspora. The heroine continues to "hold on" to "her" home: living in America, she tries to recreate the artificial life to which she is accustomed in Calcutta, as well as to regain her "lost identity". She lives with memories and "hides" behind the past, so as not to notice the chaos, loneliness and inconvenience in the still artificial for her American house. Unlike Eliot's mother, Mrs. Sen can't drive.

An important element of the writer's poetics is the common transculturalism and hybridity motif. Despite the presence of several geographical areas (Indian and American), the heroine suffers from limited cultural space (Mrs. Sen feels a symbolic "limited" space in the walls of a still alien for her American apartment). There is not only a disappointing search for one's identity, but also a kind of "search for freedom". Thus, the character's cultural "struggle" with the American reality is the work's central conflict.

Mrs. Sen, a first-generation immigrant, finds it extremely difficult to adapt to the new American culture, and her inner state is determined by "loneliness that arises outside the group" [181, p. 359].

The heroine "exists beyond time" and is in a symbolic "trap", in a confined space. Mrs. Sen opposes "foreign" culture and seeks to keep the remnants of "her own". She is just getting used to American life: "Here, in this place where Mr. Sen has brought me, I cannot

sometimes sleep in so much silence” [151, p. 128].

The story (as in the whole collection in general) clearly shows the differences of men and women’s adaptation to the new cultural environment. Yes, men’s aim is to realize their “American dream”, as most of them emigrate in search of a better life, to achieve scientific and academic purposes (an example is Mrs. Sen’s husband).

Women have a completely different adaptation experience. A. Henley notes that “writers often present the loss of a place as a woman’s first step towards self-affirmation” [140, p. 82].

Following family cult, they (women) emigrate after their husbands and, as a result, are locked in the space of “foreign” apartments. J. Clifford expressed an interesting opinion in this context, noting that a “good journey” (heroic, educational, scientific, adventure, chivalrous) is appropriate for men. Women are kept from serious travel. However, if they go to distant countries, then mainly for the company or, as an exception, [they] are forced to accept, imitate or secretly protest against the rules and experiences that belong to men” [129, p. 32]. This, in fact, is what Mrs. Sen does; she follows her husband to foreign America and realizes that she was “brought” here as a thing.

M. Trinh emphasizes “if a woman is not forced to leave home by economic hardship, her mobility is limited. Transcultural, specifically class and gender movement has been almost inaccessible to women for centuries, so every “travelling” woman became an outcast for her family, society, sex” [198, p.15]. Mrs. Sen accepts new life’s realities, but is still lonely: she realizes that the return home is no more, as there are no real friends, and her husband is constantly busy at work.

The heroine adapts to American life and at the same time “holds on” to her culture and home values. She finds refuge in the past and avoids the present. Describing the collection’s characters, S. Raj remarks: “Physically they are in America, but mentally in

South Asia. They deal with loneliness and dislocation, cultural displacement, a sense of identity and belonging to Indian and American cultures, taking into account the small details” [175, p. 460].

Mrs. Sen’s image is no exception. The heroine compares two cultures and constantly tells her life’s stories. When she says “at home”, she means “there”, in India, not in America, where she is at the moment: “At home, you know, we have a driver; Everything is there” [151, p. 125; 126].

The origins of Lahiri’s poetics can be found in the postmodern type of fiction writing, which D. Harvey considers the world of otherness: “It is important to recognize several forms of otherness that arise due to differences in subjectivity, gender, race and class, temporal and spatial geographical places and dislocations” [139, p. 113].

We are talking about the duality / fragmentation of character’s consciousness at different structural levels. There is a space-time model of the writer’s works, where there is a combination of different types of time perception: present (real) and past (conditional). The symbolic “excursion” into the past is an “open” fiction time for Mrs. Sen, as it “returns” her home every time.

The heroine realizes that only at home, in India, she feels safe. The phrase “everything is there” means that everything valuable to her stayed in India. Eliot notices that only “her” details from the past really make his nanny happy: an ordinary letter from India (not an e-letter) and a whole fish with a head that is so difficult to find in America.

An element of “her” in America is a bright collection of her saris, which no one here needs. E. Said explains this by saying that “because of the loss there is a temptation to turn to national pride, collective feelings, group passions to overcome the loneliness of exile” [181, p. 359].

The writer’s poetics is characterized by special attention to

detail, and “Mrs. Sen’s” is no exception. Only from details of “her” world, the heroine feels relieved. When a letter arrives from India, Mrs. Sen immediately calls her husband and rereads every word, because home news is her greatest consolation.

Fresh fish is the only thing that symbolizes the Indian home in America. Although this is not the fish that Mrs. Sen is used to in Calcutta. Every day she calls the fish supermarket to order a whole fresh fish, which Mr. Sen will pick up later. The supermarket staff knows Mrs. Sen because she is a regular customer. Sometimes they order a lot of fish.

The heroine compares the American fish to the one she is used to in Calcutta, and admits that there, at home, the fish is better. And one day she even refuses to take the ordered fish. The author demonstrates how important Indian culture is for Mrs. Sen and the fish is one of the symbols that “revives” and “calms”. S. Raj notes that there is an idea of “imaginary home” in the story [175, p. 466]: the heroine cannot forget her identity associated with her first homeland.

Food is an integral part of cultural identity in the diaspora and serves as an important symbol; it is a “marker” of cultural differences. In the story, food is a means of symbolic “combination” of the heroine with India. Her own, special cooking ritual is extremely important for Mrs. Sen.

The fish is directly associated with her still important Indian life, as it symbolizes Mrs. Sen’s love for home, family and the life she had to leave behind. This is the only way to be “at home” at least at household items level. Fresh fish is “her” valuable thing, which represents everything that the heroine really lacks now.

Mrs. Sen is amazed that there are so few fish in the store, despite the fact that there was a sea nearby. That is why the food supermarket was too low quality for the heroine. Mrs. Sen’s conscious desire to get fresh fish is compared by the writer to her “struggle” with the American way of life.

Buying fish is an important daily routine for Mrs. Sen. The thirst for fresh fish embodies the meeting and interaction of America and India. The owner of the fish shop regularly calls the heroine to announce the arrival of fresh fish. It is the fish, an important part of “her”, “makes” the heroine to ride a local bus, and once even try to drive a car.

For Mrs. Sen, Indian space (kitchen blade, film with the relatives voices, airbrushes from home, bright saris, rooms arrangement, etc.) contrasts with American life. The kitchen blade as a part of “our” symbolizes attachment to Indian life. Mrs. Sen understands that this is really just a copy, because she lacks real communication. The events about which she reads and often rereads in the letters took place a long time ago (her niece’s birth, her grandfather’s death). Over time, even the film with Grandpa’s voice does not bring relief, because he is no longer alive.

It is the stories about life in India, which the heroine reads in letters from “hers”, following of traditions, Bengali clothes and food that recreate for Mrs. Sen the usual atmosphere of Indian home comfort in America.

N. Bidasiuk notes that “the characters of Asian-American works keep in touch with the homeland, watching the news and reading articles about their birth country, preparing familiar dishes from childhood, celebrating traditional holidays” [12, p. 173].

Eventually, the image of “her” home loses the reality features, because for Mrs. Sen it is already an invisible, imaginary homeland, for which there is nostalgia. The heroine often listens to the tape with the relatives voices and stops the recording when she hears the voice of her grandfather, who recently died.

Analyzing the collection, S. Kasbekar notes that “when the characters leave India, they leave behind many indivisible cultural parameters that continue to sought in their migration country” [146, p. 74].

It is no coincidence that Mrs. Sen’s everyday life is associated

with a symbolic “escape”. The heroine does not want to learn to drive a car, as most Americans do, but continues to cook exclusively Indian dishes for herself and her husband.

The character “blocks” the processes of “acculturation” and does not perceive local culture’s basic elements, which leads to “communicative difficulties” [34, p. 3]. She speaks broken English with a noticeable Indian accent and makes phonetic errors: “Is it Beethoven?” she asked once, pronouncing the first part of the composer’s name not “bay”, but “bee”, like the insect” [151, p. 130]. The incorrect pronunciation of the famous classic’s name is explained by the heroine’s first disappointing steps of assimilation to American culture.

Mrs. Sen is very homesick. One day she can’t hold back her tears and leads Eliot to her room. The woman throws her saris on the bed and states that she has nowhere to wear them. She doesn’t even have any new photo to send to relatives in Calcutta. The heroine is depressed. She does not cook, turns on the TV, but does not watch it, makes herself tea, but does not drink it. She remembers the day she left India. Mrs. Sen still remembers all family members.

The story’s poetics has a complex narrative structure: it “moves” in time unpredictable symbolic “zigzags” along with arbitrary manifestations of the character’s individual memory. The story is based on the principle of protagonist’s inner monologue, although the text’s poetics is full of grammatical present tense, because the events of “hers” are still “alive” for Mrs. Sen (whenever there is a wedding in the family; my mother sends out a word in the evening; they sit in an enormous circle; it is impossible to fall asleep those nights).

The heroine, for whom past experience and cultural memory are important, is “charged” with memories and experiences. She still feels alienated from the new surrounding reality. Internally, Mrs. Sen’s image is deeply contradictory: the heroine feels lonely in American society and at the same time, turning to “her” culture,

subconsciously opposes herself to others (continues to live Indian life).

The heroine's inner monologue acquires "stream of consciousness" features: free associations of "hers", free sequence of thought, logical incoherence and language fragmentary.

If "in M. Proust it is an image of the autonomy of the whole continuum of life of consciousness, in J. Joyce – the unity and conflict of internal and external life" [72, p. 179], then in J. Lahiri – it is a cultural opposition of East and West. Symbolically, the heroine "imitates her own", mentally transferred to the past, combining internal and external experience. Her inner monologue is based on the "cultural layering" of Indian to American.

The writer's poetics is based on the metaphor of symbolic "mixing" both on the fiction (variation of the narrative) and on the culturological levels (Indian and American culture). The story's structure is cyclical: the heroine does not "discover" her roots anew, she goes through the stages of "discovering" her transcultural identity. At the same time, her desire to keep "her" identity, to accept the integrity of her "I" image in an inviolable connection with the "other" is important.

Lahiri's characters are endowed with the author's characteristic of marginality. Throughout the work, the author does not lose interest in his own protagonists, but emphasizes the value of each individual.

Along with the protagonists, "minor" characters occupy an "inert position", which D. Harvey calls "a passive image of otherness" [139, p. 337].

Eliot notices a "cultural mix": thanks to the Indian created in the American house (rooms arrangement, Bengali dishes, clothes, household items), he is temporarily transferred to a completely different cultural space. The boy appears as a neutral American who seeks true understanding and acceptance of the "other". Eliot perfectly combines unique cultural traditions.

There are contrasting comparisons of "our" and "other", past

and present. Indian rituals, used to for Mrs. Sen, are identified with fictional traditions for the American boy. Despite views differences, origin and language, the conditional “participation” in these traditions creates an intimacy sense with Ms. Sen.

The fiction signs and symbols used by the author are important in the story. For example, the boy is struck by the large number of shoes at the door and the red paint on the parting of his nanny’s hair. Mrs. Sen explains that it’s like a wedding ring – a marriage symbol, something that definitely can’t be lost in the dishwasher.

Eliot often observes the cooking process. An unusual detail for him is a blade brought from India, which Mrs. Sen uses when cutting vegetables. The heroine explains that there, at home, such a blade is in every house.

Mrs. Sen compensates for the symbolic “loss”, which means “to create and manage a new world, to stand out stubbornly in a new place, to realize her right “to refuse to belong” [181, p. 363]. In Mrs. Sen’s inner world borders are moving, allowing her to move mentally into another cultural space.

Along with the established various definitions of poetics (descriptive, historical, normative, general, functional), we can talk about the cultural poetics of Lahiri’s writing, due to the consciousness ambivalence of her transcultural character. Two cultural discourses are compared and layered at the same time – East and West, the eternal question of delimitation of which still remains open.

D. Ammons, characterizing the collection, emphasizes that “tradition plays the most important role in all stories. In particular, the tradition is often presented by the “collision” of the old (Indian) tradition and the American new. The ideal traditional standards are Indian ones” [113, p. 47]. A bright representative is Mrs. Sen, who continues to “hold on” to “her” tradition and realizes the impossibility of cultural union with America. The heroine understands that she will never be able to “discover” American life.



The story's minor characters are friendly, except for Eliot's mother, who does not want to go beyond a formal relationship with Mrs. Sen. The mother's image is removed, the heroine not only stays away from her son's upbringing, but also she is lacked with author's attention, as she has no name, but instead appears as "Eliot's mother".

The heroine lives with her son in an uncomfortable house and has little contact with her neighbors. Her lifestyle is diametrically opposed to Mrs. Sen's life. Eliot's mother is no different from a typical American: unlike Mrs. Sen, she wears short clothes, has bare knees, and her hair is dyed.

The warmth of Mrs. Sen's apartment contrasts with the cold of Eliot's mother's house, as does the cultural contrast between India and America. As befits a true Indian woman, Mrs. Sen is especially respectful of the guest. So when Eliot's mother returns, the Bengali invites her to dinner.

Eliot's mother is "alien" to Indian tastes, so she refuses, explaining that she is not used to eat so late. At home, she drinks a glass of wine, eats bread and cheese; she often overeats, so she does not eat pizza, which she and her son used to order for dinner.

Unlike Mrs. Sen, Eliot's mother doesn't spend much time in the kitchen, it's easier for her to buy ready-to-eat food. Eliot notices that his mother refuses Indian food not because she has already eaten; in fact, she prefers a hastily prepared American dinner with alcohol. Eliot realizes that he and his mother are alone, because they live alone in a beach house, where there is no one around in the cold season.

The boy likes the warmth and coziness of Mrs. Sen's house. He enjoys watching the still surprising careful cooking process and compares it to the American habit of semi-finished products. Eliot feels emotionally attached to India because of Mrs. Sen, for whom he has become a confidant (he often witnesses her sadness and nostalgia).

Another position is taken by Mrs. Sen's husband, who wants his wife to adapt to the new conditions. He assures Eliot's mother that his wife will learn to drive by the end of December. A. Dobrinescu in this context notes about "imaginary borders that separate the characters who belong to the same culture" [131, p. 102].

The characters' inner world as well as their thoughts and experiences are endowed with imaginary / invisible borders. Mrs. Sen does not want to accept American life. The heroine often mentions her home, India. She refuses to drive because she believes she will never be able to adapt fully to America.

S. Raj notes that "the author tells about the psychological shocks that an immigrant faces in a foreign country. First of all, these are constant clashes caused by cultural "transplantation" [175, p. 464]. That is why Mrs. Sen is skeptical towards her still artificial homeland and does not want to give up her Indian identity.

The writer portrays a marginal character, whom "the situation of changing the cultural environment motivates to a certain "protective" position" [63, p. 101]. J. Lahiri tends to reveal the peculiarities of Eastern life, thus demonstrating India in her literary texts, given the dominance of American models of thinking.

Identity's "correction" of J. Lahiri's characters takes place in the conditions of gradual assimilation to the new cultural environment. There is a stage of the old identity's "folding" and the formation of a transcultural new one. That's why one day Mrs. Sen asks Eliot to put on his shoes. They get in the car and Mrs. Sen wants to join the main road. The heroine knows how to drive, but is noticeably nervous.

Mrs. Sen is not sure that anything will change when she gets her driver's license, as Mr. Sen assured her. The heroine is often distracted behind the wheel, nervous when leaving on the main road. Being careless while driving, Mrs. Sen gets into an adventure and hits the car on a telephone pole. She and Eliot received minor

scratches, but were not injured. The car is the first step to assimilation. However, Mrs. Sen's inability to learn to drive becomes a symbol of her inability to adapt to the American way of life.

The heroine realizes that in order to maintain a precious connection with India (she needs to go to the store every day to buy fish), she must learn to live in America, and therefore, get behind the wheel of a car. Her attempts to achieve this take place during an excursion with Eliot to the sea to pick up the fish ordered in advance. The desire to get fish is too strong, and the bus passengers complain about the unpleasant fish smell, so the heroine decides to go by car.

M. Tlostanova notes that "the specificity of multiple, variable, dynamic and unequal identity of modern man was clearly manifested in transculturation concept" [91, p. 1]. It is transcultural identity that most fully expresses Ms. Sen's border subjectivity.

The heroine appears as two cultures' mixture and therefore loses her integrity. Cultural "confusion" "returns" her back each time to the starting point and at the same time creates her identity's new imagological image. Ms. Sen's decision to drive a car means her desire for independence and to some extent for American realities' acceptance, and hence "partial or secondary ethnicity's" acceptance [70, p. 17].

The heroine understands that in order to "survive" in a new culture, she needs to "let go" the past. The first attempts to cross the cultural border were unsuccessful. Mrs. Sen, who feels neither Asian nor American, takes the role of cultural mediator one hundred percent and consciously, chooses a car that initially caused her a great sense of fear, largely related to the conditional "meeting" of her, native, and new, unfamiliar culture.

The main character's trauma and identity crisis is at the story's heart. S. Raj notes that "the thirst to learn to drive a car is not aimed at achieving movement freedom regardless of her eternally busy husband, but is a reflection of the cultural propaganda of Bengal, where the wife must be a good housewife, cook and carefully choose

fish” [175, p. 465].

Mr. Sen explains to the police that his wife does not have a driver's license. Frightened, they go home. Mrs. Sen prepares Eliot a meal and then she hides in the bedroom. Eliot hears Mrs. Sen crying. Mr. Sen explains to Eliot's mother what happened and offers to reimburse her for the month. The husband wants symbolically to “pay off” from the accident and remove from his wife all the guilt and responsibility for Eliot's life. Proof of his wife's maladaptation to American life is her inability to care for children.

In order to get rid of nostalgia for “our”, it is necessary “to weaken the nostalgic thread that connects immigrants with the mythologized house, go beyond their fixed “I” and understand the features of a new, hybrid identity” [171, p. 77].

The symbolic “failure” to achieve this turns into a real tragedy for Mrs. Sen: her assimilation attempts end in a car accident, as a result of which she is forbidden to take care of the children. The heroine is left alone; alone with her inner experiences in a still alien to her American house. Isolated from her family and friends and pushed out of her own house, the heroine identifies American life with irritability and aggression.

The story shows a stereotypical image of an Indian woman who “sacrifices” herself and stays hopeless in the walls of an American apartment. The heroine is driven into a dead end of her own, but in fact someone else's apartment. She never thought she would be so far from home.

Mrs. Sen understands that everyone but her wanted her to “reconcile” with American reality: her husband, who wanted her to learn to drive, the policeman who didn't arrest her and didn't ask to pay the fine for the accident, the fishmongers, who always left orders for her. It all depended on Ms. Sen's efforts and desires. But she did not change anything and stayed in American apartment's “cage”.

A. Dobrinescu notes that the collection stories “touch the visible and imaginary borders that the characters must cross in order

to find their true identity” [131, p. 101].

The story shows the complex cultural relations between India and the West. The heroine is “caught” by two cultures that do not reconcile in her inner world. American culture does not displace Indian and continues to be “foreign” to Mrs. Sen.

Continuing to keep the status of “conditional existence there” and “permanent resident here”, the heroine is both an American and non-American. Her transcultural consciousness is in constant motion, each time passing cultural initiation’s stage. Ms. Sen’s consciousness is synonymous with symbolic “identification”, which, according to H. Bhabha, “is always a return to identity’s image, which bears the splitting stamp in another place from which this identity originates” [123, p. 45].

The heroine does not know how “our” / “other’s” borders coincide and whether they coincide at all. All this makes it necessary to realize the “blurred” difference between “our” / “other”, because the “cultural distance” between immigrants and indigenous people is very large. In this context, N. Bidasiuk notes that “no matter how hard they try to merge with the Americans masses, they will not be on the same level with white citizens and will not get rid of their origin” [14, p. 74].

Mrs. Sen realizes that to be “different” means to be “excellent, inferior and incapable of assimilation” [191, p. 4]. The unconscious nature of the “other” puts her on the border or, most often, outside the “norm” [42, p. 78]. The heroine accepts the “fragment” metaphor forever, because her identity, being composed of elements of several cultures, is devoid of integrity.

Characterizing the collection, S. Kasbekar remarks: “J. Lahiri’s characters are not stereotyped. They change, although their ethnic origin is the same. They face the symbolic “fragmentation” and “continents’ switching” and realize that, in fact, they are alien and alienated” [146, p. 74]. Mrs. Sen’s image, her American non-assimilation, is a good example in this context. The heroine feels

“this special feeling, this double consciousness, this feeling of constant self-contemplation through the eyes of others, evaluation of the soul by the measure of the world, which looks at you with contempt and pity” [132, p. 12].

After the accident, Eliot wears the house keys around his neck. His mother does not want any caregiver. She realized that she had entrusted her son to a woman she barely knew. Like Mrs. Sen, Eliot’s mother is also alone (there is no information about Eliot’s father), she eats her grief with American food and wine and thus isolates herself from her son and the surrounding reality. When she calls Eliot and asks if he’s all right, the boy thinks about the answer and looks out the window at the gray clouds that symbolize his inner world and expose his sadness.

Eliot assures his mother that he is all right, but in fact suffers from loneliness, thinks of Mrs. Sen and misses her very much. The boy’s pain was noticed only by Mrs. Sen, who empathized and tried to “hide” it through anecdotes and interesting cases from her life. Enriched by new cultural experience, Eliot forgets about his loneliness for a while.

The story’s title “Mrs. Sen’s” means the house, the place where the main character is. She is a woman who reluctantly followed her husband to a new country and is now unable to feel at home; unable to become part of the new life her husband had chosen.

Busy with work, Mr. Sen does not notice the sadness in his wife’s eyes. Only Eliot sees her inner state, but can not help. The husband does not care about his wife’s problems, he thinks that a comfortable American apartment will not let her get bored. Even after the accident, the husband “shuts down” from his wife and explains to Eliot’s mother that she is asleep, although in reality Mrs. Sen is crying.

Another no less important collection story is “Sexy”, which is thematically different from others. The difficulties of the Bengali couple’s family relations come to the fore, rather than the identity

problem in the new cultural environment. The story shows the collapse of the marital relationship of the young generation of immigrants.

Unlike other stories, the main character is not an Indian, but an American. The main characters – Bengali Dev and American Miranda – “depart” from “their” culture. The heroine is interested in the hitherto unknown Bengali culture, which she identified only with religion. Previously, she had a distorted view of Indian culture.

Miranda is interested in India because she has never heard of this country and knows nothing about it. She likes to learn about Indian traditions. The heroine wants to get rich culturally and takes the first steps towards this: “She and Laxmi had begun having lunch together at a new Indian restaurant” [151, p. 97].

Miranda orders a “tandoori chicken” [151, p. 96] (Indian chicken dish), cakes with chutney sauce (traditional Indian seasoning). While waiting for the order, she memorizes tourists’ phrases at the end of the menu. Indian phrases turned to be extremely difficult for Miranda. She even wanted to buy a textbook to learn the Bengali alphabet.

The symbolic “membrane” disappears when the character seeks to master Indian culture. There is a sudden realization of oneself and one’s cultural belonging. Miranda discovers “her” India along with all its cultural components.

The story raises the name issue. When the seller called Miranda’s name, Dev noticed that it had an Indian component (Mira). He explained that he had an aunt, also called Mira. That is why the heroine seeks to learn to write the Bengali letters that make the Indian part of her name. The heroine faces difficulties, but later she gets something like Bengali letters, although she is still not sure if she wrote correctly.

The story touches on gender and race issue. Dev lover is extremely exotic for Miranda. When Miranda first saw him, she didn’t know for sure what his nationality was: Spanish or Lebanese.

The man had a mustache, he did not have wedding ring, his fingers were tanned, and black hair grew on them. The heroine heard the stranger's accent.

Dev represents one hundred percent American. He destroys traditional notions of Indian marriage of honesty and trust. He met Miranda in a cosmetics store. Dev then chose a perfume for his wife, who was to fly to India for a few weeks. Miranda and Dev began dating. They met at her house every night. As Dev's wife called the same time every day (it was four p.m. in India and six a.m. in Boston), Dev hurried home to pick up the phone and say that everything was fine.

Dev does not think about his cultural origin. He behaves like a real American, despite the fact that only in time was he able to understand the American pronunciation from the TV screen. He mentions only "drinking mango juice in India" [151, p. 94], although now he accustomed to "smoked whitefish on a cracker" [151, p. 98]. Even after his wife's arrival, he continues to meet Miranda secretly. Now he visits her in the morning for a few hours only, telling his wife he needs to run. Unlike the Bengal men, Dev is not restrained in his attitude towards Miranda. He gives her flowers and calls her by name; they go to the movies together. Unlike previous suitors, Dev was the first to pay for her, to open the door for her, he did not hesitate to kiss her at the movies or in a restaurant.

Dev admires women's bare legs. He confesses to his mistress that she is the first woman whose legs he has seen completely. The character is symbolically "separated" from his wife: they have not had an intimate relationship for a long time, because his wife is usually in India. Dev explains that he knows the loneliness feeling.

Miranda is opposed to an Indian woman for whom family cult is very important. Miranda flirts with a still unfamiliar Indian man who admires her outspoken American clothes. Miranda embodies the stereotypes of American looseness. To seduce her lover, she buys a candid dress, stockings and high-heeled shoes. The heroine wants to



be Dev's mistress, so she looks especially attractive. She is even interested in Dev's cultural origin: she learns Indian words and phrases, eats Bengali dishes, studies the Indian map.

The story traces the varying assimilation degrees of Indian immigrants to the new American environment. We are talking about minor heroes, the Dixits, Miranda's neighbors. The Dixits moved to Boston when Miranda went to school. The family was never taken for granted. American men have always condemned Mr. Dixit for a poorly cleaned lawn in front of his house, and their house has spoiled the whole look of the neighborhood. The women did not invite Mrs. Dixit to their company, which often gathered by the pool.

Some minor characters in the story are devoid of author's sympathy. First, these are children who make fun of the Dixits, as well as men who do not like Mr. Dixit's lawn.

S. Kazbear notes: "Sexy" is thematically different, but also tends to the identity problem, which is felt by many immigrants" [146, p. 76]. The Dixits children feel American bullying. Miranda remembers how they laughed and scoffed at their names, how these children were completely different from them, ordinary American children. The Dixits children felt the rejection fear, so they often stood at a distance at the bus stop. Now Miranda is ashamed that as a child she and her friends humiliated little Dixits.

The heroine remembers how she was once invited to the birthday of little Dixit. Then the huge number of shoes by the doorstep surprised Miranda. Mrs. Dixit's hands were painted with henna in the form of stars and zigzags. However, most of all she was struck by the picture that hung over the stairs. It was the Indian goddess Kali, who was highly respected by the Dixits, but who frightened Miranda so much. The heroine remembers: "She was too frightened to eat the [birthday] cake" [151, p. 96]. Since then, Miranda has been afraid to walk past the Dixits house.

The author describes marital relationships and factors that cause disharmony. Only later, the heroine realizes her mistake and does not

want to ruin the family life of an Indian woman. Miranda returns Dev to the traditional values that promote marriage preservation. She knew that she would tell Dev about the end of their relationship, that it was unfair to both her and Dev's wife. The heroine chooses loneliness and no longer wants to be a mistress.

The story "This Blessed House" has a special theme – the author's appeal to the Christian culture's artifacts in order to demonstrate the characters' different attitudes towards the "other".

P. Artemyeva notes that "for writers with binary ethnoidentity is characterized by a special attitude to the culture's artifacts, around which certain textual situations can be built" [4, p. 46]. The cultural artifact plays an important role in the precedent text's perception, as it contains the past and the present.

Bengali Sanjeev moves with his wife Twinkle to a newly purchased house in America. It is in the house that the couple acquaints with various Christian culture's artifacts left over from previous owners.

Husband and wife react differently to this or that finding: for the wife, artifact of another culture is identified with an imaginary "in search of treasures" game, while for her husband it is garbage that must be get rid of. The story's culmination is housewarming celebration and the guests' fierce desire to play with Twinkle "in search of treasures".

The story's text acquires the features of a "multicultural fiction text" (a term introduced by M. Abdeluaheb) [1]. The author introduces Christian culture's precedent phenomena and fills the text with religious vocabulary: "a statue of the Virgin Mary", "poster of Christ", "a dishtowel that had the Ten Commandments printed on it", "wooden cross" [151, p. 139], as well as some quotations from the Bible scriptures.

V. Krasnykh notes, "behind the precedent phenomenon there is always a certain idea about it, general and obligatory for all carriers of this or that national-cultural mentality" [57, p. 9]. However "this

kind of reference to culture is superficial in the story, none of their meanings is realized in the text's plot lines, does not contain the author's descriptive comments" [4, p. 48].

The author lists "other" cultural artifacts as things, without taking into account such an important holiness component. In the text, it is traced at the level of a simple list construction: "They discovered the first one..." [151, p. 136].

The neutrality of such "finds" is emphasized, as well as the character's unwillingness to learn another culture, alien to the Indian community's representatives, because "the artifact's recognition occurs when understanding what is behind the thing" [88].

This understanding does not occur, because "individual variants of the "cultural subject's" perception often differ from each other in two or more arbitrarily taken individuals" [38, p. 84], and "each type of culture produces its own symbolic language, its own world's image" [86, p. 30].

The symbolic "collection" is continued by "white porcelain effigy of Christ", "a 3-D post-card of Saint Francis", "a tile trivet depicting a blond, unbearded Jesus", "a framed paint-by-number of the three wise men, against a black velvet background", as well as "a wooden cross key chain" [151, p. 137].

The wooden cross symbol is extremely important; it is an artifact reminiscent of Jesus Christ execution. However, in the story the sacredness of another culture's artifacts is reduced, because it is just fun and play for the characters. The characters do not want to find the meaning and purpose of these things; they just put them on the mantelpiece, thus emphasizing disrespect to the culture of the country they live in.

V. Krasnykh notes, "a precedent phenomenon for two different cultures may have the same expression form, but have different meanings" [56, p. 178]. That is why the characters doubt the importance of the found artifacts ("But it could be worth something" [151, p. 136]) and at the same time demonstrate contempt for sacred

thing of another culture: “She turned it upside down, then stroked, with her index finger, the minuscule frozen folds of its robes” [151, p. 137].

The chaotic arrangement of cultural “finds” which the heroine finds, is demonstrated: “taped to the back of the medicine cabinet” [151, p. 137], “left in one of the drawers” [151, p. 137], “tucked in the linen closet” [151, p. 137], “rolled up behind a radiator in the guest bedroom” [151, p. 139].

The story’s culmination is the very element of the game that is so important for Twinkle. Against the background of different attitudes to the artifacts of another culture, the conflict between the couple is traced. The husband wants to get rid of these findings: “I will tolerate, for now, your little biblical menagerie in the living room. But I refuse to have this” [151, p. 139]. Instead, the wife fills up her searches’ “collection”; “Every day is like a treasure hunt” [151, p. 141].

Cultural symbols play an important role in the story. Along with the artifact, as a Christian culture’s symbol, the text includes the precedent names of Indian national dishes: samosas, curry, chutney.

The wedding ritual is no less important, which acquaints the reader with the Indian culture’s peculiarities, as well as emphasizes the characters’ ethnicity to “their” culture: “At the urging of their matchmakers, they are married in India; in incessant August rains, under a red and orange tent strung with Christmas tree lights on Mandeville Road” [151, p. 143].

N. Valgina emphasizes that “there is always a subtextual, interpretive, functional plan on the depicted life pictures in the fiction text” [18, p. 76]. The author deliberately inscribes Indian verbal components in order to convey the national-ethnic Indian flavor, important for immigrant characters.

At the same time, the character’s desire to join the West culture is emphasized (this is achieved through the precedent names of Bach and Mahler, and not through the artifacts found in the house).

Sanjeev does this through music: he “listen to his new Bach CD” [151, p. 156], “Mahler's Fifth Symphony” [151, p. 140].

The cultural artifact in the fiction text has a symbolic meaning; it is significant for the culture in which it operates, and therefore is seen as a factor in information's symbolic “coding”. The story uses elements of two cultures, which is important for a writer with a binary identity.

The presence of artifacts compares the “our” / “other” contrasts. Precedent phenomena of “other” culture play an important role in the story; they tell about the heroes' character and show their attitude towards “foreign” culture. The characters' reaction to another culture's artifact speaks of intercultural communication failure.

Ignorance, misunderstanding, disrespect and unwillingness to know “other” culture that “interferes” are demonstrated. The precedent titles in the story emphasize the importance of ethnicity, which is important for both the character and the author. The story's title is significant, which also appeals to the national and ethnic color and acquaints with both cultures realities.

## **2.2. The problem of characters' existence in a foreign cultural environment in the novel “The Namesake”**

“The Namesake” (2003) is Jhumpa Lahiri's first novel to be on the “New York Times” bestseller list for several weeks. This is the story of one family with an Indian upbringing living in America.

The writer shows a family portrait of the Ganguli family, who immigrated to the United States after a contractual marriage. Although the author does not raise historical issues and does not mention the British colonialism consequences. The novel traces a distinct “Russian footprint” – Lahiri emphasizes that Bengals respect Russian literature. It is known that young Ashoke managed to read “The Brothers Karamazov”, “Parents and Children”, “Fathers and Sons”, “Anna Karenina” and “War and Peace”.

The young couple raises a daughter and a son, and a so-called “generation gap” arises between them: the children want “American freedom” and the parents want to follow cultural traditions. Such a problem is not alien to the author: Jhumpa’s parents emigrated from India, so she, like her characters, is on the border, trying to combine two cultures into one.

The novel has many autobiographical features, which is typical of Indian literature in the United States. It is no coincidence that Ashima (the protagonist’s mother) can be compared to Lahiri’s mother who emigrated to America and sought to fully assimilate with this country’s culture and way of life.

The writer paints a portrait of an Indian family in which, along with cultural identity’s problem, the problem of the connection between the two generations is raised. The Bengali family is shown from the point of duality: on the one hand, it is the desire to preserve “their” Indian traditions, and on the other it is the acquisition of new American ones.

Pregnant Ashima, the novel’s heroine, feels culturally “different” in America, thinking that she is almost the only Bengali in the hospital. For medical workers and pregnant women in the hospital Ashima is American, so no one can guess the language barrier that arises between them, because her husband Ashoke addresses her in Bengali, which only the two of them can understand.

The first cultural clash takes place in the hospital: when Ashima was brought lunch, she refused to eat chicken (Americans eat it with the skin, which is not acceptable for the heroine). Because of his special respect for animals, particularly cows, Ashima does not eat beef at all; for her, as for the rest of the Hindus, this is unacceptable.

Ashima also hears many affectionate words and phrases (“I love you”, “my dear”), which other men say to their wives. She blushes, realizing that she will never hear such tender words from her Ashoke (just as she will not wait for flowers on the occasion of the child’s birth).

Affectionate forms is something strange for Ashima, because in India, even calling a man by name is considered an intimate affair. At home, the heroine never calls Ashoke by name (even after his death, she will continue to say “my husband” instead of “my Ashoke”). It’s a taboo for her, and she only found out her husband’s name after the engagement.

Ashima’s image represents a symbolic “duality”. This is characteristic of Lahiri’s writing, because most of her characters have a deep cultural connotation. In Ashima’s image there is a symbolic “merger” of different cultural codes. Ashima combines several semantic roles: she will forever be an Indian daughter for her parents and an American mother for her children.

Ashima, like no other, is a conditional bridge between the two cultures. In the maternity hospital the heroine feels a split personality; she blushes when asked to undress. Ashima takes off her sari and puts on a cotton robe, which is a bit embarrassing: unlike a sari, the robe barely reaches her knees.

Clothing is the subject of a symbolic “transformation” of an Indian woman into an American one: Ashima looks no different from an American woman, but mentally she is at home, so she is sad looking at her watch, presented by her parents. “American seconds tick on top of her pulse point” [153, p. 7].

The watch conventionally divides Ashima’s life into two worlds: although it already shows American time, for her it is a symbolic “return” home. This is the last her parents’ gift, which flaunts A.G. initials (Ashima Ganguli).

Unlike her husband, for whom a watch is a common material thing (as for other Americans), for Ashima it is a conditional countdown of time not at home, and real time she used to compare on her fingers, as Indians do: you need to list the red brown rings that are painted henna on the fingers. “She calculates the Indian time on her hands. It is nine and a half hours ahead in Calcutta, already evening, half past eight” [153, p. 7].

Attention to detail distinguishes Lahiri's writing among other writers: for example, we may not know about the characters' relationship, but an accurate description of the character's appearance, or his clothing style adds to the duality problem. And not only the watch is a "home thing", Ashima brought with her "Desh" magazine, bought in Calcutta. This magazine's issue is special also because on the eleventh page there is her father's picture – an unforgettable Calcutta's view.

Like the magazine, the heroine's hands symbolize two cultures, and the detail also plays an important role here: about twenty bracelets she used to wear speak of Indian culture, while the plastic one obtained at the hospital tends to the American. Like on the watch, her name is written on the plastic bracelet, but in English.

Ashima is grateful to her Bengali friends who visit her at the hospital, but realizes that they are just a replacement for those who really need to be with her at this time. She misses her family who stayed in Calcutta.

Ashima realizes that her baby will be no different from a thousand others. The very fact of her son's birth seems something accidental for her, like everything in America, because like herself, she mentally considers her son "orphan". Future motherhood frightens her: not because she is here alone; the heroine identifies life in America with some dubious experiment.

The curtains around Ashima's bed are conditional wall that separates Ashima from other pregnant women. They interfere her when Ashima wants to talk to American women. Having lived in America for some time, the heroine already knows that Americans, despite their openness, are focused mainly on their personal lives, what they prefer to remain silent. The heroine perceives the hospital as a place where people often get sick and die. Ashima understands that if she gave birth at home, her mother would be with her.

The baby is noticeably different from the parents in appearance, because his skin is lighter. Holding his son in his arms, Ashoke



remembers some moments of the terrible accident near Calcutta. The fact that Ashoke was found among a pile of twisted metal is proof of the first miracle in his life, instead his son's birth is the second, which completely changed his life.

Ashoke was sure that if he did not die in the accident, he was destined to be born again. "He was born twice in India, and then a third time, in America. Three lives by thirty" [153, p. 18]. "Instead of thanking God he thanks Gogol, the Russian writer who had saved his life" [153, p. 18]. Ashoke does not thank God, because he does not believe in his existence (he adheres to Marx theory), although his parents constantly prayed for his recovery.

The author tells how the character was fond of reading. He still remembers his grandfather's instruction: "Read all the Russians, and then reread them", his grandfather had said. "They will never fail you" [153, p. 12]. Ashoke realizes that he cannot thank the book, which, unlike him, has suffered more. The character is convinced that it was the Russian writer who "saved" his life.

The symbolic "victory" is present in the meaning of Ashoke's name, whose daknam (home name) is Mithu: "Ashoke, the name of an emperor, means "he who transcends grief" [153, p. 21]. The author addresses the semantics of the father's name, but does not focus on it, as is the case with his son's name, which contains a number of personal problems.

The accident allowed Ashoke to reconsider his own life and helped him think about another future. "He imagined not only walking, but walking away, as far as he could from the place in which he was born and in which he had nearly died" [153, p. 17]. Since then, India for Ashoke has been identified with an accident.

Subconsciously, the character wants to "escape" so that nothing reminds him of that case. That is why after graduating from college, without telling his parents, Ashoke sends documents to several universities abroad and learns that one of them offers him a scholarship. Therefore, despite his relatives persuasion, the character

decides to start a new life in America. Ashoke remembers his dubious first impressions of this country: “A small gray city caked with snow” [153, p. 17].

Like her husband, Ashima thinks about a new life. She is gradually getting used to America, to Cambridge. The heroine, without even realizing it, begins to think like an American, although internally she remains an Indian. She misses home, so she really wants to see her parents.

The problem of cultural otherness is directly related to name's duality. The name is an important novel's transcultural problem, as it covers three cultural discourses: Russian, Indian and American. The main character is named after the Russian classic Nikolai Gogol, but in the novel Gogol is not a surname, but a name.

N. Zhluktenko notes that “The Namesake” publication by Jhumpa Lahiri returned Gogol's phenomenon to the cultural and literary-critical space of modern America in a different context” [36, p. 43]. The name of the main character is given special attention, because the name supports home traditions and at the same time shows duality's features. No family left in Calcutta has a telephone, so young parents announce the child's birth through telegrams only, sent by Ashoke to Calcutta's various parts.

The tradition of choosing a name for a child is quite interesting. Unlike home name, Bengalis are in no hurry to choose an official one. This extremely important mission is entrusted to the oldest person in the family. The Ganguli follow “their” traditions when entrusting this important mission to the oldest member of the family, Ashima's grandmother, who was in her eighties and who has already named six great-grandchildren. Grandmother was visibly worried, as she had to choose the name of the first sahib in their family (a nobleman, a gentleman in India).

Grandmother's letter is fatally lost, although the old woman personally sent it a month ago. Leaning on a stick, Ashima's grandmother barely reached the post office, because she had not left

the house for almost ten years. There are two names in the letter: for a daughter and a son, which forever remain a secret that only the grandmother knows. The reader never learns the real name of the newborn. The character's name is "lost" forever (it will be called a fictitious, false name), as well as his identity will "lost" later.

Ashima and Ashoke do not name their son until they receive a letter from Calcutta. Even at the hospital, they leave a line in the questionnaire that needs to be filled out to obtain a birth certificate. The couple doesn't care too much about the lack of their son's name, "they both know, an infant doesn't really need a name. Names can wait. In India parents take their time" [153, p. 21].

Ashima and Ashoke must wait for a letter from their grandmother before naming the newborn. It becomes clear that the long-awaited letter from home, ironically, never arrived. N. Vysotska connects its loss with the symbolic "threat or even separation's inevitability of the diaspora from the mainland culture" [23, p. 288]. Parents "betray" their traditions and are involuntarily forced to accept American rules, because they enroll the child under a "home" (false) name, which will be changed later.

Through the name of their newborn son, parents face a cultural problem: "They learn that in America, a baby cannot be released from the hospital without a birth certificate. And that a birth certificate needs a name" [153, p. 22]. Ashima's persuasion does not bring the desired result when she explains to the doctor that she and her husband cannot name the child themselves. Alternatively, in the birth certificate, the doctor suggests writing "boy Ganguli" and then entering the name chosen by the parents.

The doctor does not understand the parents who do not have a spare name for the son. He warns: "You will have to appear before a judge, pay a fee" [153, p. 22], but the Ganguli couple does not pay attention to this. They do not want to neglect "their" traditions and do not understand the meaning of the words "spare name". Even if the parents do not like the grandmother's variant, out of respect for her

and the traditions, this choice cannot be challenged.

Ganguli are surprised when the doctor suggests naming a newborn by his name or in honor of a relative: “But this is not possible, Ashima and Ashoke think to themselves. This tradition does not exist for Bengalis, naming a son after father or grandfather, a daughter after mother or grandmother” [153, p. 23].

Unlike Americans, who often name a child after a father or grandfather, in India such a choice is condemned and ridiculed, because Bengali names have always been considered sacred, independent and inviolable. Therefore, it is impossible to “share” a name or bequeath it.

“Letters arrive from her parents, from her husband's parents, from aunts and uncles and cousins and friends, from everyone, it seems, but Ashima's grandmother” [153, p. 28]. In the end, the doctor asks the parents to name the child after the person they admire, and Ashoke immediately mentions the writer who, ironically, “saved” his life. The character still remembers his favorite pages from “Anna Karenina”, “The Brothers Karamazov”, “Parents and Children”, “Fathers and Sons”, “War and Peace”. For many years, these works seemed the greatest world's treasure to Ashoke.

N. Zhluktenko notes that “in the novel, it provokes the first clash of different ethnocultural traditions” [36, p. 43]. For the first time, the memory of the accident evokes in Ashoke not horror but symbolic “gratitude”; he immediately chooses the “perfect” home name for his son. This is about the Russian writer Gogol, in whose honor the baby is given a temporary *daknam* (the name by which friends, relatives and other close people call a person).

“*Daknam*” is used only in a homely, relaxed atmosphere; it reminds us of childhood and that life is not always serious, complicated and formal. A person with an official name and “*daknam*” usually combines several identities and has several incarnations. We notice several incarnations in Ashima and Ashoke's images: Ashima's *daknam* is Monu, Ashoke's – Mithu.

Although Ashima and Ashoke were already adults, relatives in India continued to call them by their first names. Along with “daknam”, there is “bhalonam” – the official (good) name used in society. “Good names appear on envelopes, on diplomas, in telephone directories, and in all other public places. (For this reason, letters from Ashima’s mother say “Ashima” on the outside, “Monu” on the inside)” [153, p. 21].

Unlike the official ones, the daknams do not matter, because they are just a gentle form of address. Daknams are not registered because they are used exclusively in oral speech. Daknams can even be funny and silly, and sometimes a person can have several daknams, which over time allows you to decide on the best option. For example, a newborn is quickly given one of the daknams – “buro”, which in Bengali means “an old man”.

The names duality is also present in S. Rushdie’s works: “The narrator uses the actual name under which one or another figure entered history, but also offers another name, which, in his opinion, more fully reveals (especially hidden) features a certain person” [63, p. 80].

There is the first violation of “their” traditions, because under American law it is not allowed to discharge a baby without registering an official name. “In those six days, there is no time to think of a good name for Gogol. They get an express passport with “Gogol Ganguli” typed across the United States of America seal, Ashoke signing on his son’s name” [153, p. 35].

Ashima approves her husband’s choice, because she knows how, through his book, Gogol, a writer, played an important role in Ashoke’s life, whose name is “lord, the one who rises above grief”. Unlike her husband, Ashima has never read Gogol’s works, moreover, it is only daknam, which should not be taken seriously, because at present it is a simple formality for hospital discharge.

The novel clearly shows the autobiography features. The writer also has two names: the official Nilanjana and the home Jhumpa.

Almost no one mentions the first name, because even at school it seemed difficult to pronounce and primary school teachers replaced it with home name.

A similar thing is observed in S. Rushdie's biography. In the Arab-Islamic tradition, where the writer comes from, there are several types of names: *alama* – a personal name that is mostly used among relatives and close friends, *tahalus* – pseudonyms, other additional names, *kunya* – “a special kind of nickname used metaphorically and indicated the personal qualities of its bearer” [83, p. 124].

D. Mazin notes that “meaningful names help not only to better understand this or that image, but also create additional contextual meanings. At the same time, the author often plays on elements of different cultural systems or spheres within one culture, mythological and intertextual connections” [63, p. 80]. Three cultures' conflict haunts the character throughout his life, because he connects life troubles with his own name.

Gogol “rebels against the artificiality, the “otherness” of his imposed name. During his university years, he even abandoned it, replacing it with *Nikhil*: Indian in sound, this name is easily transformed into an American style” [36, p. 44]. There is a metaphor of a symbolic “dash”, because the character “could not adequately weave himself into the pattern of the American mainstream, he really is “nothing”, a lack sign in terms of his socio-cultural affiliation to a particular group” [23, p. 292].

In this case, the individual component of the writer's poetics reminds of itself. A nuance such as a name change usually means deep inner trauma, cultural contradictions, and a division into “us” and “them”, “ours” and “others”. The opposite is observed in the novel: with the name change the character gets rid of the “cultural break”, alienation; he does not try to understand the way of life of the “other” (American) world, but is once again convinced that Indian culture will forever remain “foreign” to him.

“The third culture” (not Indian and not American) contributes to the internal harmonization of heterogeneous components, which in various combinations constitute the dynamic identities of the modern globalized world” [22, p. 6].

The character seeks to become a “true American” and to move completely away from the Bengali traditions of his parents, first-generation immigrants who continue to keep ties to the “desh” emotionally and mentally, while mastering the American culture’s advantages.

Gogol’s parents want to get used to America, but they realize that they are foreigners and will never become this country’s full residents. Although at the birth of their second child, the Ganguli family already follows American traditions (they give their daughter only one name, which, like Gogol’s one, also undergoes a transformation: the Indian “Sonali” easily fits into the abbreviated American context “Sonia”), and at home Ashima begins to wear a robe instead of a sari, however she has a connection with “desh”: the heroine not only “returns” home, she attracts her children to Indian culture.

Ashima mentions how she sang lullabies in Bengali, “teaching Gogol to say “Dida” and “Dadu” and “Mamu”, to recognize his grandparents and his uncle from photographs” [153, p. 34]. She remembers reading her childhood’s poems, telling legends (although after such Indian culture’s “lessons” she asked her child to watch American channels to practice the English he spoke in kindergarten).

Ashima realizes that he will never get used to America, and therefore will not become “her” in this country. She admits to herself: “I don’t want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It’s not right. I want to go back” [153, p. 26]. That is why the heroine continues to keep a conditional connection with her home through letters she often rereads and black-and-white family photos.

When Ashima stays with her son alone in an American house that is foreign to her, she cries. The need to overcome the

psychological barrier is demonstrated: Ashima lives with her husband in a furnished apartment, raises two children, but misses “her walls” very much.

N. Vysotska notes that “in the early stages, newcomers from Asia to the United States, faced with non-recognition wall, often chose the same and invisible” [23, p. 330]. The symbolic “pattern” of invisibility is Ashima, who, not having the best impressions of the house, as well as of America in general, writes in home letters about the benefits of American life: gas supplied around the clock, hot and cold water, washing machine and more. She keeps her disappointment to herself, although in reality “It is not at all what she had expected” [153, p. 24].

Despite the fact that the heroine creates “her” little India in the American house, outside she seems American. To be perceived by Americans “as her”, from time to time Ashima wears American clothes. “Constructing” her own identity within the new cultural space proved difficult for the heroine. N. Vysotska in this context speaks of “ambiguous consequences, as the “connection” can easily turn into a “rope” [23, p. 330].

The cultural difference towards the “desh” concept is clearly seen in Ashima’s inner world: the heroine feels her non-belonging to the American way of life when she remembers how in India she was accompanied by twenty-six family members, and in America there is nobody “her” to even celebrate birth her firstborn’s birth.

The heroine is afraid to raise a child in America, where life seems unreliable and too harsh. That is why Ashima artificially forms the Indian environment in a country still foreign to her and seeks to expand her friends and acquaintances circle on the principle of such a fate.

Ashima remembers: “Gogol is one, grabbing, walking a little, repeating words in two languages. He calls his mother “Ma”, his father “Baba” [153, p. 31]. She and Ashoke often attended kathakali dances, sitar concerts, Indian performances, involved children in



“their” literature and history, and introduced them to religious rites. That is why little Gogol was forced to study Tagore poems and to know the Gods’ names by heart. The importance of “their” culture for parents is illustrated, but for the children it is only an artificial copy of the still incomprehensible Indian life. The verb “forced” clearly emphasizes the children’s reluctance to learn unnecessary (instead, so important for parents).

The generation gap problem is clearly traced in the novel. Unlike their parents, whose American way of life seems somewhat fictitious (parents continue to eat Bengali dishes, speak Bengali, do not drink alcohol, Gogol’s mother wears saris and refuses to drive a car), children have completely different life values (and fictitious for them is Indian life).

This is a particularly important Lahiri’s thematic feature, as well as Asian-American literature in general – generation gap, which, compared with the name, also acquires an important cultural color in the novel. The generation of parents, first-generation immigrants, embodies a national culture that generations of children do not try to preserve.

The author illustrates how in many cases children “depart” from their parents’ indigenous culture. This is clearly seen in the kitchen: Gogol’s parents treat food with respect, while Gogol can throw away an uneaten hamburger or just a bitten apple, as other Americans do.

Unlike Ashima, her children are completely Americanized. If for Ashima visits to India are especially vulnerable (it is important to follow Indian traditions), for her children it is just a visit, they miss America more.

Frequent visits to India are perceived differently by generations, which consists in different attitudes to the important “desh” concept for Indians, which literally means “homeland” in Bengali – a specific place where relatives live in the male line. For the generation of Ashima and Ashoke, every trip to India is especially important, because in America they still feel like strangers, comparing this

condition with a symbolic “long-term pregnancy” and eternal expectation. It seems to them that they (people of another culture) are treated with some feeling of pity, anxiety and respect at the same time.

In this context, S. Rushdie stressed that the Indian “identity is both multifaceted and incomplete. Sometimes we feel we are riding two cultures, and sometimes – that we are falling between chairs. But no matter how ambiguous and changeable this place is, it is very fruitful for a writer” [179, p. 15].

In the novel, it is Ashima who “falls between chairs” and is “nowhere”: neither India nor America can she call her home. Every time she and her husband visit India, they need to get used to the old way of life again, but once the Ganguli have fully experienced it, it’s time to go back to America. The same thing is happening in America: it takes a few days to immerse yourself in American life. Therefore, the characters can not say for sure which culture they belong to more.

Ganguli understand the inevitable “break” of children with their parents’ culture, and the reason for this is generation gap. That’s why Gogol is turned on by American TV series in order to improve American pronunciation.

In order to “preserve” their culture, parents resort to American life at home. Ashima bakes a turkey for the first time on Thanksgiving, but she can’t help but add “her” spices to the dish: cumin and red pepper; they begin to celebrate American Christmas and hang a Christmas wreath on the door, paint eggs for Easter and, as true Americans, bury them in the house. From year to year, they celebrate these days more and more solemnly, which is especially appealing to their children born in America.

Parents often make such compromises and aware the symbolic “betrayal” of their culture, but understand that no matter how hard they try to hide their own traditions, customs, life, they will forever remain “others” (even for their children), those who live in the

territory of the receiving party.

Parents notice a cultural difference: unlike them, children speak English fluently, though with an accent that always confuses them. That is why little Gogol in the third grade was sent to classes in Bengali language and culture, which took place every Saturday. The character does not want to study there, he prefers dancing and football, rather than boring textbooks on yellow paper, similar to toilet one.

Bengali seminars are demonstrated by the author through negatively colored vocabulary (boring textbooks, yellow toilet paper), which once again confirms the rejection of Indian culture by second-generation immigrants.

Ashima and Ashoke are aware of the importance of the second generation's symbolic "farewell" to their parents' indigenous culture. Unlike parents, children develop an American transcultural identity.

When the author describes Indian holidays through the eyes of children, she again uses negatively colored vocabulary: children eat "tasteless" vegetarian dishes (food as a process and as a dish is an important indicator between generations: for some it is a sacred ritual, and for others it is just hunger satisfying), they are "forced" to sprinkle Gods' statuettes with flowers and "pull" to "their" party.

The attitude of Ashima and Ashoke's children, second-generation immigrants, to their parents' homeland is unambiguous: India for Sonia and Gogol is an ordinary country on the map. So, in one of the lectures on the problems of Indian identity, Gogol hears the strange, but still incomprehensible to him "ABCD" concept (American Born Confused Deshi), who does not know the answer to the question "Where are you from?"

The character is bored, because he can not stand sociologists' theoretical considerations, along with their grotesque incomprehensible to him professional ABCD acronym to denote people like him. Gogol does not consider himself ABCD – a man of mixed identity; born in America confused Hindu.

Gogol realizes that, unlike his parents, for whom the “desh” concept is the basis of cultural self-identification, he never thinks about the homeland in Indian terms. “Desh” for Gogol, as for other Americans, is America.

However, later the character realizes that in fact he has no real homeland. This happens when, during a school trip, he and his classmates look for the names of their probable ancestors in the cemetery. Gogol finds himself in a symbolic “cultural oddness”.

In this episode N. Vysotska sees “a dualistic dislocation motif and at the same time the initial stage of merging with a new place” [23, p. 290]. Gogol’s classmates quickly find their long-dead “namesakes” in the cemetery, both by name and surname, while in Gogol’s image the symbolic “transit” of being “between” is read and at the same time a state of cultural loneliness. The character understands that his last name cannot be there a priori, because, except for his parents and sister, he has no relatives in America.

N. Bidasiuk emphasizes that “the “desh” issue is most clearly divide the generation of immigrants” [11, p. 100]. The first generation continues to hold on to established views, they feel connected to their homeland, where they really feel protected. The symbolic cultural “gap” means freedom, new heights’ conquest. Immigrant children experience another conflict: unlike their parents, they do not seek to master the Indian heritage, they feel “at home” in America.

Immigrants of different generations define “home” concept in their own way. For the first generation, home is associated with the actual birthplace and is identical with nostalgia, looking back, a sense of cultural loss. The second generation embodies movement, incompleteness, mobility and the ability for cultural transformation.

The second generation goes beyond a fixed identity, and “home” for them means a polysemantic concept, “which includes moving and a set of real and fictional places, which is more typical for the modern fluid identity of the Asian-American” [12, p. 172].

Nostalgia for “desh” is seen in Ashima’s gastronomic preference (she feels a double consciousness when cooking in the kitchen). The heroine is limited in her choice of food, especially she lacks mustard oil, so she is forced to use American ingredients: rice flakes “Krispies” and peanuts “Planters”. Culinary cultural mixing is demonstrated: “artificial” Indian dishes are prepared from American ingredients. Ashima is sure that, cooked food in America only vaguely resembles food for the poor in Calcutta.

The children became more Americanized than Ashima and Ashoke wanted. Unlike their parents, Gogol and Sonia prefer completely different foods: tuna, pizza, mayonnaise, cheese, burgers and hot dogs. Even on the plane, parents order two different menus: Indian for themselves and American for children. Everyone eats “their” food.

Parents realize that their children have never thought of India as their “desh”, because America is the actual “desh” for them. Culinary issues introduce a cultural parallel: parents follow “their” food consumption manner (avoid American plastic utensils and always eat with their hands), while their children appear “different” in this context: for them, food consumption is a normal daily affair, just hunger satisfying.

Gogol prefers the American lifestyle: Beatles songs, burgers, TV. He does not eat Indian national dishes, and also fundamentally abandons the traditional professions of Indian immigrants: a lawyer or a doctor. Ashima realizes that the language barrier used to be traced with Americans; now it is noticeable with her children, who, unlike their parents, speak with an American accent, simply, casually.

Views on marriage and family are also different. Ashima and Ashoke, as befits a Bengali family, were married by prior arrangement, choosing a partner of the appropriate caste, social status, education. Parents followed Bengali family etiquette and never showed tender feelings to people, did not call each other by

name. The opposite is happening to their children, second-generation immigrants. N. Bidasiuk emphasizes that “important for Indians purity and virginity concepts lose value for Americanized Indians” [11, p. 100].

As befits an American young man, Gogol is not ashamed to meet and live with his girlfriends (which his parents are ashamed to admit to their Bengali friends). The character does not care that his girlfriend Moushumi had relations before him, because he also met several American women and considered it a completely normal phenomenon of American life.

In the end, Gogol marries a girl like himself. His wife smokes and does not want to change her last name, although she is of Bengali origin and has known Gogol since childhood. Unlike parents, children do not consider it their duty to keep the marriage: they do not want responsibility, do not value “family” concept and act in the American way. A year later, Gogol and Moushumi divorced and each returned to his former life, while remaining friends.

Among the diversity of ethnic groups, Gogol wants to become a “true American”. With purely external elements, he tries to change his inner essence and faces a cultural barrier that has been carved in his mind since childhood. The whole work’s plot is subject to the motif of finding a symbolic “way out” of personal imprisonment state. The character himself “chooses” his identity: he is Asian or American, depending on the circumstances. Gogol realizes that America is his formal homeland.

N. Bidasiuk notes that “double roots cutting by two generations leads to the fact that children actually do not have a home, do not have an object for nostalgia” [11, p. 101].

The writer’s poetics is characterized by one of the grammatical tenses predominance. In particular, in the novel it is the use of the present tense (Present Simple), simple language; there is a physical detachment from the past (Ashima is far from home).

It is also worth noting such a feature of the writer’s poetics as

several protagonists within one work. Along with transculturalism theme, the novel is distinguished by four protagonists (Ashima, her husband Ashoke, their son Gogol and Gogol's wife, the Bengali Moushumi).

Cultural hybridity's issue is expanding through national food motif as the personification of "our". Indians have always had a special attitude to food choices: if for Americans, eating is just hunger satisfying, then for Indians, food is sacred. I. Kosheleva notes about "three interconnected components: process (cooking) – object (food) – man" [55, p. 78].

Ashima is a particularly bright triple component: it is Ashima (person) who spends most of the day (process) in the kitchen and knows the taste properties of many spices (object).

Food is associated with the Indian holiday of Annaprazan – the child's first meal of solid food. "There is no baptism for Bengali babies, no ritualistic naming in the eyes of God. Instead, the first formal ceremony of their lives centers around the consumption of solid food" [153, p. 30].

Cooking and eating is a special action for Lahiri's characters, because the superiority of some dishes over others has a strong cultural basis. In this way, food becomes a conditional language and cultural code, which is deciphered only by "ours" Indian culture's representatives. In this context, I. Kosheleva notes that "food serves as a gateway to solving important cultural issues" [55, p. 76].

Various approaches to food consumption are important: sitting on the floor, legs crossed (Hindus believe that in this position food is better digested); eat with your hands (with the right hand only, because the left is considered unclean); strictly observe fasting in accordance with religious holidays; sing Bengali songs; and gather the whole family and, if possible, friends.

A valid aspect of Indian culture – eating together, as well as following basic table manners is emphasizes. It is important to bring people together for cultural exchange, simple casual or intellectual

conversation. At the same time, sharing food allows immigrants to forget about nostalgia.

The writer demonstrates the connection between food and national culture, ethnicity, religion, and social status. During the meal there are cultural dialogues and conversations about cooking peculiarities of a certain dish; important issues of identity and cultural harmony are also raised. At the same time, food is one of the ways of character's self-identification.

In this context, I. Kosheleva notes that "food consumption serves as relationship's indicator among the characters, their social status, as well as determines belonging to a particular culture" [55, p. 76].

Due to the food theme, the writer introduces the Indian cultural code into the text. To immigrant children, Indian food seems strange and exotic. Instead, American fast food loses to Indian one in quality and does not represent pleasure. And it doesn't matter that such a simple daily American necessity twice much money is spent on.

Not surprisingly, for the children, the Ganguli family lives an "American life" once a week. Ashima prepares a real American dinner especially for her son: fried chicken, burgers and pizza, giving up the traditional dal (Indian puree soup), rice, beans, fish, lentils, peas, and curry spices.

But while preparing a turkey for Thanksgiving, the heroine adds "her" spices to the dish: she rubs the meat with a mixture of garlic, cumin and cayenne pepper. She wants to bring elements of "her", and as a result, prepares an American dish with Indian spices.

The most significant elements of cultural traditions, in particular culinary ones, are fragments of a joint dinner shown in the novel. For example, the American habit of tasting food from someone else's plate, as Gogol does is strange to Ashima. He is not ashamed when he tastes dishes from his wife's plate.

The writer shows American cultural differences in the house of Gogol's girlfriend Maxine. "Cooking gap" is seen even in the



number of dishes. Unlike the Bengalis, Americans are accustomed to large portions, so they are noticeably disappointed when they are served a small portion on a skillfully decorated plate, as it happened with Gogol's wife Moushumi.

K. Rapay notes that, "living in one of the richest countries in the world, Americans feel poor" [73, p. 117]. This refers to culinary "poverty", because, unlike Indians, who really do not have enough space in the kitchen, as well as limited dishes, Americans are lazy about cooking, that is why they feel conditional "poverty".

Circle's image is particularly important novel's sign. K. Rapay notes that the circle's image manifests itself in different ways in American culture. In particular, "the American code of the family meal is its circle" [73, p. 92].

Americans are used to put large dishes in the center of the table. Someone takes the dish and passes it in a circle so that everyone can treat themselves. Together with Maxine's family, Gogol created "his" American circle, radically different from the Indian one.

The character becomes part of the American circle when at the end of dinner guests pass chocolate to each other. There is a "cultural breakdown" (failure), which allows "other" to become "our". Thanks to this author's intention, Gogol is once again asserted in the American way of life precisely through food.

Lahiri describes how Bengali celebrations are significantly different from American ones. We are not talking about ten or twelve people that American families used to invite, but about thirty or more. Unlike the Americans, Ashima does not think in advance about the candidacy of her guests, she is happy for everyone. The circle of her Bengali acquaintances is noticeably expanding precisely because of joint cooking conversations.

Women who, like Ashima, suffer from nostalgia in a new cultural environment, ask her for advice and recipes for cooking certain dishes. Ashima tells what fish is served in Chinatown or how to make halva from wheat flakes with cream. Bengalis follow "their"

traditions and visit each other every Sunday to taste shrimp meatballs fried in oil and drink tea with condensed milk. Crossing their legs, they sit on the floor in a circle and sing “their” songs together.

Often in transcultural works the importance of “his” ritual in character’s life is emphasized. In this context Lahiri’s figure is particularly significant. In almost all her works, the Indian ritual occupies an important place.

Annaprazan (rice ceremony) is associated with food, when a child begins to eat solid food. “Rice ceremony” is a kind of act of naming a child, because in the Bengali religion there is no baptism rite. This is a special event for the characters – following home traditions. Food for Ashima, as for other Hindus, is considered “a source of food for all aspects of human life: physical, mental and emotional” [55, p. 78].

The characters create their “little India”, which so far consists of them and a few Bengali friends only: they continue to eat with their hands, Ashima refuses to drive a car, the family never swims in the river. Gogol eats his mother’s traditional Indian dishes only out of respect for her, as they will not replace the taste of his favorite American pizza and burgers.

The novel’s space-time sequence is interrupted: the work begins and ends with Ashima being left alone. But if at the beginning the heroine is alone only for a while (she is at home), then at the end of the work she appears as a widow. After her husband’s death, she finds herself alone in the house again, but not for a while, but forever.

That is why the heroine is going to return to India. She will live in India for six months, in her brother’s family, and will spend spring and summer in America with her daughter, son and close friends. This is the way of life they dreamed of with Ashoke – to be free, not tied to anything. This, incidentally, is the symbolic meaning of her name: Ashima means “without borders”. The heroine feels lonely because she has not been able to adapt fully to the American

way of life.

The image of the American house is associated with cultural imprisonment, a trap beyond which the heroine tries to “escape”. At the end of the novel, Ashima is no longer limited by physical space. She does not stay in America, but returns home, because after her husband’s death, nothing keeps her in the still “foreign” cultural environment.

Literary critic S. Rana, characterizing the novel, notes that immigrants “live simultaneously in two worlds” [176, p. 179] and this is the kind of life that suits Ashima better, considering at least that the usual American jeans are something alien to her, it is to some extent even obscene.

While living in America, she continues to wear an Indian sari for some time, but officially Ashima is American: she has an American passport, an insurance card, and later a driver’s license. She understands that when she returns to Calcutta, it will be another Ashima, not the girl who left India thirty-four years ago. She is happy to think that it will not be necessary to cook for thirty people, as she used to do in America, taking at home Bengali friends.

There are many guests at Ashima’s house for Christmas; the heroine admits that it was the children who accustomed her to this American holiday, so she used to fill their socks with sweets and various gifts. This time the guests came to send Ashima to India, so this holiday is special for her, she is looking forward to this event, wants to sit down at the table and celebrate the beginning of a new life.

But at the same time, Ashima feels some inner anxiety, she understands that the “moving” to another, but “her” forgotten life will be difficult. She used to miss India, now it will be difficult for her to part with her job, with the women she befriended in the library, and, of course, with her children.

Ashima will miss the country where she learned to love her husband, because for her Ashoke will always be connected with

America. Here she lived with him most of her life, although his ashes would later be scattered over the Ganges (a river in South Asia). This detail is very important, because the author once again demonstrates the keeping of “his”: after many years of living in another country, even after death, Ashoke “returns” home forever, to his true homeland.

Ashima would like to live the life her children live: to meet her love and marry out of love. She did not accept American life’s rules for a long time and, not surprisingly, only after her husband’s death did she learn to appreciate and love her second homeland.

Arriving in America only for a short time, most immigrants stay there forever, rebuilding their lives and careers and striving for “their” American dream. In the novel, the opposite happens: after many years of living outside of “her” culture, the heroine decides to go back.

There is assimilation conflict, when “other” is not perceived as “our”. At the same time, there is no more return “home”, resulting in a real crisis of existential / cultural dimension, which leads to personality’s crisis appears (after her husband’s death Ashima stays alone in the country still foreign to her).

Literary critic D. Sommer emphasizes the “cracked double consciousness, which could be corrected by time and practice” [186, p. 302], which Ashima could not do, in whose mind two cultures, two poles are opposed: India-America / America-India.

Ashima is a person of mixed identity. The heroine understands how America has changed her, but these changes do not bring relief. The assimilation process was the most difficult for Ashima, it was associated with the struggle between Indian life and adaptation to the new American environment.

Like Ashima, Gogol returns to “his”. Despite the cultural gap, there is one thing that unites parents and children: attachment to the family; it is seen when, after his father’s death, Gogol especially needs the attention of his mother and sister.

Despite the inner turmoil, the character does not lose optimism and knows that in the future he will have “his” family and professional success. He wants to try himself as an architect and open his own office. The author tells how the protagonist “fights” between the cultures and only at the end of the work realizes that he does not need to choose.

Awareness of the ancestral past, the importance of cultural roots is marked by the metamorphosis of the character’s name. At first, he fully identifies himself as an American, although at the end of the novel he returns to “his” roots and adopts his “other” name.

The issue of national and cultural identification of the character is at the novel’s heart. A similar motif is found in A. Tan’s novel “One Hundred Secret Feelings”. At the beginning of the work, the heroine identifies herself as an American, and later takes the surname of her Chinese half-sister [193].

A similar problem, namely the anthroponymic characteristic as an important means of characters portraying, is raised in S. Rushdie’s writing. The writer attached special importance to anthroponyms selection: “It is impossible to overestimate names’ importance. I think they affect us much more deeply than we think. You know, people become their names or change them if it turns out they don’t match them. Naming has always been perceived as something absolutely crucial for perception” [125].

The symbolic “presence” of the father is noticeable at the end of the novel, when the character finds a book of his Russian namesake given by his father. N. Zhluktenko notes that “the paratextual element affects not only the narrative strategy of Gogol Ganguli’s image, but provides additional nuances to his father’s image” [36, p. 44].

The character opens the book and only now recognizes his father’s ancient inscription, where there are no punctuation marks: “For Gogol Ganguli. The man who gave you his name, from the man who gave you your name” [153, p. 193].

N. Vysotska notes that “this fiction formula actualizes not only the play on words, but also the connection between generations and cultures – India, America, Russia, parents and children, immigrants of the first and second generations converge in a single chain of succession, deep humanistic kinship, longevity of spiritual experience” [23, p. 293].

Just like his father once did, Gogol reads “The Overcoat”, mentally approaching his late father. N. Zhluktenko notes that the appearance of the name “is mystified, the reader never learns why the long-awaited letter with the real name of the firstborn did not reach the Ganguli family” [36, p. 44].

The character feels an inner trauma: no one will call him Gogol. Only now, there is the idea that such a previously hated name “will not die” as long as his mother is alive.

N. Vysotska notes that “the intratext of allusions to Nikolai Gogol’s figure and fiction world built by the writer serves as a mediator for overcoming by the novel’s protagonist the cultural dichotomy, promotes internal harmonization of identity’s heterogeneous components” [22, p. 6].

The chosen story’s grammatical tense (present) “emphasizes the story’s incompleteness, which has a continuation outside the text, and strengthens the reader’s status as an accomplice of events, rather than a detached recipient” [23, p. 287].

Fiction incompleteness is traced not only through the present, but also through the open final. Time seems to be slowing down, because Gogol begins to read. Not surprisingly, with this symbolic reading scene the novel ends.

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In Asian-American works, writers combine the past and the present, which is viewed from the point of marginality. Lahiri’s writing is no exception in this context.

The fiction reflection of national identity's phenomenon is conditioned, first of all, by the need to rethink the otherness category – to bring the “other” to the fore and promote its national self-affirmation. This is realized in Lahiri's works through the image of hybrid “others” who seek their identity in both cultures.

All Lahiri's writing has an imagological feature. The image of the “other” character occupies a central place in her work. This is an Indian character in American literature. Often, different identities are imposed on the “other”, and as a result his “I” splits into several parts.

Lahiri's characters often find themselves in a cultural environment alien to themselves. The writer consciously interprets “our” / “other's” vision, while showing her own position on the cultural level of “another”.

The author deliberately refers to images that cannot fully express what they think and feel. This inability to communicate is not solely related to cultural or intergenerational differences.

Gender relations are important collection's issue. The author demonstrates how the interest of Bengali men in American women leads to misunderstandings and deep inner frustration (neither Miranda and Dev nor Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das stay together). Indian men (Dev, Mr. Kapasi) stare at American women because they are used to see their wives in long unattractive clothes.

The collection stories are full of Indian details (Bengali names, food, tastes, clothes, some household items, photos and souvenirs), as some of the characters continue to live Indian life in America.

The characters feel emotionally isolated from the world around them and preserve the “their” culture's remnants (they eat Bengali dishes, wear Bengali clothes (mostly women) and speak Bengali). The “old” Indian identity is more important than the “new” American one.

The author demonstrates the negative assimilation aspects: sadness, loneliness, homesickness, feelings of loss, etc., although the

stories are not limited to cultural suffering. The main collection's theme is communication: both its absence, which causes misunderstandings between the characters ("Sexy", "Mrs. Sen's"), and the way to earn a living ("Interpreter of Maladies"). Misunderstandings arise between wife and husband, parents and children, immigrants and natives.

The characters leave home for various reasons. It is harder for women to adapt because they are completely dependent on men and mostly stay at home, isolated from American reality. As a result, they experience deep internal trauma. Women think about home and the possibility of returning because they are convinced that they are in America temporarily. In fact, home exists only in memory and in photographs, which also loses its relevance over time.

"The namesake" is distinguished by its specificity: having a double consciousness, the characters overcome a number of problems, gradually striving to assimilate fully to the new "desh". They balance between cultures, living simultaneously in two worlds (not belonging to either).

This uncertainty can be interpreted in two ways, because the characters are "fighting" with their inner "I" rather than with society. It is difficult for such people to combine two homes, so they act as a kind of "bridge between cultures".

The existence problem in a foreign cultural environment, a difficult choice between homeland and a new home is the main theme of the writer's work. It is no coincidence that Lahiri turns to the new diaspora, the border diaspora, the dual consciousness, when the characters create "their little Indias" in America. Despite the significant difficulties of rejection in another cultural environment, they try to assimilate into American society, realizing that they will never become "theirs" in another's territory.

The writer shows difficult life of first-generation immigrants; they have lost their "desh" and can return to it in their imagination only. The author describes the so-called ABCD (American-Born



Confused Desi), a “hyphenated American”.

The issue of the novel's duality is intertwined not with the “homeland” concept only; the detail (watch, “Desh” magazine, bracelets), the conditional “return” home, and the evolution of the characters' views under the influence of American life are important. The everyday details of the Ganguli family once again emphasize the Bengali identity's predominance.

In order to identify the “Indian roots” in Lahiri's texts structure, it is necessary to turn to the key element of her image system – the names system. Careful attention to the characters naming is one of the distinctive features of Indian literature in the United States. There is diffusion in the name system itself, because in India a person has always had two names: pet (home) and good (official). Diffusion is explained by the belief in the names' magical properties.

Anthroponymy in the novel is a tool for characters' self-identification. The name's sacred meaning is important. Traditionally, in Bengali families, everyone has two names: home (pet name) for close relatives and official (good name) for everyone else. This protects the child from betrothal and evil spirits.

There is a symbolic onomastic “game” in the novel, based on this naming custom. The act of naming is very significant because it affects the person's essential characteristics. The name is the most important work's element. At the same time, the anthroponym Gogol is only one of the moments of general text code. For the protagonist, the name appears as a metaphor of a symbolic “cultural dislocation”. The writer combines the Indian experience with the universal one, and thus attracts intertextuality elements.

The problem of the character's dual identity is an important writer's thematic feature. Undoubtedly, dual identity can have its advantages (two homes, two nationalities), but in Lahiri's writing it tends to the “poverty consciousness” (Sommer's notion [186]). The writer shows marginal characters who will never become “theirs”, because they “hang” between the worlds: they have not yet fully

assimilated to the new “desh”, and no longer have the desire to return to the old one.

Through the topos of name, food, home, family, the image of Indian culture is positioned and the values of Indians are highlighted. Indian culture is a cultural code for the second generation of immigrants. There is a conditional border between cultures that runs between parents and children.

There are four protagonists in the novel (Ashima, her husband Ashoke, their son Gogol and Gogol's wife, the Bengali woman Moushumi). The novel's peculiarity is that the author not only symbolically “returns” home, she “returns” her characters, not forever, not really, but partly and in the imagination.

### **CHAPTER 3.**

## **THE SEARCH FOR THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S PROSE OF THE BEGINNING OF THE XXI CENTURY**

### **3.1. Poetics of transculturation in the collection of short stories “Unaccustomed Earth”**

The collection “Unaccustomed Earth” (2008) can be divided into two parts according to the genre principle: a collection of short stories and a novel. All the stories are thematically different, but they are united by a situation of Indian immigrants getting used to a foreign country, which is close to the author.

The lives of Asian-American characters who have a mixed identity is at the centre. This is the second writer's collection, which took first place in the nomination “100 best books of 2008”, and also received Frank O'Connor International Award (2008).

“Unaccustomed Earth” is the first story of the collection of the same name, whose characters consider themselves real Americans, but at the same time, something prevents them from “resembling” fully their American peers and, like them, realizing the “American dream”.

The symbolic “barrier” is their Indian roots, as most of the characters try to combine Indian and American cultures at the same time. They appear as marginals who find themselves in a gap between Asian and American reality, suffer from cultural incompatibility (mixed marriages), and experience an Indian traditions legacy.

The story traces a “shift” of identity, it is shown how immigrants combine different cultural traditions. The characters seem to be “closed” from within, deeply lonely, it seems that they are distant not only from others but also from themselves.

The technique of historical “reminiscence” noticeable in the

story allows Ruma, the main character, to “reconstruct her ethnic past” through her dead mother’s image, who, unlike the heroine, is the personification of all things Indian. Ruma “steps” into the past, subconsciously trying to find an answer to the question: how important is the past for a person and is it possible to erase it completely from human memory?

The past itself is the basis for preserving cultural traditions for the heroine (so the author’s choice of grammatical past tense is clear (he had worked, fifteen years had passed, he had seen, began, mentioned, had received, kept, he had visited – Past Simple and Past Perfect).

The collection’s epigraph was a quote from American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne’s essay “The Custom-House”: “Human nature will not flourish, any more than a potato, if it is planted and replanted, for too long a series of generations, in the same worn-out soil. My children have had other birthplaces, and, so far as their fortunes may be within my control, shall strike their roots into unaccustomed earth” [154, p. 2].

The immigration issue is of noticeable importance, which poses the problem of “reinventing oneself”, emphasizes that one should not sit in one place, because according to N. Hawthorne, it is possible to “decrease” (spiritually, intellectually) like a potato. You need to travel, discover new worlds, as main character’s father does.

After the death of his wife, he became truly free: he left his job at a pharmaceutical company and devoted himself entirely to travelling in Europe. In travels the father “finds” himself: buying the cheapest tickets, he has already managed to visit several countries in a year.

The “transplant experiment” has a downside, it affects Ruma’s life in a different way. The past is “an ideal tool for creating a separate, inner world” for her [23, p. 271]. The whole story is characterized by a retrospective narration manner (retrospection is seen after the first work’s lines, when it is mentioned how Ruma

visited European countries about fifteen years ago). The narrative movement on the “back and forth” principle (in our case, the movement from the present to the past and vice versa), which is opposed to the linear one, N. Vysotska identifies with the “back and forth” piston mode” [23, p. 280]. Indeed, the story has no clear chronology, the heroine, combining two traditions, “moves” from the present to the past and vice versa: the past is the Indian traditions, the present – the traditions of America.

N. Vysotska speaks of “not a final and inevitable break with the indigenous culture for the sake of acquiring a new one; and not desperate attempts to hold on to it in spite of all influences and pressures; but the third possibility – their combination through transformation – determines today the choice of many Asian-Americans, which is reflected in their literature” [23, p. 331].

Researcher N. Bidasiuk identifies immigrants with a hybrid consciousness with “chameleon immigrants”, for whom “the past serves as a platform for a push into the future”.

According to N. Bidasiuk, “characters who hold on to their past only to maintain the traditions doomed to failure” [13, p. 9]. The main character’s defeat is seen not in the lack of career growth, but rather in the inner loneliness feeling. The heroine has no real friends (even her father comes to her for the first time in so many years). Seattle, where she lives with her husband, is still alien to her, and she must accept her mother’s loss.

The heroine embodies a cultural pattern of behavior: brought up in female obedience traditions, but living in a democratic country, she sacrifices her career for the family. Ruma’s decision is an example of different traditions’ combination, because it shows an echo of her Indian past. E. Meletynsky emphasized that “for the Far Eastern literature – both medieval and modern – is not characterized by the portraying of personality’s formation in a linear perspective” [64, p. 281].

And Ruma is “formed” due to the memories, from which she

selects the best only. Most of her thoughts are related to her mother, whose life is the embodiment of the “right”, exemplary, ideal; it is part of everyday life for the heroine, because it is a system of views, the foundation of knowledge and values about Indian culture. Ruma’s memories are synonymous with nostalgia: more than once she would like to return her time and mother, and thus, to live life anew. Now she has a family: husband Adam and young son Akash.

The heroine combines two identities, she is a cultures’ mediator, and this mediation is an important factor in creating her inner cultural code. She feels American and at the same time cannot “forget herself” completely.

In this context, R. Bart emphasized that “the cultural code is an echo of what has already been read, seen, done, experienced; code is a trace of the past” [6, p. 39]. The past is a cultural code for the heroine, it acts as a “kind of anti-scenario”, personified by her dead mother.

The heroine’s cultural code is also connected with her genetic code, as through her mother’s image Ruma interprets the peculiarities of Indian culture. She wonders how her mother could withstand life’s trials (moving to a foreign country and devoting herself to her family only), and at the same time realizes that she is repeating her life model.

She does not understand her husband’s offer to hire a babysitter (as most American families do): how can you leave a child with a stranger, and besides, she was ashamed to “paying for something she now had the freedom to do” [154, p. 4].

For Ruma, the cultural code is a kind of “key” to understanding Indian culture. If the mother embodied the image of a traditional Indian woman (she wore a sari, cooked Indian dishes, spoke Bengali), Ruma was similar to her in everyday life only (visual manifestation of the cultural code is noticeable in everyday life).

Her mother always worried that after her death no one would wear her sari, because Ruma preferred European clothes and

therefore always wore pants, no different from the American in appearance.

From the story's very first pages, the mother's image is quite conditional (the reader learns about the death of Ruma's mother), but this does not prevent her from taking an honorable place with the main character. Comparing her life with the life of her mother, the heroine is always convinced of the existence of a "cultural gap" between them (Ruma and her brother are second-generation immigrants, her parents are the first). Therefore, Ruma's mentality as Indian culture's representative is an artificial, formed by the mother, who, unlike her daughter, emphasized her nationality. The mother's life is what is accumulated by experience, it is part of the transcultural paradigm for the heroine.

The names system is also an important cultural code. But in the story, the name's importance is shifted: the mother's name, like Ruma's father, is unknown and is replaced by the personal pronouns "he" and "she". The emphasis is on the heroine's inner experiences. Only in her mind does she symbolically "return" to her mother, and thus to India. Therefore, Ruma can be considered an "Indian in quotes", she is an outsider towards Indian culture.

Father's arrival is an important work's event. Before arriving, the heroine is a little nervous: "Ruma had never spent a week alone with her father" [154, p. 5]. Arrival allows her to "get out" of her closed inner world. This is the father's first visit to his daughter, who already lives "on a new land", so Ruma has no idea how he will live under the same roof with her own, but at the same time "foreign" father.

Familiar to the heroine is her father's habit of taking off his shoes before going into the house, because this detail reminds her of Indian traditions. Little Akash wonders, "Why does Dadu take his shoes off?" [154, p. 14]. Instead of explaining, Ruma ignores her son's surprise, "closing the door" to Indian culture and to her past: as a child she always walked barefoot.

The story vividly shows the mental characteristics of three generations. They all live in the same house for several days. The heroine is worried whether her father will find a common language with his three-year-old grandson. Ruma does not know whether to offer his father to live together, as most Indians do. The relationship between father and daughter is strained, each of them reviewing their roots and place in the family. The characters do not know whether they behave properly with each other.

The work's epigraph says that moving to a new place strengthens people. The characters hope that their children will take new roots in an unusual land for them. The author wants to make sure whether this is really the case or whether relocation to the United States is favorable for them.

We find a symbolic "answer" to this question in an abandoned garden's image. The garden represents the heroine's family ethnic roots. It is the father who after arrival immediately begins to clean the garden. He plows the beds, takes care of the flowers, cultivates the land. The heroine motivates the garden's neglect by lack of time and reluctance.

Father understands that, having inherited the status and feelings of exiles, Ruma does not feel such a strong connection with either "her" or the new culture. The grandson first carefully watches his grandfather, and then begins to "help" him. The boy has a small piece of land where he, playing, "plants" his toys: parts from a Lego constructor, a cube with a star and a rubber dinosaur. Symbols of the international, heavenly and prehistoric are combined. Working in the garden brings the family together. The grandfather teaches the grandson of the Bengali language.

Although little Akash does not understand his grandfather in many ways (the habit of taking off his shoes when entering the house, an unknown language spoken by his grandfather from time to time), this does not prevent him from communicating with the old man, as they both work in the garden. Akash copies his grandfather,



but does everything in the game's form.

The grandson buries toys in the ground (grandfather even advises not to bury deeply) – a parody of life extension, artificiality symbol. The ideal future is combined with utopia: how can a Lego constructor, a rubber dinosaur and a plastic elephant grow and bear fruit?

The garden symbolizes the cultural roots of Ruma's family. Unlike her father, the heroine is not fond of gardening, so her garden is not well-groomed. Not only does the father tidy up his daughter's garden, he symbolically "ties" himself to this land and plants a tree that will take root. Unlike Ruma, who did not even know that in her garden there are delphiniums, working in the garden is a rest for the father.

However, the immigrant from India has also changed. Despite the fact that loneliness, cultural alienation and the desire to return home are painful for first-generation immigrants, the father wants to live with a woman he met during one of his tourist trip. He leaves his daughter with a calm soul, not fearing that the cultural roots of their family garden will dry up.

The author shows in relief three generations of Indian immigrants who, due to the circumstances, are forced to live for several days under one roof. The unusually tense atmosphere (they are not used to spending so much time together) allows the characters to reconsider their relationship to each other, as well as their origin.

Having previously been so attached to her mother, Ruma did not feel her father gradually moving away from her. Not surprisingly, Ruma didn't know much about him, but she always remembered that her father allowed to speak in English to him. Instead, Ruma's mother used the Bengali language only and taught her daughter to do so, so the heroine's "border" consciousness is traced to the language as well.

The heroine is not worried about whether her father will find a common language with his grandson. According to Indian tradition, a

widowed father must live with his daughter, but Ruma has not yet been able to offer him a place in her life. She feared that her father would be an additional burden for her, which would be difficult to get rid of.

Lahiri brings to Ruma's image a dichotomy and doubts about whether a father should live with his daughter, means the dominance of one culture over another, and thus leads to a change in her inner worldview.

Her American-husband does not understand the dilemma facing his wife. There is a clash of cultural codes: on the one hand, Ruma did not deny that her father lived with her, but on the other hand, she did not want to take care of him.

The father also did not expect that his daughter would offer him to move to her. He understood that it was his fault, because he himself had once fled from his parents to another continent; he wanted to build a new life in America. Ruma also lived a "new" life: she made her own decisions and even married an American (which her late mother would never have done). There is a noticeable gap between Ruma and her father: their relationship is somewhat strained. "She knew her father did not need taking care of, and yet this very fact caused her to feel guilty" [154, p. 6].

The difference between the first and second generation of immigrants is noticeable not only in the attitude towards parents. For the first generation (Ruma's parents), India will always be home, while second-generation consider America as their home. For both generations, home is the place where you were born. The difference between the generations is also seen in the naming: Adam, addressing his wife, uses an affectionate form and her abbreviated name (dear Rum), as most Americans do.

Adorable forms are not a cultural barrier for second-generation immigrants, while first-generation cannot afford it (we mean the parents who did not address each other by name).

Transcultural paradigm's borders are conditional and therefore

may change over time. Under the American life's influence, this change is noticeable in the kitchen, where Ruma gradually begins to "tinker". The heroine gets used to American "fast food", because now Akash preferred frozen semi-finished products and grew up a typical American child. He belongs to the third generation of immigrants, who can be called "immigrants of the new diaspora".

N. Vysotska emphasizes that "most immigrants of the first (and even second) generation wanted to become real "Americans" as soon as possible, but over time the situation changes, and in the third generation of immigrants the feeling of being Americans is so strong that they can afford luxury to reconstruct their's ethnic past" [23, p. 19].

For Akash, by the way, as for his mother, the "reconstruction" of the past is conditional and is also associated with his late grandmother's image. Grandmother taught Akash Indian culture not only with national dishes, she sang him songs, studied poetry with him in Bengali.

For the grandson (as well as for his mother) cultural traditions' preservation occurs through language. Akash had a curly hair, which, by the way, had never been cut before, and dark skin. Ruma's father assumed that his grandson would grow up handsome, because he had absorbed the best of both cultures (Akash's father is American, his mother has an Indian origin). From his father, Akash will learn the importance of climbing the career ladder, and from Ruma – the following of cultural traditions.

After her mother's death, the phrase "old house" gave Ruma a double feeling (it started when her father sold the house where she and her mother lived). On the one hand, she could not forget her mother, but on the other hand, the fact that nothing around reminded of her somehow helped Ruma to cope with the loss.

In addition to the mother, the "past" is a "home" for Ruma. Sometimes she felt that after the death her mother became "closer", her image became more idealized. Again there is an "oscillation"

between past and present. Unlike his late wife, Ruma's father is no different from the American. Despite the fact that he flew almost all over America, he does not feel like a stranger here, although he remembers how difficult it was for him in the first immigration years.

Unlike his daughter, the father is more "Americanized": after his wife's death, he travels and wants to find happiness with a woman he met on a tourist trip. N. Bidasiuk notes that "in the new collection of stories the author does not connect the home concept exclusively with the past, remotely distant place of origin, but shows new opportunities for immigrants" [12, p. 174]. It is a symbolic "combination" of belonging to the old and new home at the same time.

Another proof of father's Americanization is that he did not want to live with his daughter, as is customary in Bengali families, on the contrary, he bought a new house and, a little embarrassed, confessed to his daughter about his relationship with Mrs. Bagchi. Only later does the father decide to live with the woman in the same room in the hotel just before the next Gulf of Mexico cruise.

The only thing the father remembers fondly is a small house in New Jersey and a house in Pennsylvania where he and his wife and their children have lived for many years. Sometimes the father missed the garden and at the same time wanted to stay there alone. To "escape" from the past, he bought a smaller house, which was easier to care for. It was a relief for the father to live in another part of the state, but not too far from the previous one, to still feel in a used place. He wanted to feel differently, that is why he refused Ruma's offer to live together.

The father did not want to live in a huge house, where many things would remind him of the past, which he preferred to forget. The new house "was actually a transshipment base to rest for the man between his tours with Mrs. Bagchi" [12, p. 175].

When Ruma with her family moves from the East Coast to Seattle and choose her ancestors' way of life, natives of India, it

equates to her parents' immigration: the heroine is very upset when she realizes that she lives thousands of miles from her birthplace and where her childhood passed, from a place where her parents knew no one and where they had not been before.

The heroine connects the changes in her family life with her mother's loss, but cannot explain it. Just when her mother was gone, a "wall" grew between her and Adam. For the first time she felt she and her husband were different people and that everyone had their own way. Ruma recalls that her mother was against marrying an American, but over time she changed her mind and even managed to fall in love with Adam in a motherly way.

It is difficult to disagree with M. Tlostanova, who notes: "The feeling of a new inhabitant of the "cosmopolis" does not completely erase the sensitivity to a certain cultural space, through which the process of self-identification continues" [94, p. 208].

Therefore, the typical American question of the father "What makes you happy?" Ruma cannot answer. Like her late mother, Ruma wants to dedicate herself to her family and raise a son. Although her father wanted Ruma to return to work and realize herself as soon as possible, citing the fact that in America you should rely on yourself only. The father hesitates: maybe she just can't be happy? Thinking about how his wife suffered, he realizes that he has always expected a different life for Ruma.

In order for Ruma not to copy her mother's life, her father repeatedly reminded her of the job search, repeating that self-confidence was the most important thing, but he did not know: Ruma was not going to work. The father believed that the daughter should have an American idea of freedom, to rely on herself and not on her husband.

He made the following observation: "The more the children grew, the less they had seemed to resemble either parent – they spoke differently, dressed differently, seemed foreign in every way, from the texture of their hair to the shapes of their feet and hands" [154,

p. 60].

N. Bidasiuk notes that “most of the characters from Jhumpa Lahiri’s new collection “Unaccustomed Earth” belong to the “new diaspora” [12, p. 173]. It is in the grandson that the grandfather sees a reflection of himself – genetic reconstruction, procreation, despite the fact that the Akash is only half Hindu and has no Bengali surname.

The story “Unaccustomed Earth” should be considered from transculturalism point, because it sharply raises the immigrants problem: how to become part of a new society and at the same time “not to lose yourself”. The immigration issue is considered from two points of view. First, it is seen not in the characters’ suffering in a foreign land, but in the search for new “I” in yourself. Secondly, “transplanting” to the new soil does not always give positive results, sometimes such an experiment leads to cultural “mixing”, makes a person a “hybrid” (Ruma). The work portrays the second generation of immigrants who have already “melted” in a new way and bear little resemblance to their ancestors.

In general, the whole story consists of Ruma’s reflections and, except for the father’s arrival, there are no significant events in it. After her father leaves, everything takes its place and everyone goes back to his affairs: Ruma is waiting for her husband who will soon return from a business trip, her father has already missed Mrs. Bagchi.

The story analyzes “parents and children” problem: the characters are between a sense of responsibility for parents and the desire for complete independence. Ruma finds herself between such a dilemma: simultaneously combining two cultures, the heroine “fastens” the divided (split) consciousness into a single cultural consciousness.

The heroine’s model of behavior, who feels like an American and only mentally returns to Indian culture, is opposed to her mother’s behavior. The echo of the past is an affirmation of the heroine’s personal “I”, it holds her, allowing to rethink her life, and

at the same time acts as an experience that cannot be reversed.

Generation gap is clearly seen in “Only Goodness”. Often it is the older child who feels the need to follow parents’ will, to be an exemplary child for them. Older children try to live up to their parents’ expectations, they do well in school and speak Bengali. For younger children, socialization process is easier, because they use the already acquired family experience.

Compared to parents and older siblings, the identity of younger children is not so fragile, and the responsibility to parents is not so great. The story is about the relationship between Sudha and her younger brother Rahul.

The parents’ images, first-generation immigrants, are contrasted with their children’s images, Sudha and Rahul. Parents follow the usual traditions: the mother prepares Indian dishes, her house is clean; she sings Bengali songs to children unlike her American acquaintances.

Being outside of “their” environment, parents feel like outcasts in a new culture. They realize that it is unnecessary when faced with the problem of finding an apartment in London: “Her parents told her that half the rentals in London in the sixties said WHITES ONLY and the combination of being Indian and pregnant limited her parents” [154, p. 95].

One of the greatest “sins” of American society parents considered alcohol: “She spoke as if drinking were an undergraduate hobby, a phase one outgrew” [154, p. 101]. They never drank alcohol, and condemned their Bengali acquaintances who allowed themselves to drink a little on holidays. Sudha’s mother has repeatedly stressed that alcohol is a common America problem. According to her, the whole life of Americans was reduced to the search for pleasure, and the reason for this was the unlimited “freedom” in everything.

Parents always kept their distance and did not show their feelings, so children never knew parental kisses and did not hear

affectionate addressing forms. It is difficult to say whether their marriage was joyful, they did not seem to express their emotions. The writer “deviates” somewhat from Indian traditions, because she does not focus on the names of Sudha’s parents (we notice the same in “Unaccustomed Earth”). The parents’ names are unknown in the story, although in India the name has always had a sacred meaning.

Sudha believed that parents identified immigration as a romantic adventure: they then saw snow for the first time in their lives and survived the cold winter. Failing to “settle down” in the new land, “parents aware that they faced a life sentence of being foreign” [154, p. 97], realizing that they will never become “theirs” in any country. The “heterogeneity” concept is important here, a kind of awareness of one’s differences, otherness (I’m not like that). For an individual with a shaky identity, heterogeneity is associated with “stealing the past” strategy – trying to “create” their culture within the “foreign” (Indian dishes, clothing style, Bengali language). There is a symbolic “destruction” of another, so attempts to preserve one’s individuality and national identity often end with the realization of being “on the border”.

Being marginalized, immigrants subtly feel the “shaky ratio of “their” and “foreign” [90, p. 281]. This allows us to emphasize that a person’s identity is not set forever, the identification process is constantly dynamic.

In the mother’s image this transcultural dynamism is clearly visible: after moving from India to London, she studied at university and intended to teach children, but in America she never worked or even learned to drive a car.

Unlike their parents, Sudha and Rahul emphasize their nationality by the addressing form only (instead of “mother” and “father” they say “ma” and “baba”, and “sister” changes to “didi”). Rahul and Sudha, second-generation immigrants, do not want to be a “copy” of their parents. They seek to “merge” with the Americans completely, but these “attempts” are not always successful. Sudha



mentions that “parents had always been blind to the things that plagued their children: being teased at school for the color of their skin or for the funny things their mother occasionally put into their lunch boxes, potato curry sandwiches that tinted Wonderbread green” [154, p. 101].

Parents have never heard what words their children were teased at school, they never imagined that their children, having been born in America, could also suffer because of their different ethnicity.

Unlike children, parents are so “attached” to their homeland that it is almost impossible to break the bond. At the same time, they cannot say for sure which culture they belong to more: to the one where they were born once and where their roots are, or to the new one, where they are now and perhaps will be able to realize themselves?

A similar uncertainty is close to “depression” concept, which was unknown to parents, because it was associated with some obscure American disease. The parents were proud to have done their job of raising two children in a foreign country.

Later, American features are seen in parents’ images, which allows us to emphasize that their transcultural identity is “constructed”; like a constructor, consists of elements of several cultures. More or less accustomed to America, the parents realized that there was nothing wrong with Sudha wearing American clothes, not saris, walking with untidy hair, talking to American friends.

The parents also accepted the fact that Sudha had registered her marriage in London and that her future husband was already married and was fourteen years older.

In an attempt to show their differences, Sudha and Rahul violated their parents’ ban on alcohol. It was alcohol that later ruined Rahul, making him a loser in life and abandoning his sister. Sudha made all her best to make her younger brother an exemplary American child, so they celebrated Halloween with a special tradition: Sudha herself sewed various costumes for her brother. The

sister was really envied her brother, because he had a nickname (American friends called him Raul instead of Rahul and never asked when he came from India).

Unlike Sudha, Rahul did not look much like one of his parents, although he had much darker skin. He did not spend as much time with his parents as Sudha did, but on vacation he got a job as a waiter and befriended many Americans.

The gap between father and son was that Rahul did not study well, the whole day he could lie on an unmade bed, listen to music and watch plays of the famous European modernist Samuel Beckett. Rahul could say that he was satisfied with his life, unlike his father, who was not ready to pay “space” sums for his son’s education, and he could not tolerate failure.

The father came from a poor family, so he used to rely on himself only. When Rahul was expelled from the college for regular truancy, the parents were very ashamed of their son, they were afraid that one of the Bengali acquaintances would suddenly find out about it. Instead, Sudha’s diplomas were able to confirm parents’ expectations, who praised her and put her as role model every time.

American influences “allow” Rahul to kiss his future wife in front of his parents, who is also eight years older than him. Elaine, Rahul’s wife, wore American clothes and refused to eat rice prepared by Rahul’s mother because she believed that rice had a bad effect on her figure. Rahul, by the way, like his sister, got engaged to Elaine without parents’ knowledge. The fact that Rahul did not make a career and had no purpose in life made it impossible for him to marry an American woman.

Seeking to understand the essence of “other” and “thus going beyond one’s “own” [90, p. 227], immigrant transcultural consciousness gives a “failure”, which creates an awareness of existence in the role of “eternal stranger”. Not becoming “theirs” in America, parents placed their hopes in their children, especially in Sudha. It was Sudha who “Americanized” the parents: taught them to

put garbage at the gates instead of taking it to the nearest forest, and to call the repair services if necessary. Unlike his sister, Rahul did not consider it his duty to help the parents.

The author positions the understanding of “other” in the categories of “our”. Rahul’s image is the “other” in the eyes of “our”. Raising their children in America, parents notice how, despite the Indian upbringing, America “absorbs” their son completely. Sudha’s image is the opposite, which represents two cultures fusion.

Sudha realized that her parents had come to America to get rich, but the fact that they were born in India, not in America, seemed to her like a chronic illness. Rahul took a different view. He did not think about how difficult it was for his parents after moving, he did not care.

While living in Weiland, Sudha’s parents were passive and unhappy immigrants who did not want to communicate with others. They were afraid to violate one or another unwritten rule of this small town. Therefore, understanding their “needlessness”, parents decide to go back to Calcutta.

Family “erosion” is portrayed because of the burden of responsibility and the problem of guilt before parents. Living in America, Sudha follows both American and Indian traditions. An interesting episode is when Sudha forgets about her Indian upbringing and gives her brother his first bottle of beer when he comes to her university. The heroine conditionally accepts a “cultural game” without rules.

In this context, M. Tlostanova speaks of the “non-aggressive perception of the “other”, the player’s absolute plasticity, who freely passes from one world model to another, as well as player’s “knowledge” about other cultures, his equally playful attitude towards them, when he does not take any of them too seriously” [94, p. 211].

Eventually, alcohol “separates” Rahul not only from his parents, but from his sister also. Sudha confronts alcohol problem

and stays with her brother, whom she cannot trust. The parents relied on Sudha, considering her a cultural mediator and role model, but the parents' hopes were dashed.

Only Sudha's son Neel, a third-generation immigrant is aware of all the family's "cracks", who has no feeling of guilt and responsibility, embodies positive beginnings. Unable to accustom Sudha and Rahul to Bengali traditions, Sudha's mother tries to do so with Neel, who has a white face from an English father and dark hair from Sudha, although Sudha's mother believed that her grandson was the legal heir of the Mukherjee family. While Sudha was at work, the grandmother sang Bengali songs to her grandson, which gave him an opportunity to be closer to Indian culture.

For third-generation immigrants, the ancestors culture is "encoded", so their task is not to "cross" the border between cultures, but in so-called "decipher" of this culture. The first step in this "decipherment" is the Bengali addressing form to grandparents, whom Neel calls "dadu" and "dida" as Sudha and Rahul once did to their grandparents.

The "cultural connection" is reminiscent of when the Neel turns six months old and Annaprazan, the day of the first solid meal, is celebrated in the Sudha's house. Sudha's parents flew to London (Sudha lived in London after her marriage) to attend the ceremony. According to tradition, the first spoonful of rice was to be given to the baby by the maternal uncle, and since Rahul was not there, Sudha's father did it.

S. Hantington notes that the immigrants' children "are devoted exclusively to the country where they were born, not their ancestors" [101, p. 393]. While living in London, Sudha gets used to the fact that her husband uses the affectionate form of her name Su when addressing her.

But, unlike her brother, who disappeared for a while and did not make himself known, Sudha partially follows her parents traditions (she goes to an Indian restaurant) and realizes that the lines of "her"

are only half erased, compared to third-generation immigrants, for which this border is erased completely.

Lahiri's stories are similar in their subject issue. The resemblance can be traced not through mixed marriages only (Sudha and Roger, Rahul and Elaine), but the age-old question of finding one's transcultural identity is the cross-cutting theme of the writer's stories. A similar problem is faced by Sudha, in whose image the dual identity is clearly traced. Despite her ethnic background, the heroine seeks to "merge" with Americans and at the same time be an exemplary child for her parents.

There is a "cultural gap" between Sudha and Rahul, because brother and sister have different life values. Sudha has repeatedly faced a number of restrictions, due to the fact that, unlike her American brother, she was born in England. Sudha represents a "cultural bridge" that does not level (erase) cultural differences (unlike Rahul, "cultural glue" keeps Sudha and her parents more), but forever becomes a transcultural personality, being two cultures' representative only a half.

"Her" traditions in America are followed by Aparna, the main character's mother of the story "Hell-Heaven". Despite the variety of cultural codes, the heroine deliberately denies the value of "other" / "foreign" culture. Living in America, Aparna mentally at home, she resembles an Indian woman not outwardly only but also in everyday life: she continues to cook Indian dishes, does not eat veal, eats with her hands and speaks Bengali.

The cultures' conflict is emphasized, in which Indian roots are stronger than the American reality. It is worth mentioning the "transculturation" processes here, which allows "not just to see the other and understand that it is not equal in rights, but also to try to restore these rights, give him a voice, hear him" [101, p. 137]. This, in fact, is what Aparna is trying to do, as she continues to emphasize the importance of Indian traditions.

Feeling a painful longing for her homeland, Aparna tries to

“return” the previous situation – to “domesticate” someone else’s environment. The family lives in America, but their house and way of life are very similar to “home” (Indian). It is very important for a mother to follow home traditions, no matter what part of the planet she is in.

Oriental motifs are clearly seen in Aparna’s appearance: “My mother was wearing the red and white bangles unique to Bengali married women, and a common Tangail sari, and had a thick stem of vermilion powder in the center parting of her hair, and the full round face and large dark eyes that are so typical of Bengali women” [154, p. 46]. The author deliberately adds Indian elements when addressing “her” culture, and outlines in detail this environment’s cultural features.

Aparna prepares Indian dishes with a special care. Her symbolic “alienation” is traced not in the absence of American friends, but rather in the “incomprehensible” habits of Americans: Thanksgiving was associated with consuming a huge amount of tasteless food and with a reason not to go to work; and to finish cooking when the guests had already arrived was considered a bad tone. Mother’s life seemed extremely boring to Usha: her mother never worked, and her life purpose was to serve her daughter and her husband, who did not praise her for her delicious food and never used tender words towards her.

Addressing transformation is interesting in the story. Aparna allows herself to flirt with a childhood friend and even falls in love with him. Being married, she calls her friend by name, Pranab, which she never did towards her husband. This is because addressing each other by name is extremely intimate; it is a taboo that the heroine has broken.

The opposite happens with Pranab. “Staying” at home conditionally, the immigrant character does not lose attachment to his cultural environment, which K. Katrak calls “the opportunity to live here, in the flesh, and at the same time somewhere else in mind and

imagination” [147, p. 201].

Pranab embodies “geographical synchronicity”. Despite the fact that Pranab lives in America, he never calls her childhood friend by name, but uses the word “Boudi” (a married woman from Bengali). Indian habits allow the character to feel like a transcultural person: to live in America, but to follow Indian traditions.

Pranab creates “his” home within another cultural environment, which, according to N. Bidasiuk, is identified with the symbolic “journey with the walls”: leaving the country physically, the immigrant continues to stay there mentally” [12, p. 172].

Lahiri’s works are imbued with the narrator’s transcultural consciousness and his emotional experiences. Pranab brings his Indian habits to American reality and thus becomes a “border link” in two cultures: “He appeared without warning, never phoning beforehand but simply knocking on the door the way people did in Calcutta and calling out “Boudi!” as he waited for my mother to let him in” [154, c. 48].

Pranab’s task, a first-generation immigrant, is to preserve “home” traditions, unlike second-generation immigrants, for whom this is already the interpretation of cultural differences (codes).

N. Vysotska notes that “the subtlety of the problem of self-identification in Lahiri is that preference is not given to any of the binary oppositions” [23, p. 289]. The character’s concept in Lahiri’s writing is deprived of existential integrity, so the character is aware of his transcultural fragmentation.

Fragmentation means the “merging” of several cultural discourses, which ultimately leads to disintegration. Pranab feels the same: living in America, he notices great differences in the Indian and American education systems.

According to the character, Americans are lazy: he does not know why during his postgraduate studies at Boston Technology University he was given equations that he solved as a child. The character does not take Americans seriously, as well as studying,

which allows himself not to attend. He is amazed that seven-year-old Usha has not yet done her homework and has no idea about the properties of the Pi number.

The “nomadism” problem is important in the collection, in particular in the story “A Choice of Accommodations”. The “nomads” are Amit’s parents, the protagonist, who, after living for some time in America, decide to return to India.

Although Amit’s parents, first-generation immigrants, are minor characters, their images are no less interesting. Dual identity is clearly seen in their images. Duality is because their culture “returns” parents home (back), while the new one has already opened its borders.

The parents’ “nomadism” reminds itself when, four years later, they decide to return to America (but not for long: in five years, the parents will settle in Switzerland, and at that time, they are in the United Arab Emirates).

In this context, Amit’s parents are “cultural chameleons”. Their transcultural identity is “situational” because being outside of “theirs” is temporary – parents still hope to “return home” without realizing that their (native) culture is gradually moving away, and there is a process of erasing cultural values.

It always seemed to Amit that, unlike Bengali acquaintances, his parents did not feel a painful longing for their home, so they did not visit India every summer. They left the country without hesitation and never seemed to look back.

In everyday life and partly in appearance, except for skin color, Amit’s parents are no different from Americans. They begin to follow American habits and pretend to be real Americans: “His mother had short hair and wore trousers, putting on saris only for special occasions. His father kept a liquor cabinet and liked a gin and tonic before his meals” [154, p. 69]. It is clearly traced “transculturation” phenomenon here, which can be called a “temporary border” [53, p. 40].



According to his father, Amit does not need to come back to India and get used to another education system, because in a few years he will enter an American college. Amit, a second-generation immigrant, fully agrees with his parents.

Unlike his parents, Amit does not know Bengali and does not consider it necessary to call India his home. The young man identifies his rare visits to his parents with boredom and dreams of returning to his quiet American town as soon as possible. The parents' culture is "encrypted" for Amit, who does not set himself the goal of approaching the understanding and interpretation of "other" ("other" for Amit is Indian culture), because he perceives everything "foreign" chaotically – without ultimate awareness or direction. Amit pushes his ethnic self into the background and does not ask himself: "Where is better for me and where is the border which I must (can) cross?"

In Amit's image there are American traits of transcultural identity. A Hindu by birth, the character notices how, under the influence of American life, not only "our" / "other's" coordinates are leveled, but his hybrid identity is formed. Amit's views change when he studies at Langford. The young man understands his "otherness" because he is the only Hindu for the whole college.

The character, no doubt, overcomes the difficulties of his own adaptation. He realizes that the beginning of a "new" life is not always successful. As a result, the young man is unhappy and lonely. Amit suffers without parents and misses his family in Calcutta. Of course, no one guesses this, and when he talks to his mother on the phone, he orders himself not to cry and is always full of courage not to reveal his "secret".

Amit's psychological state is correlated with the "border" concept: balancing between "his" and "foreign", he is in a transitional stage of his personality's formation. The stage of formation ended with the fact that after the Bengali upbringing the character had to make a lot of effort to "join" the common stream of

peers and not reveal his ethnic origin, and thus try to become one hundred percent “his” among American students: “After that first semester he had slipped as best as he could into this world, swimming competitively, calling boys by their last names, always wearing khakis because jeans were not allowed” [154, p. 70].

Being in America, in a new cultural environment, the immigrant feels like a “border link” [53, p. 38] and wonders whether this is the life he expected; who his children really are and whether they will become “theirs” because they were born “here”. In order for Amit to be perceived as “his”, the parents act in the American way and give their son freedom.

For example, when Amit studied in Langford, his mother and father never visited him, did not even come to the graduation ceremony. The father explained this as follows: “He was requested to perform cataract surgery on a member of Parliament” [154, p. 63]. According to the father (he was a doctor), the patient’s operation is much more important than a visit to his son. By the way, Amit managed to live without his parents and enjoy American freedom.

Amit’s new type of freedom is that he married an American woman who was five years older than him. Undoubtedly, this was contrary to parents’ expectations; everyone was against this marriage, because Amit had to marry, in their opinion, a Bengali. The wedding was also purely American – only brides attended it.

Amit’s parents never met Megan (their son’s chosen one), although the mother, following the traditions, still gave the daughter-in-law family gold. Megan did not like jewelry, so the refusal to wear Indian jewelry was perceived by Amit’s mother as an insult.

Amit did not fulfill his parents’ will to pursue a career without becoming a lawyer or a doctor, which created a gap between relatives who had little contact with each other.

The writer conditionally “returns” Amit back, choosing the action place the character’s former school. This allows the protagonist to re-analyze his life and, delving into the past, to think

about who he really is: an American or a Hindu. After all, American corrections prevail, which is once again confirmed by the fact of “generation gap” existence: immigrant children rarely read or speak Bengali.

The story’s interesting feature is that the minor characters are distant from the reader. It is about Amit’s daughters and Megan, who are “present” in the story only conditionally: through Amit’s the memories. The author focuses on one story line only, gradually developing it and at the same time returning back in retrospectives’ form.

The characters are not outside the culture only, but also outside their home (at that time they were in a hotel). The young couple Amit and Megan appear on the eve of the wedding of Amit’s school friend, where they were invited in advance.

The character notices that after the birth of their second daughter, their marriage with Megan broke up. Cultural loss borders on the relationship’s rupture between the spouses. Amit is internally lonely, but the situation of separation from home allows the characters to “rediscover” themselves and save the marriage.

Adaptation affects immigrants lives in different ways. Some of them can adapt to the new culture, but for most immigrants it is really painful and almost impossible to combine two cultures at the same time.

Sang’s image, the heroine of “Nobody’s Business”, is an example of a new transcultural identity. Despite her Bengali origin, the heroine consciously emphasizes the traits of acquired Americanness: she asks her friends and acquaintances to use the abbreviated form of her name Sang instead of Sangeeta (her official name can be seen on envelopes only, various bills and receipts); destroys parental stereotypes about marriage and at the age of thirty does not think about starting a family; goes on a date for fun. By the way, a similar name’s abbreviation is traced in “The Namesake”. It’s about the protagonist’s sister, her Bengali name Sonali is transformed

into the American abbreviation Sonya.

According to the heroine, true love does not exist, and her fans' constant phone calls she considers as a sign of planned traditional Indian marriage. "These men weren't really interested in her. They were interested in a mythical creature created by an intricate chain of gossip, a web of wishful Indian community" [154, p. 123].

Sang sees nothing strange in the fact that she can not do the studying and leaves the University after the second year. The "parents-children" problem is clearly combined with the "cultural" one, because Sang's parents barely survived this shame: "After she dropped out of Harvard a year ago, her mother locked herself up in her bedroom for a week and her father refused to speak to her" [154, p. 126]. Having a significant number of school diplomas and victories in competitions, Sang spends her life at the cash register and places books on a shopwindow.

Bengali roots are clearly seen in the kitchen, because Sang often eats shallots, goat cheese, peanut butter and rice with a dark red sauce, which includes lime and red pepper (while she does not give up vegetable salad, yogurt, cookies and American steaks). It is in the kitchen where "cultural mixing" takes place: the heroine used to eat Bengali dishes with a fork, not with the fingers of her right hand, as most Bengalis do.

The "cultural break" is also noticeable when Paul, whom she rent an apartment with, pours tea into the kettle, fills it with boiling water and leaves it all for five minutes to remove the leaves in time. The heroine is surprised, because, in her opinion, it is much easier to use a tea bag: it will take half as much time and effort.

In appearance, the heroine does not resemble an American and at the same time sees herself as "different" from others. At the same time, except for the her golden skin color, she is no different from the typical American. Sang isn't ashamed of her American half-nakedness when Paul sees her with her hair flowing, with red strands glistening, in short shorts made from old jeans, and in a T-shirt with

narrow straps.

“Hers” used to see Sang “other”: for the Bengalis, she forever remained an exemplary girl with decent manners, who dances Bharatanatyam and has thick hair. Despite the external difference, the heroine deliberately denies “her” culture’s manifestations.

T. Naduta believes that “from the point of view of imagology such an image is interesting because it has no established “other”: both “our” and “other” in it is not stable and can change to the diametrically opposite” [68, p. 104]. In this context, Sang’s image is particularly vivid: given her external “otherness”, the heroine realizes that she is “different” about “her” as well.

Unlike Bengali women, who can’t imagine their wardrobe without a sari, Sang prefers peach scarves, which she sometimes ties around her neck, and cashmere sweaters, which she used to order through a catalog, because ordering clothes through a catalog or online is common case for her.

The heroine has a complete freedom in her personal life: despite the large number of fans, Sang has a permanent boyfriend Farouk, an Egyptian by birth, who is in Cairo with a visit to his parents.

Sang is not ashamed when holds Farouk’s hand and kisses him right on the street. The heroine even feeds him from a fork when once invites him to dinner. She allows herself to be alone with Farouk and return home after midnight, which an ordinary Bengali girl would never done.

When, before Farouk’s birthday, the heroine spends all day on cooking, she resembles a Bengali woman. Sang especially likes the new role of aunt: her sister, who lives in London, gave birth to a boy. The heroine is happy to buy gifts for her nephew and goes to London for the winter holidays. She officially declares to her friends “I’m going to be called Sang Mashi” [154, p. 133], which in Bengali means “aunt”.

Bengali “mashi” is unusual for the heroine, as well as unusual

“her” Indian culture, because Sang rarely speaks Bengali. Only in conversation with parents living in Michigan, the heroine sometimes uses a few Bengali words. The distance to her culture is confirmed by the fact that when Sang is asked how to say “have a safe journey” in Bengali, she does not know.

Unlike her American neighbors, Sang keeps her room clean, which surprises Paul, who used to believe that Sang is always in chaos. Paul notices that Sang’s room looks tidy and austere at the same time. Indian miniatures complement the cleanliness of the American room: “Men smoking hookahs and reclining on cushions, bare-bellied women dancing in a ring” [154, p. 134].

The heroine does not “return” to her roots, but continues to live a “free” American life. After a visit to London, she cuts her hair, as before carries a backpack, celebrates Thanksgiving, rents an apartment, allows herself to drink alcohol and does not spend the night at home for several days.

Sang is not ashamed to stay with her boyfriend for the night, which is not approved by the Indian community, nor is it approved by unmarried women over the age of twenty. The heroine is not perceived by “her” culture and appears as an anti-stereotype of a Bengali woman living in her thirties under the slogan “love does not exist”.

### **3.2. Representation of a new transcultural identity in the novella “Hema and Kaushik”**

The cross-cutting issue of the novella “Hema and Kaushik” from the “Unaccustomed earth” collection is immigration theme. Detached from home, the characters face an eternal dilemma: to assimilate in a new country and thus accept all its features or preserve their identity.

The novella represents a new transcultural identity. The reader gets acquainted with transculturality conditionally, through the

fiction text where several cultures are capriciously combined. The character's formation takes place within two cultures simultaneously: both Indian and American. The character is not squeezed into the "our" / "other's" limits, but he is in the "other" dimension – transcultural.

Such a situation of displacement of a transcultural subject requires a reconsideration of human existence's components: identity, home, "our" / "other", etc. N. Vysotska notes that "at the present stage, identity is presented not so much as a fixed fact, but as a field of intersection and interaction of heterogeneous impulses" [23, p. 43].

It is noteworthy that full understanding, as well as complete assimilation of the "other" may not occur, but there is a third dimension, transcultural, which is on the other side of "our" and "other". The transcultural dimension does not strive for cultural alignment or the hierarchy's removal of "our" / "other", in terms of modern transculturalism "the fundamental impossibility of cultural "purity" is important" [91, p. 6].

The multiplicity of cultural differences is significant, because the usual "culture" concept takes on other connotations and is largely rethought. In this context, G. Lenz notes that "there can be no pure terms or pure concepts that could define a new reality. All terms are internally hybrid, dialectical and dialogical, historically tense" [137]. Thus, in modern Asian-American literature, there is no "pure" / "spotless" identity (not spotted by other cultures).

A good examples of this identity are the novella's protagonists, which consists of three parts: "Once in a Lifetime", "Year's End", "Going Ashore".

In the center of the novella's first part – the characters' childhood and the conditional "return" back, because the main character tells about her childhood. Hema addresses her childhood friend Kaushik; she remembers her thirteen years and Kaushik's parents, who decided to return to America after seven years living in

India.

At the center of the work are two families who, despite old family friendships, live radically different lives. These families are close because of the cultural origin and adaptation peculiarities to the new culture and at the same time are different precisely because of the different degree of this adaptation.

In the first part, the writer changes her writing style because, unlike the traditional third person ("The Namesake", most of the stories from "Unaccustomed earth" and other works), the narrative is built from the first person, the main character Hema.

A work with a first-person narrative allows the author to "openly introduce her own voice into the narrative" [63, p. 87]. Often these are the character's memories of his life's some fragments, taking into account the smallest details. At the same time, the conditional distance between the course of events and the readership disappears, because "the character appears the same as he was at the time of the ordeal of certain life conflicts" [63, p. 87].

Kaushik's family is visiting Hema's one a few days before everyone starts a different life. Hema's parents have a farewell party for their friends. After the party, Kaushik's father decides to take the guests home, because this is his last chance to drive a car.

After some time, due to circumstances (Kaushik's mother's illness), Kaushik's parents decide to return to America. Hema moves to her parents' room, and Kaushik lives with his parents in her room.

Kaushik's parents ask Hema's parents to accept them until they find suitable housing. As befits true Bengalis, Hema's parents are happy to accept old friends. They feel a culture shock, because, despite their common origin, Kaushik's parents wear American clothes, smoke, and drink whiskey every night.

Parul, Kaushik's mother, has changed especially: she spends a lot of money on clothes, cosmetics, restaurants; like a real American, she "sorts" houses. In a conversation with real estate agents, she is not interested in prices, but in the style of the houses themselves.



Hema remembers: “Unlike my parents, yours had opinions about design, preferring something contemporary” [154, p. 386].

The heroine compares the way of life of two families who came together because of the same ethnic origin and the adapting experience to a new culture, and at the same time notices that due to different social status a “cultural abyss” is formed, which separates “theirs” from “others”. The symbolic “merging” process into the new American reality is especially unusual for Hema’s mother, because before coming to America she never ate at the table and did not know that there were lavatory pans in the toilets.

In order to keep in touch with her culture, Hema’s mother deliberately emphasizes the Indian details of her outfit: she wears a sari and puts red paint on her hair. The mother feels not moral only but also inner discomfort, a symbolic “mismatch” of Indian and American cultures; there is a conflict of her inner consciousness with the realities of American modernity.

Hema’s mother never wore short skirts, because she considered it obscene, did not allow herself anything stronger than tea, cooked exclusively Indian dishes in the kitchen: dal (traditional vegetarian Indian puree soup), curry (a dish of stewed vegetables, legumes and meat), kachuri (stewed vegetables with rice) and ghee, which is considered a wealth symbol in India.

Hema’s father also “holds on” to the past. In this he is helped by separate details-symbols of “his”: an old stereo system with speakers and a built-in receiver and family photos. The culture of “his” country is firmly rooted in the father’s mind for life. The stereo system has a calming effect because it resembles a previous life. There is a subconscious desire to “merge” with “his”: to call home, to hear the native voice.

The father subconsciously takes with him what symbolically “resembles” the homeland: photos and a music center. He was extremely “jealous” towards his music center. At a time of stress or internal depression, the father turned to “his” because he longed for

familiar feelings, memories, thoughts and experiences. There is a symbolic process of “isolation” from the outside world: the father is emotionally and subconsciously “charged” by “his” culture.

The author draws a clear and distinct parallel between the mothers of Hema and Kaushik. Despite the same immigrant status, the lifestyles of both families are markedly different. Parul, Kaushik’s mother, wears trousers and a tunic that barely covers her thighs; has thick short hair; her American image is complemented by a scarf and bright red lipstick, making Parul look noticeably younger than Shibani, Hema’s mother.

Unlike her mother, Hema respects Parul for using cosmetics even when she crosses the threshold of her room. According to Hema, painted lips give a woman a noticeable confidence. In this context, cultural differences are intertwined with “generation gap” problem. The conflict of generations determines the intertwining of plot lines, because “depending on which character is in the center of the work, the reader forms a point of view concerning the cultural identity of the text” [82, p. 246].

Like her mother, Hema sees herself “other” among Americans, even in appearance, because she differs from American children in the asceticism of her appearance. Unlike the American girls who wore pink jackets, Hema was accustomed to the fact that all her childhood she wore Kaushik’s things and tried to get rid of these outdated clothes.

Despite the presence of external assimilation signs and symbolic “infusion” into another culture, the heroine’s inner “stiffness” relative to another culture is noticeable, because her parents did not even consider buying new clothes for their daughter: “When I asked my parents if I could have a new coat they said no” [154, p. 374].

Hema is the only one who does not protest against the presence of Kaushik’s family in her house, because, unlike her mother, Parul makes Hema many compliments and as a result they became so

friendly that for some time Hema keeps a secret Parul's habit of smoking.

America does not "equalize" the social status of families, so everyone continues to live "their" life: Hema's family is impoverished, and Kaushik's family allow themselves everything. The author portrays ordinary people and privileged women who are not ready to be housewives. The parallel between the two families is shown: some of them completely assimilated to America, while others were "stuck" between the worlds.

Hema realizes that over time, the two families are noticeably separated from each other. Her parents are prominent representatives of those who have undergone acculturation, but, unlike Kaushik's parents, have not assimilated fully. Despite the fact, that formally they are already citizens of another culture and, having crossed the border, "change their role to the role of the absolutely different" [90, p. 222]; this does not prevent them from keeping in touch with their culture.

The symbolic "layering" of traditions and cultures experienced by Hema's parents leads to multiculturalism, resulting in there is a noticeable "cultural break". The line of this "cultural break" is often invisible, as it takes place in the inner world of the marginal character. These are, first of all, thoughts, memories, person's sadness for the past with awareness of irreversibility of these events.

N. Vysotska in this context notes the identities that "are subject to analysis from the historicism point and are constantly in a state of change and transformation" [23, p. 44]. Shibani complains to her husband about how much America has changed their friends, who over time have become completely alien to them.

The heroine sadly remembers that before everything was different: a different life, and they are different. Now she considered Parul a lazy American. "There were complaints about how your mother did not help clean up after dinner, how she went to bed whenever it suited her and slept close to lunchtime" [154, p. 386].

Shibani realizes the difference between men: unlike Parul's husband, who used to "run" around his wife and follow her whims (bring a sweater, a glass of water or whiskey), her chosen one never showed so much attention to her. Shibani recalls that Parul's husband allows his wife to fly first-class on her birthday, while her husband for the rest of his life never gave her a birthday present, and sometimes he didn't mention it at all.

Parul notices the opposite in relation to her son; it seems to her that they hardly communicate with him. Parul declares: "Even in Bombay we managed to raise a typical American teenager" [154, p. 382]. There is a different degree of immigrants' assimilation to the new cultural environment: for Hema's parents it is incomplete assimilation / semi-assimilation and complete assimilation for Kaushik's parents, which allows them to feel "at home" in America.

Transcultural elements are traced in Kaushik's image, who, despite his American upbringing, does not understand the meaning of the American word "set" and thus surprises Hema. Kaushik realizes that all cultural barriers can be overcome, and therefore, despite the resistance of both cultures, he is free to "move" among all cultural spaces. He understands that intercultural barriers are mostly conditional and therefore are in the imagination.

Walks in the forest are strange for Kaushik, where he decides to go without asking his parents. Of course, Kaushik's parents didn't see anything wrong with their son taking a walk in the forest, but Hema's mother did panic and began to recall scary stories about the forest. Unlike typical American teenagers, who sit at the TV with chips and pizza for days, Kaushik tries to spend at home as little time as possible.

In the novella's second part there is a noticeable fiction transition to a new type of narration. The narrator's language (verbal components) plays an important role. The narrator's change is determined by the choice of one's own evaluative position, as well as perception's subjectivity.

In the novella's second part, the narrator is Kaushik. He talks about his life after his mother's death, about his unwillingness to find common ground with his stepmother, whom his father recently married, and with his stepsisters.

Kaushik says that after his mother's death, his father married again. Chitra, the father's chosen one, was a widow, had two daughters and worked at the school. Of course, Kaushik did not approve his father's choice, but instead felt only a dull unbearable pain in his stomach, which he identified with the offence of his mother's memory.

Kaushik does not understand his father, who married not out of feelings for Chitra, but only to have a human presence nearby. His father met Chitra a few weeks before the wedding and met her only twice before he became her legal husband. This did not prevent him from immediately getting used to the personal pronoun "we" and quickly achieve a sense of comfort with his new wife. The author demonstrates a marriage that is based on convenience, not love.

The father's inner world becomes a symbolic metaphor of "virtual reality". Without realizing it, he subconsciously returns to Indian traditions and at the same time, like other Americans, lives with a woman almost twenty years younger than him, whom he creates a new family with.

After his wife's death, the father deliberately got rid of the things she once wore or used. He gives Kaushik "Audi", which he bought after the family moved from Bombay to the United States. He sends other things to Indian charities, because in America, bright saris were not very popular, in addition, so wanted Parul. He and his son sent all Parul's gold jewelry to Calcutta and gave it to poor Indian women who once worked as maids or cooks in Kaushik's family.

Over time, the father distances himself from the past and wants to forget his late wife, but at the same time fulfills the will of the deceased: scatters her ashes off the coast of Gloucester. Father's

inner experiences are ambiguous: he realizes that in order to gain inner freedom, he must first find the core in himself.

Kaushik notices changes in his father's image. After meeting Chitra, the father behaves differently: he does not worry about trifles, he does not even frown; no longer drinks alcohol, explaining it as follows: "I sleep better at night, I find" [154, p. 398].

Kaushik doesn't believe that his father gave up alcohol so as not to scare Chitra, because during his life his parents did not hide their passion for their favorite "Johnny Walker". Kaushik loved beer, although at home he could also afford a glass of "Johnny Walker" with an ice cube (as Parul always did).

The only thing left of the mother are old photos. As a successful photographer, Kaushik does not dare to open a personal page – to post his childhood photos on his own website. Family photos are a cultural subtext of the past for the character – details that still "hurt" and that are not easy to forget.

Only after Kaushik sees that his stepsisters have found his late mother's photos does he realize how much it hurts a person when someone "tidies up" his past (after his mother's death, he never looked her photos). Kaushik believes that his sisters "punished" him by this act. He yells at the sisters and, enraged, takes away these still important details of the past, which he then burns in the forest. Burning photos is an extremely emotional work's episode.

The character says goodbye to his past and to his late mother forever, although he still remembers the content of the photos: "Even from a distance the banished images assaulted me: my mother wearing a swimsuit by the edge of the pool at our old club in Bombay" [154, p. 413].

Despite his cultural origin, Kaushik's mother became an American internally, so it's no surprise that, unlike an Indian woman who is not allowed to be photoed in a swimsuit, she overcomes these prohibitions and allows her transcultural identity to be free "culturally".

The character leaves home and does not communicate with his father for some time. He really becomes “stranger” at home: Kaushik is absent from his father’s wedding, because he roams, travels a lot, the reason for which is Chitra, a symbolic “replacement” of his mother. After his mother’s death, he feels great loss and loneliness. Memories of his mother do not leave him; she still “lives” in his inner world: the same house, but with a stepmother, depresses the character a lot. Kaushik’s relationship with his father becomes formal.

It is the father’s “betrayal” (symbolic “replacement” of the mother – marriage to another woman) motivates the character to become a nomad. Kaushik is suitable for a nomadic lifestyle, he got used to this since childhood (his parents repeatedly changed their residence place). He is really an outsider, because his nomadism is not by choice, but by circumstance. Kaushik’s passion for photography became his profession. Despite his career’s success, the character is unhappy, because, except his late mother, he really has no close person.

Kaushik notices that Chitra is the exact opposite of his late mother. Chitra was of Indian origin, and long years in America did not make her one hundred percent American. Unlike Parul, Chitra is Indian not only in origin but also in everyday life.

Chitra consciously emphasizes her Indian origin: she has long hair and uses red paint, like Hema’s mother (a tradition that Parul never followed); does not share American women’s habit to drive a car (this is not worth Chitra); she is surprised that there are no curtains in the kitchen, where she spends most of the day.

Kaushik doesn’t understand what made his father marry the old-fashioned Chitra. His stepmother is associated with a simple maid who can only cook dinner and wash socks. Unlike Parul, Chitra speaks only Bengali, is embarrassed when she once meets Kaushik (it is unacceptable for an Indian woman to look a man in the eye), and drinks Calcutta tea “Chanachur” instead of alcohol.

Chitra is afraid to stay home alone, which almost made Kaushik laugh, although she once allowed her daughters to look in American way: “The thick zippers and bright nylon shells of the coats transformed their appearance, suddenly lending them a legitimately American air” [154, p. 402].

Chitra is afraid to let her daughters go to the shop with Kaushik, who is still unknown to her. Her fear is also noticeable when she forbids her daughters to leave the house by themselves. Kaushik does not share his stepmother’s worries, as he sees nothing strange in giving her daughters American freedom. He goes with them to a coffee shop, where he orders “real” American donuts.

The character begins to involve his stepsisters in American life. Without realizing it, Chitra’s daughters feel a culture shock: they have never tasted American pastries. Kaushik notices that the girls liked American pastries: “They began eating enthusiastically, not pausing until they were finished, exchanging glances and a sisterly commentary I was not privy to” [154, p. 404]. There is a clear “cultural gap” between Kaushik and his stepsisters: despite their common origin, Kaushik realizes how far he has moved away from Indian culture, and thus is “other” to both Chitra and her children.

The character understands that he finds himself in the same situation with his stepsisters: “Like them I had lost a parent and was now being asked to accept a replacement” [154, p. 404]. He realizes that, despite the strangely retarded reactions, Chitra’s daughters are marked with the same border “seal” as himself, so they will never lose the role of “other”. Each time he discovers variants of “Indianness”, he “gets lost” in his own “hybridity”, and his character’s integrity is that he is seen “other” to the representatives of each of the cultures.

The opposite situation is in Chitra, who is surprised by the American habit of chopping a Christmas tree and does not distinguish spruce from pine. But Chitra’s daughters are especially happy about the silver “rain” (they have never seen anything like



that) and the gifts with their names, which according to American tradition stand under the Christmas tree. Especially for the girls, Kaushik's father booked a hotel at Disneyland for five days; and gave Kaushik an envelope with a thousand dollars.

The father tries to replace the father to Chitra's daughters, but instead symbolically "redeems" himself from his son. The character realizes that he is superfluous at home. That is why, due to his father's betrayal, he leaves home and calls the next day only, explaining why he left without saying goodbye. The character is sad, but his inner experiences are different, special. They are connected with personal events only, with memories of a mother who continues to be "alive" for him.

In the third, final part, the narrator is a third person. The narrator is not only "here and now", but in several places at once (everywhere and always). It is important that there is a clear difference between the third narrator's image and the symbolic "presence" of the author of the work.

It is in the third part that the fateful meeting of Hema and Kaushik takes place, who meet by chance thirty years later in Italy. Hema talks about her wedding to a man she still doesn't know, and Kaushik, a successful photographer and traveller, talks about his work. Despite the long time distance, the characters still feel a cultural connection to each other and try to "hold on" to the past, thus continuing to remain culturally isolated from American reality.

Both of the characters understand that they live different lives and will soon really divorce forever (Hema, following her parents' will, will marry Navin, give birth to a child, and Kaushik will die during the tsunami). After a long relationship with married men, Hema still obeys her parents' will and agrees to a traditional Indian wedding. The sphere of family relations touches the deep foundations of Indian society.

Hema suffers from the fact that her lover recently left her, and at the same time is preparing for the wedding that her parents

planned for her. She barely knows her future husband, but is happy that he is ready to marry her “in absentia”.

Only now the characters “discover” each other again. Without realizing it themselves, they temporarily fall in love with each other, but do not admit it to themselves. Kaushik even asks Hema not to marry Navin, but to go on another trip with him. Hema realizes that this is not an offer to marry, and this will prevent her to finish her dissertation.

The characters, indeed, are far from each other and do not stay together. Hema returns to India, and Kaushik continues to travel because he doesn't really have a home. The character will forever remain a nomad, in motion, on a journey. He realizes that Hema is the only one who understands his inner world, because she knew his late mother and realizes how difficult it is for him now.

In the third part, the “home” topos expands: the characters are free, and it depends on each of them whether they will return to their roots. For both Hema and Kaushik, it is difficult to define the correct interpretation of “home” concept. The author demonstrates how you can find yourself without home, nomading by accident, by coincidence. On the one hand, the characters do not depend on cultural background, but on the other – their roots are not yet completely dead (Hema can not disobey her parents and marries Navin).

Hema subconsciously abandons “her” roots, because she dares to have a relationship with a married man. Therefore, for “hers” it means cultural “dishonor”, because Hema is engaged. Before Christmas, the heroine had to go to Calcutta, where her parents now lived, and get married in January. In this context, Hema's act means a return to “her”, because, as befits an Indian woman, she decides to marry a man almost unknown to her.

At the same time, the heroine violates the basic marriage rule – the importance of endogamy (marriage only between members of the same caste). Her future husband was not honored to be born in the

West part of Bengali, so Hema's parents were quite contemptuous towards his nationality: "Navin was what her parents termed a "non-Bengali", that is, someone from any province in India other than West Bengal" [154, p. 421].

This, by the way, it explains the superiority of some Indians over others. Navin came to America to defend his doctoral dissertation and taught physics at the University of Michigan. Only during the second meeting did he dare to kiss Hema and go to spend the night at his friend.

Hema realizes that her relationship with Navin has nothing to do with love, while Navin is seriously thinking about starting a family and procreation. Hema believes that there is something dead and false in their marriage with Navin from the beginning. At the same time, she understands that for many years she had every chance to get married and that love may come to them with Navin over the years, as it happened to her parents.

While in Rome, Hema communicates with Navin via the Internet and even calls him several times. The heroine does not want to think of marriage as a traditional Indian wedding, but understands that there is nothing she can do. Her parents "found" Navin earlier and had long dreamed of bringing them together, although for them he was considered "other", because he did not fit into the established stereotype of "theirs". The parents thought that Hema was too immersed in her research and too shy to meet men.

Under the influence of the American way of life, the heroine became accustomed to the symbolic role of the "second woman". Her lover's name was Julian; just like Hema, he lectured and occasionally allowed himself to drink alcohol. Hema realizes that her parents did not suspect the existence of a lover; it would be a real shock to them.

Kaushik understands that it seems there was no thirty-year separation when they last saw each other. "He realized, in spite of her dark hair and fitted leather coat, that she was too Italian. That in fact

she was Indian. That he needn't have used the polite form in addressing her, that her face was one he'd known" [154, p. 430].

In Hema's image, the connection with "hers" is maintained through cultural detail. This is a gold bracelet donated by her grandmother, which Hema has not removed since the age of ten (even at night). She understands that in a few weeks she will wear a wedding sari and will have twenty gold bracelets on her hands, as befits a married woman.

Hema understands that she no longer has a choice whom to spend the rest of her life with, so she lives the life she has chosen herself. Their wedding ceremony with Navin takes place according to all Indian traditions: "We were blessed, my hand was placed on top of his, and the ends of our clothing were knotted together" [154, p. 444]. This kind of tying the edges of the brides' clothes serves as a ritual knot to unite forever.

The heroine performs "her" religious ritual. As befits a true Bengali woman, she marries and is about to have a child, because for Indians, family is life's goal. We emphasize the importance of a large Indian family, when siblings live under one roof. The ritual of remembrance, which is followed in India to this day, facilitated this unity of the family as a whole.

Even when Hema and Kaushik were not yet acquainted, they were already linked by ethnic origin. Hema still remembers her first impression of Kaushik: "A quiet teenager in a jacket and tie, refusing her mother's food" [154, p. 430]. At the time, he seemed to Hema to be a spoiled American teenager who was not only well-dressed but used to have everything he wanted. Hema remembers how she didn't want to and was ashamed to wear Kaushik's things, but she had no other choice.

Kaushik sees nothing strange in bringing Hema home, because they both decide they have a lot to say to each other. Although in the past they did not communicate: "It was unquestioned that they would not part yet, unquestioned that though they had not seen or thought of

each other in decades, not sought each other out, something precious had been stumbled upon, a newborn connection that could not be left unattended” [154, p. 430].

What is meant is a common culture that still unites them. Despite a different lifestyle and a thirty-year separation from Hema, Kaushik realizes how strong the ethnic connection is with Hema.

The chosen nomadic way of life, as well as cultural marginality, allows the character to be “here” and “there” only half. Hema is a little envies Kaushik and declares: “I’ve never belonged to any place that way” [154, p. 436]. At the same time, she realizes that she chooses a calm, measured Indian life with Navin. The heroine subconsciously “returns” to “her”. She even fatefully leaves part of herself in Italy, because at the airport she forgets her bracelet, which cannot be returned on time. Ethnic detail plays an important role here.

Like Kaushik, Hema has the so coveted “American freedom” that eventually leads to betrayal of a man she still doesn’t know, but the heroine doesn’t even think she’s betraying Navin. She feels safe among thousands of strangers, because their relationship with Kaushik is completely indifferent to outsiders.

After her former lover Julian decided to return to his wife and their relationship finally ended, Hema was sure that the relationship with Kaushik was also temporary and the matter was not even she was engaged to Navin. “She began to appreciate his ability, perhaps his need, to connect to strangers in this way, and the willingness of strangers to connect to him. She began to understand his willingness – and she thought perhaps this was also a need – to disappear at any moment” [154, p. 433]. This shows Kaushik’s inability to maintain a long-term relationship, as well as his habit of changing his location from time to time.

Kaushik’s image is similar to transcultural, because it is characterized by a noticeable detachment to a particular place. The character is a representative of several cultures simultaneously.

Unlike his parents, first-generation immigrants, he does not question his “desh” and defines it with confidence: he is at home everywhere. There is a symbolic “substitution” of cultural principles, when “our” and “other” are intertwined in a complex transcultural unity.

Eventually, Hema becomes Kaushik’s mistress: holding hands like teenagers, they wander the Rome streets, secretly kiss, visit restaurants or dine on hastily prepared “Bread and cheese he’d bought, the sliced meats and wine” [154, p. 433]. They both enjoyed freedom, did not talk about a common cultural history, did not mention the past and did not plan for the future, but simply lived “here and now”. The characters understood they are “others” everywhere and will never be able to get rid of their “border complex”. Borrowing “other” but retaining “their”, they choose the role of “conservative”.

American freedom leads to the fact that at the age of forty Kaushik does not dare to confess to his girlfriend, whose name is Franka. Love contradicted Kaushik’s passion for the nomadic way of life, so it is not surprising he could not finally define his feelings for Franka. Unlike Hema, Franka accuses Kaushik of being a coward who is pathologically afraid of a symbolic “attachment” to both one person and one place.

The nomadic way of life reminds of itself in the next Kaushik’s visit to the resort town Khao Lak (Thailand), where he plans to celebrate Christmas. The food in this town reminds him of Indian one: “Steaming rice, dense brown and yellow curries, whole red and green chilies floating in sauce” [154, p. 439].

Despite the fact that Kaushik does not feel much admiration for Indian food, he liked the dishes in this town and it even added a little “his” nostalgia. The character feels similar feelings to Hema’s house, where he was for some time as a child. Kaushik’s inner world is full of contradictions: he remembers how bored he was in Hema’s house, and at the same time he mentions it with sadness.

At the end of the third part, Hema mentally “talks” to Kaushik.

She says she has regained her past existence, the one she chose without Kaushik. The heroine remembers how her refusal hurt Kaushik, he was very worried and with this sadness went to Thailand, where he was killed by a tsunami.

Hema prepares for the wedding and hears about the tsunami. She knows that Kaushik is in Thailand, but she doesn't know exactly where. She does not need confirmation of Kaushik's absence in her life. She is pregnant, but this child is not Kaushik's; the character really left nothing behind. Hema says, "It might have been your child, but this was not the case" [154, p. 444].

The novella pays special attention to "home" topos, which becomes an integral part of the fiction image. During the twentieth century, the "home" is undergoing significant transformations, but this does not prevent it from being one of the pressing issues of modern Asian-American literature.

Portraying "other" characters, the writer emphasizes the "cultural tightness" and the awkward location. The point is that in the border conditions people of different strata occupy one space, as a result of which the distance between two individuals decreases due to close contact. The characters create "little Indias" and at the same time, despite the considerable difficulties of rejection in another cultural environment, try to assimilate into American society, realizing that they will never become "theirs" in a foreign territory.

G. Anzaldua notices the following in this context: "Since I am a mestizo, I have no country. I am outside the culture's boundaries" [114, p. 102]. Like G. Anzaldua, modern Asian-American literature's character feels like a mestizo, as he feels a connection to a number of cultural and geographical spaces.

The reader notices that the symbolic "alienation" is overcome due to the fact that the character's fragmentation is replaced by a new, not limited by cultural framework transcultural integrity of his personality. At the same time, the character understands that his symbolic "home" is a thin line between "his" and "foreign".

There is a fictitious / false assimilation, which even after years does not erase completely the border of “his”. A similar thing happens in B. Mukherjee’s novel “The Tiger’s Daughter” (1971): even after seven years in the United States and marrying a white man (mleccha), Tara feels expelled from her society, estranged from friends and their way of life, which she describes as an outsider” [14, p. 45].

Literary critic D. Sommer in this context notes the “cracked double consciousness, which could be corrected by time and practice” [186, p. 301-302], which is not done by Lahiri’s characters. While living in America, they continue to wear Indian saris, follow home culinary traditions, and refuse to drive a car, communicate with Bengali families only and continue to eat with their hands. All this is a confirmation that they do not want to accept the rules of the American way of life, linking their dual identity exclusively with “desh” concept.

In “Hema and Kaushik”, the time distance unfolds until a few years ago, when Kaushik’s parents decided to return to India. The narrator calls them “deserved” immigrants because they left India in 1962, before the law supporting foreign students in the United States came into force.

Despite the title of “long-lived”, parents cannot stand a new life and stop the “struggle” for the title of “real” Americans. “Parents had decided to leave Cambridge, not for Atlanta or Arizona, as some other Bengalis had, but to move all the way back to India, abandoning the struggle that my parents and their friends had embarked upon” [154, p. 372].

Hema’s parents maintain a conditional connection with home when they organize “parties for theirs”. They invite acquaintances, who are treated Bengali delicacies only, and then after a six-course dinner sit down in the living room and especially emotionally discuss Indian politics events.

Thus, “their” Indian circle is created in America. The



importance of supporting “theirs” in America is confirmed by the special respect for Kaushik’s family. For Hema’s mother, Kaushik’s parents are extremely respected guests. Therefore, it is not surprising that Kaushik’s family is hosted with special warmth.

The position of novella’s “unreliable narrator” is reduced to the author’s inability to unambiguously perceive modern transcultural reality. M. Legky noted that “the introduction of an unreliable narrator into the work provides a symbolic “transmission” of impulses of author’s “energy” to the reader” [60, p. 17].

Deprived of a leading narrator, the reader, like marginal characters, takes an active position, because he is forced to balance among different points of view. V. Izer emphasizes that such a technique of an unreliable narrator “establishes perspectives that do not provide a simple events description” [40, p. 361].

The work’s poetics is dominated by the concept of bipolarity of the transcultural world; the fact of the interaction of cultures “through” is emphasizes and, as a result, the existence of trickster’s image, capable of various kinds of cultural transformations and reincarnations. Trickster is identified with “the mediator, so he embodies the nature’s dichotomy, which he must overcome in himself. Hence the character’s ambiguity and contradictions in it” [105].

When Shibani prepares for the reception of Kaushik’s family, she “betrays” her rules, because she puts on the table something unusual – a bottle of whiskey “Johnny Walker” – a favorite drink of Kaushik’s parents. Symbolic “betrayal” is traced also when every Thursday, after shopping at the “Star Market”, parents go to “McDonald’s” and buy Hema a hamburger and fried potatoes. American “traits” are also noticeable when one day Hema’s parents allow themselves to sit on the couch, putting their feet on the coffee table.

N. Vysotska notes the identity, which “is not given from birth, but is minted separately by each individual in the process,

accompanied by doubts, denials and constant revision” [23, p. 49].

We notice the symbolic identity’s “denial” in Parul’s image, who with her husband becomes a “great American”. Parul has short hair, smokes from time to time, wears pants and drinks whiskey while eating (Parul and her husband can afford whiskey even after dinner, which worries Hema’s parents). Shibani does not share Parul’s refusal of the traditional curry, which Parul replaces with American toasts and the habit of sleeping for a long time. Life and assimilation in the new cultural environment contribute to the fact that Kaushik’s parents gradually subject “their” elements to symbolic “erosion”.

Once in a different cultural environment, Hema’s parents brought to America “their” culture, along with all its features. N. Vysotska notes that “immigrants from Asia have locked in their national enclaves, preserving there elements of lifestyle and values” [23, p. 303].

The characters overcome not only the language, but also the cultural barrier, which “can be impenetrable as a strong wall, thin as a haze, or conditional” [14, p. 81]. Hema’s mother addresses Kaushik in Bengali, but he always answers in English. Such a “broken” language, which assimilated characters of different generations are forced to communicate from time to time, appears in the work as the only means of global communication.

The presence of a constant dialogue and ethnic traditions’ interaction, as well as the exchange of cultural differences declares the existence of a new transcultural character, capable of changing the cultural paradigm. The communicative act in terms of transculturation means that they do not try to reduce the “other” to “their”, he is perceived as one that has an independent way of expression.

Of course, a full understanding of the “other” may not happen, there will certainly be cultural gaps, impenetrability, because the “other” is interpreted as a combination, a synthesis of two “I” or two

cultures. Kaushik's stepmother speaks Bengali only and asks to call her "mamoni" in Bengali style, and in her children's presence she calls Kaushik "dada" (older brother in Bengali). The character does not like "dada", so, breaking Chitra's "laws", he asks his stepsisters to call him by name.

Kaushik's father takes an interesting position and offers his version – "KD", an abbreviated form of Kaushik-dada. The father always liked to play with words, at one time he even wrote poems in Bengali. Therefore, Kaushik's image is twofold: on the one hand, he is called by name, and on the other – use incomprehensible to him "dada". Kaushik mentions: "I found the nickname inane, but my father seemed proud of it, and it was preferable to Chitra's alternative" [154, p. 397]. Chitra's daughters address Kaushik in English, but with a noticeable Indian accent.

Chitra's daughters have American verbal traits: despite their Indian upbringing, they call their stepfather "daddy" in American style, although they always called their late father "baba" (father in Bengali). Kaushik takes an active part in girls' "American upbringing" and later notices that their accent and behavior manner are close to American.

\* \* \*

"Unaccustomed Earth" embodies cultural mixing with borders' leveling. Cultural "struggle" is seen in the images of protagonists' parents, who deliberately "transplanted" themselves to new ground, but refuse to follow American traditions. Despite the Indian upbringing, in the formation of their children's transcultural identity American traits are still dominated.

Having "uprooted" themselves for the beginning of a new life, the characters face questions of hybrid identity; they are puzzled by the complexities of the "we" / "they" relationship, as well as feelings of guilt and cultural betrayal.

In “Hema and Kaushik” there is a variation of narrators: the first-person narrative dominates (the work’s first and second parts), ie the subjective narration. The story is told clearly, chronologically, with a specific time definition, place and cause of the event.

The author introduces the reader to the atmosphere of a family of Indian immigrants. It is immediately clear that the events take place long before the event itself took place. This is a conditional return, a retrospective narration manner. There is a temporal strategicity of the fiction narrative. This is realized through the category of time of real life (past for the characters).

What is important is the narrative pace, which does not coincide with the one in which the events took place. All the presented events are tied to a specific time period – the main characters’ childhood. As then, at the age of thirteen, Hema mentally turns to Kaushik and explains that she has chosen a measured Indian life instead.

The work uses dialogues, insert episodes, characters’ thoughts and experiences, which are also important factors in the narrative construction of the work. There are other characters’ statements (characters’ parents, stepsisters, other minor characters), who are the background for revealing protagonists’ character.

The work combines thematic and cultural-fiction synthesis of “our” and “other”, Eastern and Western worldviews and thinking models. In this context, Kaushik’s image is particularly significant, because, having a Bengali origin, but being brought up in the American way, he “fights” between the cultures and can not find a balance. In such an identity’s formation, the character completely changes “his” stereotypes, accepting elements of different cultures. Tasting the dishes prepared by his stepmother, Kaushik thanks her, saying a polite phrase in Bengali, which he was taught by his late mother.

The two families are compared, the different degree of socio-cultural assimilation of the characters to the new environment is shown. The author carefully constructs a problematic identity

complex: Kaushik's parents tend to the American way of life, while Hema's – to the Indian one.

The cultural abyss divides the characters into “ours” and “others” and thus creates a torn “I”. The character is treated not as a whole personality, but rather as heterogeneous, not identical even to himself. Such a fragmented “self” is not at all separated from modern transcultural society, but, on the contrary, fights for its inalienable right to exist.

## EPILOGUE

Fiction work of many writers of the late twentieth century, primarily characterized as multiethnic. This is, first of all, cultural issues and the character's belonging to a certain race, class, ethnicity. Cultural diversity, transculturalism, tradition are considered key concepts of modern American border literature of the late twentieth century.

Asian-American literature is of particular interest in this context, the formation of which originates from historical and cultural circumstances that determined the specifics of writers' fiction consciousness whose writing emerged at the intersection of different cultural traditions. The problem of the place of border writers in Asian-American literature is poorly understood, and there is currently no general term for their designation.

Identity analysis in the context of the problems of Asian-American literature opens new perspectives in the study of the peculiarities of the literary process in the United States in the late twentieth – early twenty-first century. It is the Asian-American tradition that allows us fully understand the problematic and stylistic literature's diversity, to delve into the peculiarities of writers' fiction thinking who found themselves on the “border” of cultures and literary traditions.

One of the features of modern Asian-American literature is the “departure” from the established stereotypes of national and cultural identity. If earlier Asian-American literature was on the margins of the literary process, then in the XXI century it has established itself as an important phenomenon.

The concepts of hybridity, binary, heterogeneity, and otherness prevail in the works of border writers; a new facet of identity is revealed – transcultural one, devoid of the search for “their” by modern Asian Americans.

The characters of Asian-American literature are no longer

identified with the previously established pronoun “they”, as was the case in multiculturalism, but appear as “new” Americans who can afford different cultural / ethnic incarnations. The character does not want to “stay in the shadow”; on the one hand, he seeks to rethink his identity, and on the other – to assert the acquired Americanness, which allows his marginal consciousness formation. The character’s dual identity acquires new signs of transience and transit and is “somewhere”.

In the hybridized identity of transculture characters there is a cultural “fusion” of “their” and “other”, accordingly Asian and American. The innovation of modern border writers (F. Chin, A. Tan, D. Lahiri, B. Mukherjee, S. Wong, O. Ruth, L. Hayslip, J. Hagedorn, etc.) is traced in the development of a new transcultural poetics. The theme of modern Asian-American writers is the formation of a “new American”, in whose hybrid consciousness the various ethnic elements are combined into a single whole.

Unlike multicultural character, the one of transculture is characterized by greater stability, as he appears as a strong Asian-American who no longer experiences internal conflict.

For the Asian-American tradition, the figure of J. Lahiri is significant. The complex semantics of characters images, the interweaving of different plot lines, the presence of intertextual connections, simplicity of presentation, privacy, dynamic development of the plot are the characteristic features of her works. Literary critics mainly tend to analyze her work from the point of transethnic and transcultural understanding.

Scientific research devoted to the study of J. Lahiri’s fiction heritage emphasizes the importance of the archetypal layers of “our” and “other” culture. All this once again makes it possible to identify Asian-American relations in Lahiri’s writing.

Despite the significant interest in the transcultural component of Lahiri’s writing, the literary critics’ attention is focused primarily on the analysis of character’s certain typological features. This is an

outsider – an oppressed character who is already “alien” there, and even “alien” here. Critics’ attention to Lahiri’s writing is reminiscent of a symbolic “curve”: a significant amount of scientific research focuses on “The Namesake”, while some stories (the collection “Interpreter of Maladies”) lack attention in terms of coverage of transcultural processes.

All Lahiri’s writing tends to transcultural issues. The writer’s attention is focused on the character’s constant search for his own identity, which is a dynamic structure. The writer not only embodies in her images the structure of thinking of Eastern culture’s representatives, but also organically combines elements of Western and Eastern written tradition.

Lahiri’s fiction world is filled with transcultural characters, for whom it is extremely problematic to identify themselves with one culture only. The cultural identity’s issue becomes the main subject of attention of the writer’s transcultural character, who in the conditions of the modern existential situation “rediscovers” himself and his identity.

Lahiri’s transcultural character goes through a process of self-discovery and self-renewal; he destroys the long-established “our” / “other’s” borders. This is a problem of overcoming “cultural borders”, characteristic of writer’s each marginal character.

The analysis of most of the writer’s works is reduced to the characteristics of the image of the character-seeker of his home and his identity. Lahiri successfully develops a fiction way of representing the “mediator” in the structure of the national-cultural identity of the Asian-American. The expressiveness of her text is seen in the organic intersection of several fiction discourses: Asian, American, “other”. For the reader, “other” culture’s mastering takes place through a transcultural character who creates an alternative to “marginality” stereotypes.

Lahiri’s writing is based on binary semantic opposition: the fiction world divides “our” and “other” cultural space, and,



accordingly, “our” and “other” characters. The writer’s transcultural character is not afraid of his cultural roots, just as he is not afraid of his eternally changing and incomplete identity, composed of different cultures’ elements. Having the ability to hybrid positions of otherness, he does not lose touch with “his” cultural discourse, because he remembers the existence of a cultural border.

Lahiri makes the American text hybrid, deliberately adding Indian elements to it. The writer shows the unique survival experience of Indian immigrants on the American continent. The key issues are “cultural loss”, torn consciousness, the border of “our” / “other”.

The author touches on the immigration problems, as most of the characters, being representatives of two cultures, end up “nowhere”. The text’s “double perception”, due to its transcultural poetics, is important. Indian stereotypes find an unexpected dimension in the poetics of the writer’s works. The reader cannot fail to notice the importance of the character’s transcultural image, who, on the one hand, seeks to “merge” into American reality, and on the other – to follow “his” traditions.

A comprehensive analysis of Lahiri’s works focuses on the theory of the functioning of the hybrid transcultural identity of Indian immigrants. For the first time in the study of Lahiri’s writing, a number of important Indian elements (symbols) were identified that contributed to the formation of the poetics of her prose: the Annaprazan rice ceremony, the name duality (daknam, bhalonam), precedent phenomena.

The stories of the debut collection “Interpreter of Maladies” are full of Indian details (Bengali names, food, tastes, clothes, certain household items, photos and souvenirs), as some characters live Indian life in America. They feel emotionally isolated from the world around them and continue to preserve “their” culture’s remnants (to eat Bengali dishes, to wear Bengali clothes (mostly women) and to speak Bengali).

A clear difference of “The Namesake” is the semantic fields outlined by the anthroponymy of the Russian writer Nikolai Gogol. Such an introduction of literary figures expands the fiction action, while emphasizing the transcultural nature of the text itself.

The work has an obvious text game with the names of the characters and special techniques for creating virtual “meetings”. It is not only about visits to the secret depths of “our”, but also about a symbolic “leap in time” for “acquaintance” with the classics of the XIX century. The author significantly expands the character’s cross-cultural living space, because she is not limited to “her” and “foreign” culture. Important is the “other”, the third culture, which is the novel’s core.

Violation of naming tradition signals the understanding of the author’s own identity. It is in the differences in naming traditions in India and the United States that the problem of the cultural abyss is clearly demonstrated. The name as an ontological category becomes a focus that addresses a number of issues related to the characters’ cultural self-identification.

In “Unaccustomed Earth” there is identity’s “shift”. The characters appear as marginals who find themselves in a gap between Asian and American reality, suffer from cultural incompatibility (mixed marriages), and feel Indian traditions’ legacy.

The collection stories tend to reflect the trends characteristic of transcultural literature. It is about the existence of the character’s subjectivity “at the crossroads”, who, despite attempts to assimilate into another environment, can not lose his memory. Memory is the personification of “his” and distinguishes certain moments of cultural experience, while being the narrative’s object.

The writer resorts to “moving” images, which constantly destroy and create a new changeable and at the same time labile in nature identity. In this way, the author builds a plural fiction world in which different transcultural discourses are organically combined. Through the transcultural character, the reader is offered a cultural

model of multiple identity; the character has the right to be not only culturally “other”, but also “other” within himself.

The unfolding of the fiction narrative is built through the “remembering” processes, so the two planes of the past and present are compared simultaneously. There is a violation of the events sequence due to the character’s transition in time and the switching of cultural codes. The interaction of different time coordinates and cultural spaces is an integral feature of Lahiri’s poetics. All her writing is characterized not by a stable structure, but by constant shifts in the culturological dimensions of the literary text.

The work is considered as a text collage, in the center of which – ethnic issues. Semantic and poetic analysis of the text suggests the presence of complicated forms of representation of “hybridity” problem. It is a conscious fiction synthesis of Indianness and Americanness, which there is no new transcultural identity without.

Today, Lahiri’s writing should not be viewed from the point of view of multiculturalism only. The writer’s fiction vector noticeably expands. There is a symbolic “transition” from multiculturalism to transculturation.

Along with problems of generations, society, chronotope of the city, homeland, home, we notice the narrative transformation of poetics. This means not only the fiction embodiment of a specific narrator, but also an in-depth image of the psychology of the characters’ inner world.

The transformation of the writer’s poetics is noticeable in “Hema and Kaushik”. The work represents a new transcultural identity. The character’s formation takes place within two cultures simultaneously: both Indian and American. There is a variation of narrators in the work, the first-person narrative dominates (parts 1 and 2 of the work), ie the subjective narration.

The main character is both a narrator-character and a narrator-eyewitness, as he analyzes the immigrants experience in a new environment. Past events mark the fiction purpose of reminders for

the characters. The change of narration in the work is like a circle: the story begins and ends with the same narrative technique.

The author carefully constructs a problematic identity complex: Hema's parents choose a difficult path of adaptation to the American way of life and at the same time exist in a narrow niche of "their", as they try to retain Indian traits. These are, first of all, external details: Indian dishes, traditional clothes, Bengali language, etc.

The work clearly demonstrates the rethinking of the traditional "home" concept and the symbolic metaphor of "return" to "our". The work's plot retrospection acquires special importance, as it is a question of conditional "return" home.

For Hema's parents, the "I-American" position means only a physical presence in the country and completely denies the cultural difference of America. The assertion of "I-Asian" and, consequently, the cultural "non-choice" of Americanness means a state of symbolic "absence" and an emphasis on an identity different from the standard "like everyone else".

The novella analysis is not limited to "our" / "other" ratio in the minds of the "other" character, whose fiction world is characterized by ambivalence and does not fit into established stereotypes about his culture. Striving for a complete merger with the "other", the character with a multiple identity "aligns" the communicative act, but each time realizes that understanding is impossible.

The author points out the immigration theme from different sides. Thus, in "The Namesake", which occupies an important place in her writing (awards, novel's film adaptation, the connection with the writer's biography), cultural "otherness" is traced through the name duality; in the story "Unaccustomed Earth" from the collection of the same name, immigration is presented in the form of protagonist's internal monologue through memories, thoughts and experiences.

In "Hema and Kaushik" cultural difference is seen in the national Bengali dishes. The debut collection of short stories

“Interpreter of Maladies” is no less important. Although the thematically collection stories are the same (Indian immigrants’ fate), there are many symbols that the author uses in the analysis of cultural “otherness”.

Along with the well-established various definitions of poetics (descriptive, historical, normative, general, functional), we can talk about the cultural poetics of Lahiri’s writing, due to the ambivalence of the consciousness of her transcultural character. Two cultural discourses are compared and layered at the same time – East and West, the eternal question of delimitation of which still remains open.

The work of modern transcultural writers, in particular Lahiri’s, brings Asian-American literature to a new stage of development, forces us to take a closer look at what is behind the stereotypes of Indian culture. The study of the problematics of Lahiri’s bicultural writing allows us to rethink the literary tradition of representation of the East in the international literary space.

The study shows the innovation of the writer’s work in transculturalism context; the duality of her text is seen in the combination of Indian cultural code and American experience.

Lahiri’s writing requires a more detailed study in order to trace the mechanism of her distancing from her own culture. However, the monograph does not cover all aspects of the outlined problem and determines the prospects for further scientific research in the field of individual components of the writer’s poetics, taking into account the transcultural paradigm.

## GLOSSARY

**ABCD:** (American Born Confused Deshi) a man of mixed identity; born in America confused Hindu.

**Aerogram:** an airmail letter.

**Aloo gobi:** a dry Indian and Pakistani dish made with potatoes, cauliflower, and spices.

**Annaprazan (Rice ceremony):** a ritual celebrating the first time a baby is given solid food; a kind of act of naming a child, because in the Bengali religion there is no baptism rite.

**Baba:** father.

**Bhalonam:** good (official) name for identification in the outside world. Consequently, good names appear on envelopes, on diplomas, in telephone directories, and in all other public places.

**Bharatanatyam (Sadira Attam):** a major form of Indian classical dance that is indigenous to Tamil Nadu. Bharatanatyam is the oldest classical dance tradition in India.

**Bidi:** a thin Indian cigarette made of tobacco wrapped in a tendu leaf.

**Bindi:** “third eye”, a decorative mark worn in the middle of the forehead by Indian women, especially Hindus.

**Biryani:** a set of rice-based foods made with spices, rice (usually basmati) and meat, fish, eggs or vegetables.

**Buro:** an old man.

**Chai:** tea.

**Chutney:** a very common condiment used in Indian cooking. Flavours of chutneys can range vastly from any chopped fruit or vegetable which is cooked in vinegar, sugar and spices.

**Croquette:** a small fried food roll usually containing mashed potatoes or minced meat.

**Cuticura powder:** an antibiotic, medicated soap powder.

**Dada:** older brother.

**Dadu / Dida:** grandparents.

**Dal:** a dish made with lentils or other split pulses; Indian puree soup.

**Daknam:** pet (home) name meaning, literally, the name by which one

is called, by friends, family, and other intimates, at home and in other private, unguarded moments.

**Desh:** literally means “homeland” in Bengali; a specific place where relatives in the male line live.

**Didi:** sister.

**Durga pujo:** also known as Durga puja, an annual Hindu festival in South Asia that celebrates worship of the Hindu goddess Durga.

**Durwan:** a porter or door-keeper.

**Flokati:** a handmade, shag wool rug.

**Galauti (Gilawat):** flat spicy mutton kebab.

**Ganges:** river in South Asia.

**Gariahat:** a street in Southern Calcutta, famous for its shops selling sarees and jewelry, restaurants and cafes.

**Ghat:** a stone stepped structure serving as a ritual ablution for Hindus and / or as a cremation site.

**Hanuman:** a species of monkey named for the Hindu God Hanuman. It is regarded as sacred.

**Harmonium:** a free-standing keyboard instrument whose sound is created by blowing through reeds.

**Jackfruit:** a kind of enormous, sweet-fleshed fruit widely grown in Asia parts.

**Jain:** a follower of Jainism, a religion originating in South Asia about the sixth century B.C.E.

**Japiur:** the capital of the state of Rajasthan, in western India.

**Kali:** a Hindu Goddess. Kali is the chief of the Mahavidyas, a group of ten Tantric goddesses.

**Kathak (Kathakali):** one of the eight forms of Indian classical dance traces its origins to the nomadic bards of Northern India known as Katha-Kars or storytellers.

**Konarak:** a small town in the state of Orissa. It is the site of the Sun Temple built by King Narasimhadeva I (AD 1236-1264) of the Ganga dynasty.

**Ma (Mamoni):** mother.

**Mashi:** aunt.

**Mesho:** uncle.

**Melamine:** a white, crystalline resin.

**Mukhesh:** a popular Indian singer known as “the man with the golden voice”. Usually spelled Mukesh.

**Namaste:** traditional Hindu greeting said with hands pressed together.

**Pantua:** a traditional, deep-fried Indian confection.

**Payesh:** a Bengali rice pudding.

**Pulao:** traditional Indian vegetable pilaf.

**Punjabi:** a native Punjab, the region of eastern Pakistan and northwestern India that includes the Pakistani province of Punjab and the Indian state of Punjab.

**Sahib (Saab):** an Urdu honorific now used across South Asia as a term of respect, equivalent to the English “sir”; a nobleman, a gentleman in India.

**Salwar Kameeze:** a unisex outfit of pants and a shirt worn in South and Central Asia; a kind of traditional attire worn by men and women in India, Pakistan and some other countries of South Asia.

**Samosa:** a snack usually consisting of a fried triangular pastry shell with a savory potato, onion and pea stuffing.

**Sari:** a strip of unstitched cloth, draped over the body in various styles.

**Sindoor:** traditional vermilion red or orange-red colored cosmetic powder from the Indian subcontinent, usually worn by married women along the part of their hair.

**Sun Temple (Konark Surya Mandir):** a 13th-century CE Sun temple at Konark about 35 kilometres (22 mi) northeast from Puri on the coastline of Odisha, India. The temple is attributed to king Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty about 1250 CE.

**Tagore:** Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), a Bengali poet, philosopher, visual artist, playwright, composer and novelist.

**Tandoori:** traditional North Indian fare prepared in a tandoor, or clay, oven; a term to denote how meat is cooked.

**Tarkari:** a spicy vegetable curry.



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