

Re-Homing and Identity Reconstruction of Diaspora in Jhumpa Lahiri's "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine"

(*Re-Homing* dan Rekonstruksi Identitas Diaspora pada Cerpen "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" Karya Jhumpa Lahiri)

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Diterima: 10 September 2020

Direvisi: 6 Desember 2021

Disetujui: 22 Desember 2021

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan mendeskripsikan bagaimana karakter diaspora dalam "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" merekonstruksi identitas mereka dan menegosiasikan proses *re-homing* di rumah mereka saat ini. Cerpen "When Mr Pirzada Came to Dine" (WMPCD), yang ditulis oleh Jhumpa Lahiri, menggambarkan hubungan kompleks identitas dan rumah yang dialami melalui karakter diaspora, keluarga Pirzada dan Lilia. Untuk mencapai tujuan penelitian, pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif digunakan bersama dengan teori kritik sosiologis Laerson dan Swingwood, pembentukan identitas Castells, dan teori *re-homing* Zhang. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa proses *re-homing* yang digambarkan dalam WMPCD berdampak signifikan terhadap pembentukan identitas karakter diaspora, dalam hal ini keluarga Pirzada dan Lilia. Artinya, proses konstruksi identitas diaspora tidak akan selesai secara efisien karena identitas, khususnya bagi individu diaspora, akan terus dibentuk dan direkonstruksi dalam konteks sumber daya pembentuk identitas yang dapat diakses di "rumah" baru mereka dan apa yang mereka bawa dari tanah air mereka. Dalam hal *re-homing* dan *de-homing*, proses navigasi identifikasi ini menjadi semakin kompleks dan canggih. "Rumah" tidak lagi secara eksklusif didefinisikan secara geografis sebagai lokasi, melainkan oleh waktu dan orang-orang yang berkontribusi untuk membentuk ikatan pribadi dengan pengalaman serupa. Singkatnya, *re-homing* menjadi elemen penting dari proses rekonstruksi identitas.

Kata kunci: diaspora, identitas, rekonstruksi identitas, *re-homing*

Abstract

This study aims to analyse and describe how diaspora characters in "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" reconstructed their identity and negotiate the process of *re-homing* in their current home. "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" short story (WMPCD), written by Jhumpa Lahiri, depict the complex relation of identity and home experienced through diaspora characters, Pirzada and Lilia's family. To pursue the objective of the study, qualitative descriptive approach



was used together with Laurenson' and Swingewood's sociological criticism theory, Castells' identity formation, and Zhang's re-homing theory. The results of this study indicated that the process of re-homing depicted in WMPCD has a significant impact on the identity formation of diaspora characters, in this case, Pirzada and Lilia's family. It means that the diaspora process of identity construction will not be efficiently completed since identity, particularly for diaspora individuals, will continue to be established and reconstructed in the context of the identity-forming resources accessible in their new 'home' and what they bring from their homeland. When it comes to re-homing and de-homing, the process of navigating this identification is becoming increasingly complex and sophisticated. 'Home' is no longer exclusively defined geographically as location, but by time and the people who contribute to forming personal ties to similar experiences. In short, re-homing becomes an essential element of the identity reconstruction process

Keywords: identity, identity reconstruction, diaspora, re-homing

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of diaspora is such a complex and challenging topic to tackle. In particular, when it comes to the issue of identity and the concept of home. Even though the term diaspora was once narrowed and limited to the migration of Jews, Greeks, and Armenians to specific parts of the globe, Tololyan (2003) now considers it to have a broader semantic domain. It is defined as an individual or group equal to immigrant, expatriate, refugee, exile community, the community of a particular ethnicity overseas, and other terms related to transnationalism (Clifford 1994). On the other hand, the concept of diaspora emphasises a greater distance and separation, and solitude in exile. However, according to Weittstein, as cited by Edwards (2014), there are significant distinctions between diaspora and exile. The term diaspora refers to a situation where a person leaves their native or home nation without being forced. On the other hand, Exile connotes sorrow due to someone's compulsion to leave their home since things are no longer as they should be (Edwards 2014).

In terms of the dynamic relationship between diaspora and identity, an individual or a group of diaspora individuals will undoubtedly undergo major changes in their lives, particularly in the social and cultural realms. A diaspora's migration brings about many other changes in their lives, one of which is an identity crisis or losing a part of their previous identity (Castells 2010). As a consequence, it becomes another issue they must negotiate. People around a diaspora who deny the changes they are experiencing will have difficulty accepting their 'otherness' side, which seems different due to the cultural differences. To put it another way, accepting such shifts will create a demand for them to live in a state of flux between reality and fantasy (Dwivedi 2012).

Several factors predispose an individual or group to escape and leave their home. As Hu-Dehart (2015) mentioned, Clifford discusses many elements that motivate someone to travel and become a diaspora. Some of these causes include the desire to avoid civil war, world war, the fall of the old empire, the rise of the new regime, asylum-seeking, and other issues. This strong desire to migrate also impacts how long it takes someone to leave their home. The length of time spent escaping varies from person to person, depending on the reason for their migration. It can take months or even years for multiple generations to be born and become citizens of their new home. Their background will undoubtedly influence someone's identity. As a result, the identity crisis and its resolution process are unavoidable.

The diaspora identity and re-homing are vital issues studied through Jhumpa Lahiri's short story collection *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999). Jhumpa Lahiri is a female writer born in London, England, a daughter of an Indian migrant. She currently resides in Brooklyn and has become a citizen of the United States. Lahiri's works are frequently praised for their ability to portray and disclose the lives of migrant and diaspora people as they navigate their identity and struggle to survive in their new world (foreign land). *Interpreter of Maladies* is a collection of her short stories that focus on the issue of Indian American migrant identity and homeland. *Interpreter of Maladies* won multiple awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award in 2000, just under a year after its initial publication. "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" is one of the short stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* that is dense with concepts of diaspora identity and home.

The short story "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" chronicles the life of Pirzada, a man from Dacca who resides in the United States during Pakistan's 1971 civil war with its Eastern border, which is now Bangladesh. Pirzada pays almost daily visits to the narrator's house during dinner time. Pirzada visits their house primarily because the dormitory where he stays lacks an adequate stove and television. As a result, he decided to visit and dine with Lilia's family, a group of American citizens with Indian ancestry living in the United States.

Pirzada's life in Dacca is portrayed as opulent, with a three-story house, a 21-year-old wife, and seven daughters. He fled Dacca during the war to pursue his education in the United States on a scholarship granted by the Pakistani government. He frequently spent his life in the United States, primarily with Lilia's family. During the conflict, the problem of worrying about his hometown and family develops into a series of significant problems. Thus, this study aims to highlight the diaspora's experience of navigating their identity and exploring how the characters in the short story reconstruct their identities as proposed by Castells (2010) in relation to Zhang's concept of 're-homing' (2004).

Castells (2010) argues that power dynamics and power relations frame identity reconstruction. This process serves as the basis for his concept of three distinct mechanisms of identity construction: legitimation, resistance, and projection. Legitimizing identity explores the origins of identity as presented by authorized institutions to maintain and legitimize their dominance. When actors perform at a more devalued or stigmatized level, the identity is in resistance, which tends to encounter and confront the dominant one's consequences. When social actors gain access to cultural resources such as memory, knowledge, religion, or traditions on their own, they may establish a project identity (Castells 2010). Such perspectives frequently result in marginalization, where the legitimate identity exercises authority over the resisting one.

As individuals or groups engaged in cross-cultural contacts, Diaspora play a significant role in reconstructing their identity between their preceding and 'new homes.' Additionally, the implications of diaspora and identity are tied to the political, economic, and cultural changes that must be addressed, which significantly threaten the existence of the concept of home and sense of belonging, which was previously assumed to be permanent and static. As a result, Zhang (2004) believes that diaspora refers to a person who relocates and a person who undergoes a layered transformation that involves the process of rehomings or 'de-homing.'

In this case, the concept of 'home' is distinct from the conventional definition. The term 'home' no longer refers to a physical location for a diaspora. According to Zhang (2004), the diaspora would have a paradoxical sense of homesickness and home crisis which mean wandering without

a fixed home, resettled at the world's crossroads, referring back to a sense of being and difference. Consequently, the definition of a home as merely a space or a place to live in a particular geographical location is obsolete.

Furthermore, for Zhang (2004), diaspora does not simply refer to someone who moves overseas, but also to a state of being disconnected from culture, language, and personal experience (out of oneself experience). As a result, the close relationship between diaspora, identity, and the process of re-homing becomes critical to investigate, particularly how a diaspora reconstructs his identity and eventually establishes a new 'home' in a different place than where he comes. Rehomeing in this case is defined as the process of relocating, redefining, and revising home in a new society and culture where one's sense of home as a fixed, pure, and closed structure is threatened. On the other hand, de-homing refers to the state of feeling that there seems to be no place like home anymore—even home has become increasingly unhomey (Zhang 2004).

Numerous analyses have been conducted on Lahiri's short story "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine." Deb (2014) conducts the first study, in which she explores the significance of food symbols in the short narrative, which she interprets as intertextuality of humanity, otherness, negotiation, and respect for diverse contexts. Deb uses food to metaphor Bengali identity and decorum in the short narrative. She analyses her debate from a deconstructive viewpoint concerning the hegemonic discourse on the role of Bengali diaspora women in America in terms of their cultural identity distinctions and growth.

Panda and Bhakat (2015) analyze how two short stories in *Interpreter of Maladies*, "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" and "The Third and Final Continent," depict the diaspora's existence. The issues discussed in this study concern diaspora life and the identity crises depicted in chosen stories. This study goes into great detail about the diaspora. However, it has little to offer about the complexities of identity crises and the concept of 'home.' Nonetheless, the outcomes of this study justify the feeling of being 'here' and thinking 'there,' which is interpreted as validating the existence of a dual consciousness process and the fluidity of identity.

Bartwal's (2016) research examines the diaspora's sensibility concerning the religious identity depicted in the short story. Bartwal's research focuses on the character's mental illness during a war that threatens his family's survival in Dacca. Additionally, he analyzes how Pirzada's diasporic sensibility fosters empathy by uniting Hinduism and Islam's religious identities. It is to emphasise that Bartwal's essay emphasizes the psychological side of the character's experience as a South Asian diaspora in the United States.

Nasser (2019) focuses on Lahiri's two short stories, "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" and "Mrs. Sen's." Nasser's work focuses on how 'home' as a physical location has a strong association with individuals from various perspectives. As a result, he concentrates on home's meaning, which causes people to rethink their personal and social sense of human alienation. It expands on the definition of 'home,' both literally and metaphorically, and how the diaspora can transform a house into a home.

By conducting a review of numerous past research, this study will analyze the relationship between the diaspora and 'home,' as well as the process by which a diaspora reconstructs their identity. It is critical to research the process of identity negotiation that a diaspora goes through when navigating their previous identity as a member of a region currently at war and their subsequent identity in the new country where they live as a migrant. It primarily demonstrates

how the concept of 'home' is becoming increasingly complex, requiring a diaspora to reconstruct their self-identification considering the two distinct contexts in which they live, the real and the imaginary. Their previous identity is often considered irrelevant in their new place, and their surroundings do not easily validate their new identity.

METHOD

This research employs a literary criticism approach, which comprises interpreting, analysing, and evaluating literary works (Gillaspie 2010). Literary criticism can be classified into four approaches: mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and objective (Abrams 1953). The purpose of this study is to investigate a literary work via a mimetic lens, in which the development of any literary work is viewed as being influenced by the world rather than as a self-contained production. This study uses sociological criticism, which examines social issues in literature and how literary works reflect social phenomena, to examine the relationship between social reality and their depiction in a literary work (Laurenson and Swingewood 1972). Castells' (2010) theory of identity formation is used to identify and observe the process of identity reconstruction, which is closely tied to power relations. At the same time, Zhang's (2004) idea of re-homing is utilized to examine the diaspora's relationship with 'home' and how it reconstructs their identity. The data are expressed in words, phrases, sentences, or conversations, which are evaluated and then interpreted in the perspective of the stated theoretical framework. The data is analyzed in the context of these theories to demonstrate how the concept of 'home' is becoming increasingly complex, requiring a diaspora to reconstruct their self-identification. This research is primarily based on a short story titled "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), published by Harper Collins London. Along with the story as a primary source, this study relies on secondary sources such as books and journal papers, both printed and electronic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Identity Reconstruction of Diaspora Characters in the Context of 'New Home'

"When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" (WMPCD) by Jhumpa Lahiri has various diaspora characters from two ethnic groups. Pirzada is portrayed as a Dacca native studying in the United States. Second, Lilia's family, which consists of a father, a mother, and Lilia, is an Indian immigrant family residing in the United States for a lengthy period. Pirzada arrived in the United States to study in New England and Boston. He has at least lived in America for a long time with more than one year of residency. Apart from his desire to study, Pirzada chose to remain in the United States indefinitely. He could not return to his hometown due to a war in Pakistan. Pakistan's current state, which is fraught with threats, torture, and even murder, is vividly depicted below:

That year Pakistan was engaged in a civil war. The eastern frontier, where Dacca was located, was fighting for autonomy from the ruling regime in the west. In March, Dacca had been invaded, torched, and shelled by the Pakistani army. Teachers were dragged onto streets and shot, women, dragged into barracks, and raped. By the end of the summer, three hundred thousand people were said to have died (Lahiri 1999, 20).

Apart from Pirzada's origins as a migrant and his inability to return to his homeland, several crucial aspects become the hardships of a diaspora. In overcoming adversity, a diaspora frequently joins and shares with the same community as Pirzada does by dining with an American Indian family every night. Locating migrants in similarly precarious situations in the United States has been a common technique to alleviate their stress adjusting to a new environment and culture. As a result, Lilia's family has been seeking a familiar family name to live with since the start of her academic studies at Pirzada's university, which they eventually chose Mr. Pirzada.

In search of compatriots, they used to trail their fingers, at the start of each new semester, through the columns of the university directory, circling surnames familiar to their part of the world. It was in this manner that they discovered Mr. Pirzada, and phoned him, and invited him to our home (Lahiri 1999, 20).

Strong communal relationships are crucial parts of a diaspora's life. Every immigrant feels the weight of hardship when forced to live alone, and they have not even finished negotiating their previous identity in the context of their new home. Thus, as defined in the WMPCD, the role of an Indian ethnic community in the United States is to reinforce their identity in order to remain inside the group circle of individuals who share the same identity-building material in terms of historical experiences, beliefs, norms, and traditions.

Additionally, community support and familial relationships have additional repercussions. One of them is a developing sense of empathy for those adjusting to their abandoned homelands. Lilia, the narrator and notable character in the WMPCD short story, demonstrates innocence, but she profoundly empathizes with Pirzada's sorrow. Despite their similar American education, she feels a special connection to Pirzada. This similarity manifests not through shared emotions and experiences but on behalf of humanity. Lilia, as a child, wishes for Pirzada to have hope that he can live his life and that the family he left behind in Dacca will always be safe and secure.

Eventually, I took a square of white chocolate out of the box and unwrapped it, and then I did something I had never done before. I put the chocolate in my mouth, letting it soften until the last possible moment, and then as I chewed it slowly, I prayed that Mr. Pirzada's family was safe and sound. I had never prayed for anything before, had never been taught or told to, but I decided, given the circumstances, that it was something I should do. (Lahiri 1999, 24).

Appearing to be distinctive from Pirzada's case, Lilia's family tends to choose the United States as their new home as a diaspora with a more extended history of living in a new country. It is due to the certainty of a better quality of life in sectors such as education, health, and career. As a result, this demonstrates the presence of a negotiation process about their identity. Additionally, once the process has reached a point of clarity in the form of a decision, a diaspora will typically choose one identity, develop a new identity, choose both, or even leave both, as Shannon proposed (1988). Lilia's mother desires that Lilia become a complete American in order for her to have a secure, quality, and better life in the United States.

"In her estimation, I knew, I was assured a safe life, an easy life, a fine education, every opportunity. I would never have to eat rationed food, or obey curfews, or watch riots from my rooftop, or hide neighbours in water tanks to prevent them from being shot, as she and my father had. "Imagine having to place her in a decent school. Imagine her having to read during power failures by the light of kerosene lamps. Imagine the pressures, the tutors, the constant exams" (Lahiri 1999, 21).

Concerning identity, a diaspora will also arrive at a position where they need to negotiate and reconstruct their identity by considering the new environment around them. When living in a new place, a newcomer tends to be different and categorised as a part of another group. Pirzada is often mistaken as an Indian, even though he identifies as a Pakistani. At first, Lilia thought Pirzada was an Indian because she saw it only from his physical appearance, language, and last name.

"What is it, Lilia?"

"A glass for the Indian man."

"Mr. Pirzada won't be coming today. More importantly, Mr. Pirzada is no longer considered Indian," my father announced, brushing salt from the cashews out of his

trim black beard. "Not since Partition. Our country was divided. 1947" (Lahiri 1999, 21).

Lilia's preconception is subsequently corrected by her father, who explains that Pirzada is no longer considered an Indian following Pakistan's split and independence from India. The debate between Lilia and her father about the disparities between Lilia and Pirzada's families demonstrates the existence of a layer of differentiation even among groups that share a common identity, South Asians. As a result, the distinction is almost inevitable. Apart from their state or citizenship, one characteristic that distinguishes these two groups is their religious identity.

"Hindus here, Muslims there. Dacca no longer belongs to us." He told me that during Partition Hindus and Muslims had set fire to each other's homes. For many, the idea of eating in the other's company was still unthinkable.

He seemed concerned that Mr. Pirzada might take offense if I accidentally referred to him as an Indian, though I could not really imagine Mr. Pirzada being offended by much of anything. "Mr. Pirzada is Bengali, but he is a Muslim," my father informed me. "Therefore he lives in East Pakistan, not India" (Lahiri 1999, 21).

It is to note that the process of identity negotiation and reconstruction of new identities does not only occur in the outermost layer. Apart from reconstructing his Pakistani identity, Pirzada also feels the need to negotiate his South Asian identity. However, despite his many similarities with Indians that led him to become part of the Indian American community, he still cannot be considered an Indian. He is somehow a fish out of water. Nevertheless, it is also important to emphasize these similarities as unifying elements. The similarities found in Pirzada and Lilia's families enable them to unite as a community on behalf of humanity.

It made no sense to me. Mr. Pirzada and my parents spoke the same language, laughed at the same jokes, looked more or less the same. (Lahiri, 1999, p. 23).

Now that I had learned Mr. Pirzada was not an Indian, I began to study him with extra care, to try to figure out what made him different. I decided that the pocket watch was one of those things (Lahiri 1999, 23).

The excerpt above demonstrates that even those close to Pirzada continue to view and regard him differently. As a result, Pirzada feels compelled to reconstruct his identity in respect of how others perceive him and how he perceives himself with existing social and cultural components of his new environment. The integration of his multiple identities acquired in the United States as a multicultural country would undoubtedly result in forming a new identity in him. The development of a dominant identity-building material is determined by the degree to which the identity is internalized, which occurs at the level of power relations, as Castells suggests (2010).

Re-Homing Experience of the Diaspora Characters

A diaspora's reconstruction of their identity is thus inextricably linked to the process of negotiating their new home, termed the re-homing process, which Zhang pioneered (2004). As implied by the short story's title, Pirzada visits Lilia's family, both of whom are of Bengali ethnic origin. Although they have distinct national and religious identities, the sense of family in South Asia or Bengali is sufficiently strong to justify the preservation of their ancestral dwellings as part of their former identities. Pirzada receives a sense of home and belonging from Lilia's family during his stay in the United States. Similarly, requesting Pirzada to visit them regularly demonstrates that they want to experience a sense of Bengali in their home to develop a personal bond with him. These encounters symbolize mutual contact as the two attempts to reconstruct their identities in their new environment.

Not only that, but a diaspora will eventually encounter homesickness and home crises. Both sides, Pirzada and Lilia's family, are confronted with this obstacle. Pirzada satisfies his longing for his

hometown by socializing with the Lilia family. Similarly, Lilia's family cope with this by allowing Pirzada to visit them freely each night. Pirzada's yearning for his homeland is evident in how he tells Lilia's family stories about his house, his family, and his feelings throughout their time living together under the same roof.

In Dacca, Mr. Pirzada had a three-story home, a lectureship in botany at the university, a wife of twenty-year, and seven daughters between the ages of six and sixteen whose names all began with the letter A (Lahiri 1999, 20).

While Pirzada's depiction of his homeland makes it sound like a tranquil place, he does not feel about his hometown when he is in the United States. He attempts to compensate for his homesickness by interacting with his family in Dacca, but the situation is terrible. Pirzada has not heard from "his house" or his family in over six months. His hometown exists just in his thoughts (ghostly location). He is physically present in a new home in the United States with Lilia's family, but his emotions and thoughts are still bound up in the homeland, to the point where he cannot be felt or touched by his senses. As a result, sustaining a sense of belonging to a distant home that cannot be seen or may have been destroyed is a tough challenge for a diaspora.

Each week Mr. Pirzada wrote letters to his wife, and sent comic books to each of his seven daughters, but the postal system, along with most everything else in Dacca, had collapsed, and he had not heard word of them in over six months (Lahiri 1999, 20).

Pirzada's struggle to survive in such a state, along with his love for his homeland and family, is a burden for him. Moreover, WMPCD depicts time zone differences, as though Pirzada is constantly living in the shadow of his family in Dacca. When he wakes in the United States, anything he does may have been premeditated far in advance by his family. It is to say that Pirzada is far from unaffected by the picture of his family and hometown—where he feels better at ease—that constantly haunts his feelings and thoughts.

When I saw it that night, as he wound it and arranged it on the coffee table, an uneasiness possessed me; life, I realized, was being lived in Dacca first. I imagined Mr. Pirzada's daughters rising from sleep, tying ribbons in their hair, anticipating breakfast, preparing for school. Our meals, our actions, were only a shadow of what had already happened there, a lagging ghost of where Mr. Pirzada really belonged (Lahiri 1999, 23).

The WMPCD describes in great detail how Pirzada's hometown has been destroyed. However, he still feels Dacca is home as a whole. It is a place where he feels complete. His family presence, memories, and experiences in Dacca will never be erased and will always be a part of his life. Although Pirzada's time with Lilia's family also brings the impression of a 'home' in its way, Dacca is the centre of his life in any way. As described in the short story, the destruction of Dacca further strengthens Pirzada's obstacles and challenges in facing homesickness and home crisis that are no longer only about longing but also covered by deep worry.

On the screen, I saw tanks rolling through dusty streets, and fallen buildings, and forests of unfamiliar trees into which East Pakistani refugees had fled, seeking safety over the Indian border (Lahiri 1999, 23).

Apart from the difficulties and confusion seen in several of the lines above, Pirzada struggles to discern between a real and visible house in real life and a home that is merely a fantasy invisible to human sight. As a result, despite his physical presence in the United States, Dacca is constantly in his thoughts. Pirzada does not choose to de-home by forgetting Dacca in this situation; instead, he maintains his 'ghostly homes' to himself. The preservation of these two results from his ambiguity and inability to discern between those different homes.

"Don't go into any of the houses you don't know," my father warned. Mr. Pirzada knit his brows together. "Is there any danger?"

“No, no,” my mother assured him. “All the children will be out. It’s a tradition” (Lahiri 1999, 27).

The excerpt above tells how Pirzada is deeply concerned about Lilia, who wants to celebrate Halloween traditions around neighbourhood houses. Pirzada is worried about the children because he feels like seeing his own family, and he shares the fear of how he feels about his children in Dacca. Therefore, his attitude shows an effort to anticipate what he is worried about. However, eventually, Lilia’s mother assures him that in the United States, there is nothing to worry about. She considers that everything is safe and Pirzada does not need to worry.

If Pirzada’s re-homing process seems to be on the verge of struggling to negotiate his old home in Dacca and his new home in the United States, then it is different from what happened to Lilia’s family. In this case, Lilia’s family tends to be more able to decide on their new home after undergoing a relatively long re-homing process. They choose the United States as their whole new home and show no desire to return to their old home, conflicted India. Such an illustration can be seen in the following:

In her estimation, I knew, I was assured a safe life, an easy life, a fine education, every opportunity. I would never have to eat rationed food, or obey curfews, or watch riots from my rooftop, or hide neighbors in water tanks to prevent them from being shot, as she and my father had (Lahiri 1999, 21).

However, India remains an integral part of Lilia’s family life. At the end of the story, Lilia feels that Pirzada and his identity have built many things that can shape Lilia’s identity as a Bengali in a complete way. Consequently, when Pirzada decides to go to Dacca after an arduous struggle, Lilia feels the loss of the precious pieces that had previously complimented her. Home in this sense can not only be interpreted as a place, location, sense of belonging, but also a circle of people who can create a sense of security and comfort. Such an aspect can further be considered one of the main backgrounds and reasons for the formation of various ethnic minority communities in various parts of the world, especially in multicultural countries.

CONCLUSION

The analysis on the short story illustrates that the re-homing process is created from place or space; time in the form of history or memory; and the society or people around them. It is to note that communities play a vital role as valuable pieces in shaping a diaspora’s identity. Losing some of it will also have consequences that can lead to homesickness or even a home crisis. In this case, Pirzada becomes a critical part of Lilia’s identity-building material when they live together, as he is also someone who makes her more aware of who she is. On the other hand, this works together as well in terms of how Lilia’s family gives so much influence to Pirzada in shaping and negotiating his identities during his stay in the United States. This mutual connection and influence from one party to another makes the cultural interaction more complicated on the one hand, yet also empowers people on behalf of humanities on the other.

The WMPCD short story demonstrates how the process of re-homing has a significant impact on the identity formation of diaspora characters, in this case, Pirzada and Lilia’s family. It is to emphasize that the diaspora’s process of identity construction will not be efficiently completed. Identity, particularly for diaspora individuals, will continue to be established and reconstructed in the context of the identity-forming resources accessible in their new ‘home’ and what they bring from their homeland. When it comes to re-homing and de-homing, the process of navigating this identification is becoming increasingly complex and sophisticated. ‘Home’ is no longer exclusively defined by geography or location but by time and the people who contribute

to forming personal ties to similar experiences. As a result, re-homing becomes an essential element of the identity reconstruction process.

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