

UDC 821.111-32.09(73)
DOI: 10.32342/2523-4463-2022-2-24-11

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POETICS OF GASTRONOMIC IMAGES IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S "THE NAMESAKE"

Метою статті є аналіз специфіки гастрономічних образів та індійського гастрономічного коду в романі Джумпи Лагірі «Тезка» як уособлення азійської ідентичності в контексті транскультурної парадигми.

У статті використано такі *методи*: культурно-історичний, історико-типологічний, функціональний, герменевтичний, наратологічний аналіз, біографічний, принципи постколоніальної та деколоніальної критики.

Автор статті зазначає, що їжа виступає умовною мовою для героїв, а також культурним кодом, який успішно трактується лише «своїми» – представники індійської культури. Такий символічний «контакт» з кухнею іншої країни дозволяє краще відрізнити, зрозуміти і асимілювати «своє». Тому культурні кулінарні відмінності яскраво простежуються на кухні, де героїня звикла проводити більшу частину дня і особливо ретельно готувати страви. Інтерпретація приготування їжі як справжнього мистецтва пов'язана з маргіналізованими / порубіжними персонажами Джумпи Лагірі: потрібно пам'ятати, скільки, коли та яких саме спецій потрібно додавати до страви. Як справжня бенгалка, героїня майстерно готує традиційні «свої» страви. Свою внутрішню культурну ностальгію та сум вона «заповнює» приготуванням їжі, а відтак намагається перенестися додому подумки. Вона усвідомлює, що всі інші ідентичності в ній можуть бути зламані, але кулінарна ідентичність буде завжди; вона вистоїть навіть у новому культурному середовищі. Їжа та кулінарна активність героїні служать критерієм для розмови про щось інше: про психологію та, перш за все, про вираження культурної ідентичності.

Проаналізувавши гастрономічні образи в романі Джумпи Лагірі «Тезка», вдалося зробити такі *висновки*: образ їжі в художніх творах дає можливість трактувати її як естетичний феномен, і як відносну категорію «істівне» / «неістівне». Процеси приготування їжі представлені в інструктивному ключі в романі, проте гастрономічні образи страв мають певне призначення – підкреслити культурну ідентичність, а також показати психологічний портрет героя. Варто відзначити спокійну манеру Ашими готувати, ретельно продумуючи не тільки перелік страв, але й кандидатури людей, для яких ці страви готуються.

Ключові слова: гастрономічні образи, транскультура, індійські іммігранти, маргінальний герой, етнічна ідентичність, традиція.

Для цитування: Yalovenko, O. (2022). Poetics of Gastronomic Images in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake". *Вісник Університету імені Альфреда Нобеля. Серія: Філологічні науки / Visnyk Universitetu imeni Alfreda Nobelya. Seriya: Filologicni Nauki*, vol. 2, issue 24, pp. 131-141, DOI: 10.32342/2523-4463-2022-2-24-11

For citation: Yalovenko, O. (2022). Poetics of Gastronomic Images in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake". *Alfred Nobel University Journal of Philology / Visnyk Universitetu imeni Alfreda Nobelya. Seriya: Filologicni Nauki*, vol. 2, issue 24, pp. 131-141, DOI: 10.32342/2523-4463-2022-2-24-11

Introduction

Multicultural competence in nutrition is becoming a basic knowledge nowadays. The reason for getting acquainted with the cuisine of other cultural environments is tolerance, willingness to take risks, as well as openness to the world. Under such conditions, fiction significantly contributes to the acquisition of relevant experience.

Food is primarily a biological need in human daily life, but it also occupies an important place in culture as a criterion of identity. The writers use the names of dishes, food consumption to show not only characters' social status, expression of character traits, but also to determine cultural identity, because food has "its" symbolic meaning in all cultures.

Within intercultural communication, national stereotypes are not left out, which strongly expresses the established culinary stereotypes. As a result, literary works on food preferences and antipathies, cooking and food arranging practices are fruitful from culturally contrasting and intercultural perspectives. Therefore, the appearance of fiction works related to food issues is justified, as well as the increased interest in this problem of culturology and literary studies.

It is known that India is home to most well-known and little-known spices, and spices are the main ones in Indian cuisine. Even ordinary rice or potatoes Indians eat with spices. Several dozen spices are mixed in pin-point accuracy. You have to remember when, how much, and what spices should be added to the dish.

Indian culture has always been associated with religion, that is why food is considered God's gift. As a donation, Hindus often give food to the poor and believe it is their sacred duty. Some foods have religious significance; even rice itself is identified with life symbol. According to the religious concepts of Hinduism, "you are what you eat" (national food and identity) and "where you eat" (the feeling of home extends to your family, your native land, culture). Hindus eat while sitting on the floor (there are various explanations for this custom) just like in the temple, performing an act of humility and faith, considering themselves disciples of God who is higher.

Paralinguistics interprets food as a "system of significant differences": it is important what and how a person eats, where she/he does it and what she/he likes, non-verbally tells about her/his origin, education and lifestyle. That is why food is not just a daily hunger satisfaction as a process, but it is considered a language or a communication system.

In Jhumpa Lahiri's writing food is not just a cultural code, not a pursuit of food, not a means of satiety, but a real art. In "The Namesake", gastronomic images are used as a cultural phenomenon; the problem of cultural hybridity is shown through the motif of national food as personification of "our". Lahiri's characters realize that hunger is an emotion, more precisely, a feeling of lack of "their" warmth.

Food preferences of Lahiri's characters are a symbolic "tool" for establishing various kinds of relationships, they contribute to the reconstruction of memories of the characters' past, and serve as an indicator of self-identification. The writer invited the reader to get acquainted with the food practices of Asian culture. Food motif is characterized by a symbolic and culturological "load". Food and drink mark not only the social status, but also the immigrant experience, their troubles and aspirations. In the novel food in its ethnographic aspect serves as an identity criterion and an associative background for understanding the characters' relationships. The author uses both external and internal focalizations, which mostly alternate in the texts, demonstrating the interaction between "other" ("foreign") and "own" ("I").

In this context professor I. Limborsky says the following: "First of all, multicultural literature consistently defends the right to the voice of the "other", who differs by his special world's view and claims to be heard by those who consider themselves majority members. The character of multiculturalism literature, as a rule, differs by his, "other" social, racial, gender or other status" [Limborsky, 2019, p. 171].

The motif of "other" is vividly conveyed through eating habits as Jhumpa Lahiri's characters are distinguished by their culinary preferences. We mean different approaches to food consumption: to sit on the floor with your legs crossed (Hindus believe that in this (a sitting) position food is better digested); to eat with your hands (only with your right hand as the left is considered unclean; the left hand is for washing the body, putting on shoes, etc.); to adhere strictly to the fast on religious holidays; to sing Bengali songs and to gather the whole family and possible friends.

An appeal to gastronomy images in fiction works allows us to interpret food as an aesthetic phenomenon. Food is an integral part of diaspora's cultural identity and serves as an important symbol; it is a "marker" of cultural differences. In fiction, particularly in marginalized and bilingual writings, food serves as a means of symbolic character's "connection" with her/his own culture (her/his own special cooking ritual is extremely important). The culinary art (the art of cooking and eating) is one of the important cultural phenomena that pervades contemporary Asian-American literature. Therefore, the food topos and its representation in fiction works are extremely productive from a transcultural perspective.

Lahiri's writing is an excellent example of national Indian cuisine representation in the transcultural paradigm. In each Lahiri's work there are plots of cooking, because dining plays a central role in her writing. That is why it is important to determine the literary aspects of the study of gastronomic images in her writing: not narrative strategies only, but also figurative symbolization of "our" / "other" culinary differences as well as language organization of food arrangements along with Bengali cultural traditions, tastes and preferences.

Food and its preparation process are extremely important for Asians: dish properties depend not only on where and how the products grew, but first of all on who cooked the dish. This careness (Asian women spend most of the day in the kitchen), compared to the American habit to haste, is often emphasized in Lahiri's works. The cook becomes almost the main symbolic "ingredient"; the food smells of the person itself, even there is the smell of her/his feelings and her/his pain (in our case it is a cultural pain, i. e. nostalgia).

Cooking and eating are special activities for Lahiri's characters because the preference of some dishes over others has an important cultural basis. In this way, food becomes a cultural product. Food is a conditional language for the characters, as well as a cultural code that is deciphered by "ours" only (Indian culture representatives). In this regard, I. Kosheleva points out that "food serves as a gateway to solving important cultural issues" [Kosheleva, 2012, p. 76].

The purpose of the article is to analyze the specificity of gastronomic images and the Indian gastronomic code in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake" as a personification of Asian identity in the context of transcultural paradigm.

In the article we used the following *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 Lahiri's narrative manner), biographical (revealing the reflection of author's personal experience in her writing), the principles of postcolonial and decolonial criticism (rethinking the problem of "otherness" in transcultural discourse).

Despite the presence of scientific works of foreign critics (T. Bhalla [Bhalla, 2012], K. Chatterjee [Chatterjee, 2016], S. Dasgupta [Dasgupta, 2011], N. Friedman [Friedman, 2008], R. Heinze [Heinze, 2007], F. Kral [Kral, 2007], S. Lutzoni [Lutzoni, 2017], B.W. Noelle [Noelle, 2004], A. Rizzo [Rizzo, 2012], A. Shankar Saha [Saha, 2012] and others), Jhumpa Lahiri's writing is not fully investigated, which determines further theoretical studies in transcultural context. Important remarks about the genre characteristic of Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake" and its problematic-thematic features were expressed by Ukrainian critics, in particular N. Bidasiuk [Bidasiuk, 2008], N. Vysotska [Vysotska, 2006], T. Denysova [Denysova, 2004], N. Zhluktenko [Zhluktenko, 2010], I. Kosheleva [Kosheleva, 2012]. However, "The Namesake" analysis is still relevant, especially in the context of the basic transcultural positions.

Generation gap

"The Namesake" (2003) is the first Jhumpa Lahiri's novel that was featured in "The New York Times" bestseller list for several weeks. This is the story of one family which has an Indian upbringing but lives in America. The novel is characterized by its specificity: having a double consciousness the characters solve a number of problems and step by step they want to be more fully assimilated into the new "desh" (literally "homeland" in Bengali; a specific place where relatives in the male line live).

The problem of cultural hybridity expands because of the national food motif as “our”. Food choices have always been important for Indians (we can compare: Americans are simply starving, but for Indians eating is sacred). In this way I. Kosheleva emphasizes “three interconnected components: a process (cooking) – an object (food) – a man” [Kosheleva, 2012, p. 78]. This is perfectly evident in Ashima’s characterization, the protagonist’s mother: Ashima (the person) spends most of the day in the kitchen (process) and knows the taste properties of many spices (the object).

Both cooking descriptions and consumption play an important role in the text. It is the ability to eat that makes it possible to explain the hero’s character. The soul’s primitiveness creates the inability to enjoy food, signals the lack of consumption culture (unlike Americans, Asians eat slowly, commenting on the cooking process itself).

In Jhumpa Lahiri’s writing, especially in “The Namesake”, food serves not for nutrition only, it is shown as an art that needs some interpretation for new world’s representatives. We mean Ashoke and Ashima’s characterization, the first-generation immigrants who used to eat in a leisurely manner. Hours of painstaking work in the kitchen, as well as the art of quiet food consumption, form the core of traditional Bengali culture for them. A morning shopping trip, which rightfully belongs exclusively to the family head, is also traditional. Instead, immigrant children can afford a pizza or a burger right in front of the TV.

Immigrant children follow completely different values: they tolerate parental attempts to accustom them to this national “nonsense”. Even Gogol once said that Indian dishes can never be compared to his favorite pizza and burgers. Milk and orange juice, vegetables and muffins are the usual products for Gogol and his sister.

In the novel dishes also have hedonistic and anti-hedonistic properties, depending on attractiveness or repulsiveness emphasis. American food is perceived as “their” and delicious for Gogol and Sonya, but he barely forces himself to eat his mother’s food (in this case, such a respectable food for parents is perceived as a disgust by the second generation of immigrants).

Diet is no less important in the daily lives of Indian immigrants than their following of certain rites, customs and traditions. Most of the characters remember “their” prohibitions and restrictions associated with the consumption of certain foods and beverages (characters “do not betray” their traditions and do not drink alcohol).

It is important to realize how food can have different meanings for different nationalities. For Americans, food is just a daily necessity, while it is a pleasure for Bengalis. That is why Americans’ habit to throw half-eaten sandwiches into the trash bin, or apples on the ground, biting off them only a couple of times, as once Gogol does, does not arouse Ashoke’s approval because food is considered God (Brahman) in Hinduism and, accordingly, they treat it with great respect. They also donate food to the poor and disadvantaged; follow fasting on religious holidays. In this context D. Sivers notes the following: “The response of poor people to food is consistent throughout the world: they eat as much as they can when they can, because they don’t know whether they will have the opportunity to eat the next day” [Sivers, 2008].

It is not surprising, that in order to please their children, the Ganguli family lives an “American life” once a week (here food serves as a link between Ashima’s American and Bengali roots). Especially for her son, Ashima cooks a real American lunch: fried chicken, burgers and pizza, while giving up traditional dal (Indian puree soup), rice and beans dishes, fish, lentils, Turkish peas, as well as curry spices. But, while preparing Thanksgiving turkey, the heroine can’t keep herself from adding “her” spices to the dish: she rubs the meat with a mixture of garlic, cumin and cayenne pepper. She wants to bring the elements of “hers” and, in the end, we have an American dish with Indian spices. In this episode along with the importance of family and community for Bengalis Lahiri shows a unique type of culture: neither Bengali, nor American completely.

Describing the life of Indians in American conditions, Lahiri notices the smallest details of cooking and consumption, unwritten table behavior rules. So, arriving in America for the first time, Ashima is amazed that Americans eat chicken with skin; she herself would not even touch such food. The heroine realizes that Americans are much more difficult to feed than Bengalis, because most American teenagers are allergic to dairy products and never eat bread crust. Ashima does not understand her American neighbors, who (unlike her) do not spend most of the

day in the kitchen. As a result, her neighbors have a lot of dirty dishes. Dinner or supper cooking is a real ritual for Ashima; she prepares the dishes slowly, carefully following the preparation mechanism and in this case her psychological portrait is clearly shown. Gogol knows that his mother spends most of the day in the kitchen, so he is not surprised at the amount of food when he invites his girlfriend Maxine. He remembers one time his mother cooked for thirty people and made two hundred croquettes herself. Therefore, Lahiri emphasizes on an important aspect of Indian culture – joint eating, as well as the cultural code of basic table manners. It is necessary to bring people together for cultural exchange and a simple casual or intellectual conversation. At the same time, sharing food allows immigrants to forget about nostalgia.

Raising the problem of Indian immigrants' existence in American settings, the writer portrays the smallest details of a person's life in a new cultural environment. Lahiri shows how ethnic factors influence the formation of culinary preferences. We mean joint culture elements: what can be eaten and how, in what quantity and where, when and whom with. Without hesitation from some novel's episodes we can make a list of Indian immigrants' tastes, as well as the basic rules of culinary etiquette (food typifies the system of Indian culture's signs and symbols).

Like in Lahiri's writing, the culinary plot is especially carefully constructed in B. Mukherjee's "The Tiger's Daughter" (1971), where eating is a kind of ritual, especially on holidays. There is a culinary contrast between East and West in the novel. Tara's parents, the novel main characters, describe endless birthday menus. Tara understands that she has a different lifestyle in America, but she remembers that dinner is not just an entertainment.

American "food circle"

The most revealing elements of cultural traditions, in particular culinary ones, are some novel's fragments concerning a joint dinner. For example, the American habit of tasting food from another's plate, as Gogol does, is strange for Ashima. Her son 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. Cooking gap is noticeable in dish sizes. Unlike the Bengalis, Americans are used to large portions, so they are very disappointed when they are served a small one (portion) on a skillfully decorated plate, as happened with Gogol's wife Moushumi. In this context K. Rapai points out that "being one of the richest countries in the world, actually, Americans feel poor" [Rapaille, 2007, p. 117]. We mean symbolic culinary "poverty", because unlike Indians who do not really have enough space in the kitchen, as well as being restricted in utensils, Americans are lazy about cooking, and that is why they feel conditional "poverty". In this context the length of food preparation is a good example.

While staying in Maxine's house, Gogol sees this "poverty": in simple white plates, Maxine's mother serves too thin tubed steaks, green beans, lettuce and a bowl of baked potatoes, which they pass to each other. Gogol is sure that, unlike Lydia, who seemed to have forgotten about her guest absolutely, his mother would have died ashamed if she had treated the guest with such a small amount of food. She would constantly watch the guest's plate and would run to the kitchen and come back with a new meal. The table would be filled with a variety of pots and bowls so guests could choose what they wanted. Lahiri shows that according to Indian traditions receiving guests or celebrating good news are of vital importance that is why a lot of special dishes are prepared.

Maxine's family eats food slowly, commenting on the cooking process itself: the beans are fresh and the meat is just melting in their mouths (in this way Maxine's family is similar to Ganguli one). The dinner in Maxine's house is very cheerful and fun.

Food is the most important topic that is mistakenly considered as an aspect of our material lives, whereas it is a primary model for communication, assessment, coverage and regulation, more informative as it is verbal. During the meal Gogol chooses conversation topics which are completely indifferent to his parents. We mean not cooking ones, but also new movie news stories. There is also a talk about museum exhibitions, restaurants, books, and finally, about New York. The friendly conversation continues even at the empty table, which is unacceptable for the Ganguli family. Empty plates and glasses of wine, bread crumbs create somehow "his" American home warm atmosphere and comfort for Gogol, quite different from his parents' atmosphere.

The circle image is of prime importance in the novel. K. Rapaille points out that “the circle image manifests itself differently in American culture. In particular, the American family meal code – is our circle” [Rapaille, 2007, p. 92]. Americans used to put big dishes in the center of the table. Someone takes the dish and passes it in a circle so everyone can treat it. Within Maxine’s family, Gogol creates “his” American circle, too different from the Indian one. That is why the character has a conscious desire to immerse himself into a foreign / another culture for a few hours.

Gogol becomes a part of the American circle even when, at the end of the dinner, the guests pass on a chocolate to each other. There is a “cultural breakdown” (failure) that allows the “other” to become “our”. With such author’s intent, once again Gogol admits himself in the American way of life, namely because of eating motifs.

D. Sivers notes that “making dinner is on Code for home in America. Food is secondary” [Sivers, 2008]. That is why very little attention is paid to food quality in America; fast food costs twice as much as books, movies or music. The researcher continues, that “the average American spends six minutes eating dinner. The American Culture Code for food is FUEL” [Sivers, 2008]. We notice the opposite with Gogol’s parents: for Ashima, as well as for the rest of the Hindus, food is considered to be “a source of nourishment for all human life’s aspects: physical, mental and emotional” [Kosheleva, 2012, p. 78]. Lahiri’s characters create their “little India”, which consists of them only and of a few Bengali friends. They continue to eat with their hands, Ashima refuses to drive, and the family never bathes in the river. Gogol eats Indian mother-made traditional dishes out of respect only, as they will never replace the taste of his favorite American pizza and burgers.

Jhumpa Lahiri shows how Bengali celebrations significantly differ from American ones. We mean not ten or twelve people American families used to invite, but about thirty or more. Unlike American women, Ashima does not think about the guests’ candidacy in advance, she is pleased with everyone. In this context Lahiri highlights the importance of family and community. Thus food acts not only as an identity matter, but also negotiates social, racial and personal immigrant’s identities. In this context “food is directly connected with gender issues. Eating habits and the way of cooking determine a woman’s identity as well as her differences. Food emphasizes women’s cultural affiliation: in Lahiri’s writing it is shown that food serves as sacred ritual and art for Indians, in contrast to the American habit of hunger satisfying with semi-finished products” [Yalovenko, 2021, p. 98].

The circle of Ashima’s Bengali acquaintances is noticeably widening, namely because of common cooking conversations. Women, who like Ashima suffer from nostalgia in a new cultural environment, ask her for advice and recipes for some dishes (here Lahiri uses food as a remedy for homesickness). Ashima tells them which fish is served in Chinatown, or how they can cook halvah with wheat flakes. Bengalis follow their traditions and visit each other every Sunday to taste shrimp fried in butter and to drink tea with condensed milk. Crossing their feet, they circle down on the floor and sing “their” songs together.

The culinary phenomenon in fiction helps to create a background of expressive and colorful situations, to show the communication peculiarities in everyday life, to characterize characters’ tastes and preferences, and so on. We also highlight the dishes’ festive function. Dynamic descriptions of the preparation of a festive dinner are illustrated on the day before Annaprazan or “rice ceremony” – the day when the child begins to eat solid food. Such episodes indicate the scale and importance of holiday cooking. When preparing food, the heroine follows a certain ritual act, which is closely intertwined with her cultural customs. The ritual associated with child birth is a structural unit of family rituals in general. It should be noted that ritual food has been a part of a person’s life since birth; and Lahiri’s writing is no exception in this case.

In almost every author’s work, an Indian ritual plays an important role. Food is associated with the “rice ceremony”. “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” [Lahiri, 2003, p. 30]. “Rice Ceremony” is a kind of act of naming a child; this is a special event for the characters (following their home traditions).

The celebration description, in which food occupies a special place, is an important part of the text. For an American, such holidays are often associated with incomprehensible rituals (the first spoon of rice should be given by the uncle on the maternal line).

It is important for Bengalis to feel not only the taste of food but also tactile, that is why they eat with the right hand. It is only right-handed to take or pass something; instead, the left hand is used for everyday life. Raising a son, Ashima follows these Indian habits. For example, by the age of five, little Gogol could eat with his right hand, but not with his whole palm, as it was from the beginning; alcohol is strictly prohibited in Ashima and Ashoke's house. It is in the kitchen that the heroine follows her Indian traditions (prepares the dishes of her childhood, remembers her husband's food preferences).

Like in India, food is respected in China. In this context D. Sivers notes that "while the Chinese are eating dinner, they rarely speak with one another. Instead they focus entirely on the food. This is true even at business dinners. One may be in the midst of a spirited conversation about an important deal; when the food comes, all conversation ceases and everyone feasts" [Sivers, 2008]. "In China, dinner is all about the food. Food is cooked in multiple locations (the kitchen, the fireplace, outside, even the bathroom) and it has a hugely prominent place in any Chinese home. Food is hanging, drying, and curing everywhere" [Sivers, 2008].

American reality

Ashima's neighbors, who often leave their children alone at home, are clumsy in the novel. This is seen as "a cultural gap" between the characters: Ashima watches the neighborhood kids playing in the yard for hours, and their mothers never braid their hair, leaving it always tangled. The image of the children's father, who is a university professor walking in holey jeans, elbow-worn suede jacket and rubber slippers, is unclear. Comparing the neighbor with Bengalis, Ashima ironically admits that even cyclists in India dress better than professors in America.

When one day Judy asks Ashima to look after her daughters, the heroine notices a big difference between her neat apartment and Judy's American lifestyle: "They have a washing machine in the basement which Ashoke and Ashima are permitted to share, a television in their living room which Ashoke and Ashima can hear clearly through the ceiling" [Lahiri, 2003, p. 25]. "Just beyond the ceiling yet so different from her own, piles everywhere, piles of books and papers, piles of dirty plates on the kitchen counter, ashtrays the size of serving platters heaped with crushed-out cigarettes" [Lahiri, 2003, p. 25]. "Instead of cereal and tea bags, there were whiskey and wine bottles on top of the refrigerator, most of them nearly empty. Just standing there had made Ashima feel drunk" [Lahiri, 2003, p. 25]. The author demonstrates how Ashima does not want to accept American reality, which is identified with a symbolic "intoxication".

That is why, unlike their neighbors, who came with champagne to congratulate the Ganguli with their son's birth, Ashima and Ashoke only imitate drinking because alcohol is a taboo for them. American chaos is noticed in Judy's daughter's room: "The girls slept together on a bed piled with clothes" [Lahiri, 2003, p. 25]. The American way of life the author sees through the negative vocabulary: loud TV, books and papers heaps, dirty plates and ashtrays, empty bottles of whiskey, scattered clothes.

Unlike Judy, who wears jeans all the time and cuts them shorts in summer, Ashima is more housewifely, though she realizes that "There is no one to sweep the floor, or do the dishes, or wash clothes, or shop for groceries, or prepare a meal on the days she is tired or homesick. She has accepted that the very lack of such amenities is the American way" [Lahiri, 2003, p. 25]. Ashima mentions that she was not surprised by the dirty cups in the kitchen and the unmade bed in her bedroom when she returned from the hospital (although she used to cleanliness). This is because the heroine was forced to accept American reality: however difficult it may be, she must cope with life herself.

Bengali cuisine has a lot of legumes. The most popular dishes are red lentils (moshur-dal), mung beans (mung-dal) and chickpeas (channa-dal). Sweets are also important in traditional Bengali cuisine. There is an episode in the novel when in Ashima's brother's house the guests are treated with warm milk and Indian rasgulla dessert (this happens during a vacation in Calcutta). Within the food patterns, the "cooking gap" problem is clearly noticed. This happens once when Ashima asks Judy to borrow some rice. As it turns out, Judy's American rice is brown and crude.

American culture's rejection is also emphasized when Ashima throws out Judy's borrowed rice which is untrustworthy (although the character is amazed by the whiteness of American sugar). Indian motifs are traced to Ashima's appearance as well, because she always braids (unlike Judy). For the first time since her son's birth, she walks the stuffy Cambridge streets and goes to the supermarket to buy white rice.

While in an American apartment, Ashima keeps in touch with her house: she often rereads Bengali novels and carefully cooks the dinner – the habit she holds forever. The character realizes that all these years she has been doing her duty to gather her countrymen at home and thus to follow home traditions. Therefore, their Bengali acquaintances gradually expanded: "Every weekend, it seems, there is a new home to go to, a new couple or young family to meet. They all come from Calcutta, and for this reason alone they are friends" [Lahiri, 2003, p. 29]. "The families drop by one another's homes on Sunday afternoons. They drink tea with sugar and evaporated milk and eat shrimp cutlets fried in saucepans. They sit in circles on the floor, singing songs by Nazrul and Tagore" [Lahiri, 2003, p. 29]. Here Lahiri uses food as a tool to display deterioration of family bonds, culture and community. Along with the length of food preparation (Lahiri uses it to expand upon dining traditions in India, where every meal was important), it is the joint meals that bring all immigrant families closer together and in this way conversations are very important – they have the same matters to speak about.

Conclusions

The last decade prose tends to gastronomic discourse in literature; it's fascinating, stylish and new. In the literature, in particular in Lahiri's writing, food serves as a code of identity (we notice the significance of food at a personal level), as well as a communicative system, a stock of images, and conduct rules. It functions as a cultural symbol among Asian culture's members.

The gastronomic images help the writer to diversify his work, to add bright colors; with the help of gastronomy to show better his characters. Lahiri's works are marked by gastronomic discourse. Fiction models of dishes, their preparation and consumption features perform instructive, cognitive-informational, hedonistic and anti-hedonistic functions. Language units help to convey the taste of dishes. Gastronomic vocabulary is also used to express the characters' emotional state.

It is the national cuisine that was and remains one of the most stable forms of culture. Despite changing the place of residence, the characters do not accept other dishes, globalization and the processes of intercultural communication do not erase national culture's boundaries, and thus do not destroy national traditions, which is clearly seen in "The Namesake". The culinary phenomenon in the novel is realized in the image of an Indian woman, for whom cooking "her" dishes is life's meaning. Gastronomic episodes in the novel are a background for demonstrating the ways people communicate in everyday life.

Literary expression of gastronomic images allows us to understand the nature of cultural meaning, which is fixed by the language sign; the culture and traditions are no less important. "Food" phenomenon is a separate cultural life sphere, without which human existence is impossible.

Food is known to have different meanings for each country. In "The Namesake" food is positioned from a cultural point of view because it is directly connected with ethnic identity. Food is a daily sacred ritual held by characters, first and second generation immigrants. We have to mention that in Lahiri's works, the emphasis is on the ethics of home cooking, on honoring those who eat (unlike Americans, Asians eat slowly, commenting on the cooking process itself).

Having analyzed gastronomic images in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake", we managed to draw the following conclusions: the food image in fiction works makes it possible to interpret it as an aesthetic phenomenon, as then relative category "edible" / "inedible". In the novel, cooking processes are presented in an instructive manner but also the images of dishes have a specific purpose – to emphasize cultural identity, as well as to show characters' psychological portraits. It is worth noting Ashima's calm manner in cooking, carefully considering not only the list of dishes but also the candidates for the people for whom these dishes are prepared.

Extensive explanations are included in the description of cooking breakfast or dinner; particular attention is paid to the preparation of particular dishes. Besides, informative descriptions enrich the knowledge of cooking particular dishes, what exactly and how much spices you have to add to each dish.

Gastronomic images, no matter what token it represents, appear comprehensively. Here are the main aspects of this concept: general ideas about what to eat, as well as the cultural significance of names, types, species, quality and taste of food. The author keeps traditional Indian cult; it tells us how culture, ethnicity, even religious beliefs determine the choice of culinary preferences, as well as the appropriate consumption manner. For example, because it is important for Bengalis to feel food not only in taste but also tactilely, they eat with their right hand. It is customary to take or pass something with the right hand only, while the left hand is used for everyday life.

The readers of "The Namesake" get convinced of the importance of Indian cuisine, because eating is equated with sacred ritual for the characters. The novel offers a wealth of visual material to observe the construction of "our", and therefore near and owned, and at the same time "other" – odious and disgusting. We also notice that different approaches to food consumption are shown in the novel: as a ceremony / ritual for Indians on the one hand and as a simple hunger satisfaction for Americans on the other. Food is positioned from a cultural point, as it is directly related to ethnic identity. With the help of "their" food, they confirm their transcultural identity and keep in touch with their home. Indian culinary traditions define the characters' values and stereotypes; the so-called taste from childhood "travels" with them.

Although Jhumpa Lahiri's writing drew a certain attention among researchers, there is still a need in carrying out a coherent study which predetermines further theoretical searches in terms of transcultural paradigm.

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POETICS OF GASTRONOMIC IMAGES IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S "THE NAMESAKE"

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DOI: 10.32342/2523-4463-2022-2-24-11

Key words: *gastronomic images, transculture, Indian immigrants, marginal character, ethnic identity, tradition.*

The purpose of the article is to analyze the specificity of gastronomic images and the Indian gastronomic code in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake" as a personification of Asian identity in the context of transcultural paradigm.

In the article the following *methods* are used: cultural and historical, historical and typological, functional, hermeneutic, narratological analysis, biographical, the principles of postcolonial and decolonial criticism.

The author of the article notes that food serves as a conditional language for characters and as a cultural code that can successfully be interpreted by "ours" only – Indian culture representatives. Such symbolic "contact" with the cuisine of another country allows us to differentiate, to understand and to assimilate "our" in a better way. Therefore, cultural culinary differences are found in the kitchen, where the character is accustomed to spend most of her day and especially carefully prepares the dishes. An interpretation of cooking as a true art is associated with Jhumpa Lahiri's marginalized / border characters: you need to remember how much, when, and what kind of spices are to be added to the dishes. As a true Bengali woman, the character skillfully prepares traditional "her" dishes. The heroine "fills" her inner cultural nostalgia and sadness with cooking, and thus tries to move home mentally. She realizes that all other identities in herself can be disappointed and even broken, but the chef identity will always stand, it will stand even in a new cultural environment. Food and character's culinary activities serve as a cover to talk about something else: the psychology, and, above all, the expression of cultural identity.

Having analyzed gastronomic images in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake", we managed to draw the following *conclusions*: the food image in fiction works makes it possible to interpret it as an aesthetic phenomenon, as then relative category "edible" / "inedible". In the novel, cooking processes are presented in an instructive manner but also the gastronomic images have a specific purpose – to emphasize cultural identity, as well as to show character's psychological portrait. It is worth noting Ashima's calm manner in cooking, carefully considering not only the list of dishes but also the candidates for the people for whom these dishes are prepared.

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Одержано 22.09.2022.