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Unterrichtsmaterialien in digitaler und in gedruckter Form

Auszug aus:

Mukherjee, Bharati - Nostalgia (Interpretation and worksheets)

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Bharati Mukherjee – Nostalgia

PLOT

The story begins with Dr. Manny Patel, who looks into the window of an Indian shop in Manhattan. Behind the counter he sees an exceptionally beautiful young Indian woman. After his hard day at the psychiatric hospital where he works as a doctor, Patel feels a strong desire for this woman.

While Patel observes the young woman through the shop window, he reflects on his day and on his life in America. He had moved to the USA from India in order to go to university there. He has a wife and a young son. The reason why he has come to Little India in Manhattan today was that he felt a pang of regret for leaving his parents behind in India without repaying them for their kindness towards him.

When the woman in the store is about to pick up a very heavy sack of rice for a customer, Patel rushes into the store to help her. He cannot bear the thought of such a beautiful woman doing hard work. After the other customer has left the store, Patel asks the young woman out to dinner that night. She agrees and they arrange to meet again at six-thirty. To kill the time until the date, Patel wanders through Little India. At one point he calls his wife Camille to tell her that an emergency has come up at the clinic and thus he will be home very late that night. Camille believes his lie without question.

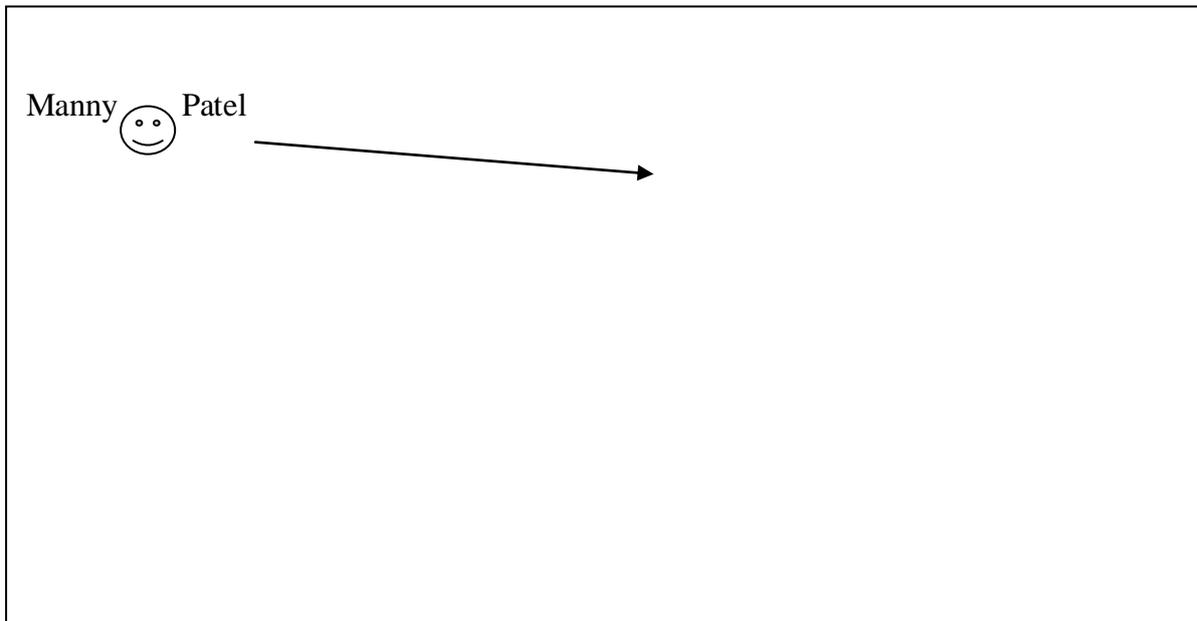
Patel is half an hour early for the date and hides in his Porsche, so that the woman will not notice how early he is. Unexpectedly, at half past six he sees her coming out of the store in front of which they are supposed to meet. He had expected her to come along the street. Unlike before, when she wore American clothes, now the woman is dressed in an Indian sari. When they meet, she finally tells him her name: Padma. Both are aware that their meeting is quite illicit, because she has to assume that he is married, and he is aware that a young Indian woman should not be going out with a stranger. This makes Patel feel like an adventurer and he is in very high spirits. He chooses a nice Indian restaurant, which Padma, rather unexpectedly, knows. In fact, she says that she was about to recommend it herself.

At the restaurant, where Patel has eaten several times before, he is slightly afraid that the management might judge him for bringing a young woman who clearly is not his wife, but the maitre d' **does not seem to care**. Padma obviously flirts with Patel during the meal. She does not eat a lot, but smokes a number of cigarettes.

The maitre d' spends a noticeable amount of time at Patel and Padma's table, making small talk and giving a number of recommendations about the food he does not share with other guests. When the food has arrived at the table, the maitre d' asks Patel for his help. He and his wife would like to adopt

STUDY QUESTIONS TO THE SHORT STORY

1. Characterise Manny Patel and at least one female character of the story!
2. Draw a scheme (DIN A4) illustrating the relations and main characteristics of the **story's characters!** When finished, ask fellow pupils to evaluate your scheme.



3. Borrowed words – borrowed cultural concepts: Search the text for all the words in the story which seem to have been borrowed from an Indian language and explore their meaning and use in English!

Def. borrowed word (n.)/loan word (n.): a word adopted or borrowed from another language

LOAN WORD	MEANING	USE	ORIGIN

3. INDIAN LOAN WORDS IN THE TEXT

Loan Word	Meaning	Use	Origin
Taj Mahal	Here: name of a shop	Name of shop	Indian
Bombay (film star)	Former name of a city in India (now Mumbai)	Any Indian film star before 1985	City colonized by Portugal and Britain (16thC till 1947)
Paki (scum)	Short form for Pakistani	Umbrella term for people from South Asia	Used since 1964 by press
Rupee	Indian currency	Here: value system	Hindi <i>rūpiyā</i>
sari	Material, long garment wrapped around female	Clothes Material	Known to English speaking world since 1598
Dal	Bean	Implication Indian traditional cooking	Hindi <i>dāl</i> (split beans)
Gujarati (farmer)	Person from city Gujarat/speaker of language	As noun, adjective	Hindi, < <i>Gujarāt</i>
Masala (tea)	Tea of mixed spices	Spice blend	Urdu <i>maṣālā</i> ,
Hindu family	From northern India and/or believing in Hinduism (religion)	As noun, adjective	Persian hindu, Urdu <i>hindū</i>
samosas	triangular pastry fried in ghee (clarified butter) or oil	Indian dish	Hindi
poppadom	Large round spiced bread	Indian appetizer	Tamil <i>pappaṭam</i>
Pork vindaloo	Curry made with meat/fish and sauce vindaloo	Dish mixing Portugese and Indian kitchen	Portuguese vin d'algo wine and garlic sauce
Bengali	Of or belonging to Bengal	Noun or adjective	Bengali <i>Bangālī</i> .
Raita salad	Salad containing mustard	Asian kitchen	Hindi <i>rāytā</i> < <i>rāī</i> mustard
sahib	Respectful title used by Indians to address Europeans	Respectful address to Europeans (questionable whether colonial vocabulary)	Urdu, use of Arabic <i>ṣāhib</i> , originally 'friend'

Source: OED

This task can sensitize students for cultural borrowing, i.e. taking over a spice, a rite, a cloth name or else from one culture to another. Here, Indian terms and concepts are adapted to American English, which serves as a matrix (language/culture).



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