

A Transnational Reading of Diasporic Identity and Ethical Choice in Jhumpa Lahiri's: The Lowland

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ABSTRACT

Diaspora is the travel of a group of individuals from their home country to a new location to settle. Diaspora persons face various identification issues when they relocate to new areas. Diaspora encompasses a vast area in all of its diversity and depth, touching on a wide range of cultural, ideological, and intellectual debates. The term Diaspora is occasionally used to describe the spread of human civilisation around the globe. The lowland by Jhumpa Lahiri is the subject of this research, which emphasises on the problem of diasporic identity. Subhash and Gauri are its representatives. The Lowland is a large-scale novel that tells the narrative of Indian immigrants in America. Stuart Hall and Avtar Brah created the notion of cultural identity, which is used to show the diasporic identity. It's the result of a process of adjustment, of acclimating to a new environment that differs from the previous one. The historical history of Indian Americans is included in order to compare their lives to those depicted in the narrative. This research looks at how Subhash and Gauri's diasporic identities differ and how they acclimatise to the new culture. Subhash was able to integrate both his old and new cultures, but Gauri forgot about her old culture and acquired a new one. Subhash and Gauri are migrating from India to the United States for a variety of reasons. Joblessness, poverty, and political activity are among the few variables. As a result, characters who relocate to America develop a diasporic identity and regard themselves as Indian Americans.

Keywords: diaspora, diasporic identity, culture, immigrant, Indian-American

I. INTRODUCTION

The word Diaspora is taken from the Greek language, which means scattering, and it also refers to the dispersion of people from their homeland. A simple definition of diaspora literature would be works, which are written by authors who live outside their native land. Diaspora is a catchphrase which is especially connected with a particular subject and is used more often in news papers. Diaspora registers more major communities than Post-Colonies and their lived experiences in all their good and bad feelings on something or some persons, contradictions, multiple traversals, imaginary 'returns' to homelands, nations of the mind and this unfolds in all such extremely large number of communities across the Globe. The term Diaspora is sometimes used to denote the development of human civilization all over the world. The Origin of the Primitive human and later dispersal to establish human societies in different parts of the world means Diaspora and Diasporic condition. The term Diaspora has been used to describe cross-cultural mobility and the resulting dislocation. Ancient Diaspora, Medieval Diaspora, and Modern Diaspora are the three major eras of Diaspora history that lead to the Post-modernist Diaspora. The word "Diaspora" was first used to describe the exile of Jews from Israel in the sixth and seventh centuries B.C., and later from Jerusalem in the second century A.D. The term "Diaspora" was first used to describe the exile of Jews from Israel in the sixth and seventh centuries B.C. Exile was given to the Jewish movement because it was a forcible migration in which Jews were taken from their homelands and transplanted as a lost people in other places. From 200 A.D. to 900 A.D., the Medieval Era saw a significant

number of people, owing to the opening up of new trade routes between countries. Many native people migrated in quest of a better life, and subsequently, many religious communities relocated to other territories. The modern era movements throughout colonialism were mostly motivated by conflict, slavery, and the desire for economic advancement. People from colonial areas were sent as slaves or as hired labour to neighbouring colonies. Man, unable to control his difficulties in a new nation, continuously marks his identity. Many writers, including Salman Rushdie, Kiran Desai, S.S. Baldwin, V.S. Naipaul, Anita Desai, Kavita Daswani, Uma Parameswaran, Rohinton Mistry, Meena Alexander, Jhumpa Lahiri, Meera Syal, Anita Rau Badami, Bharati Mukherjee, and others, address the challenges of immigrants in their work.

Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London to Bengali Indian immigrants Nilanjana Sudeshna and her family. She migrated to the United States with her family when she was three years old. She grew raised in Kingston, Rhode Island, and graduated from Barnard College with a B.A. in English literature in 1989. She moved on to Boston University, where she earned an M.A. in English, an M.F.A. in Creative Writing, an M.A. in Comparative Literature, and a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies. She was a fellow at Provincetown's Fine Arts Work Center from 1997 to 1998. Lahiri's debut short story collection, *Interpreter of Maladies*, was published in 1999. It focused with issues affecting Indians and Indian immigrants, such as generational differences in understanding and beliefs. The Pulitzer Prize for Fiction was presented to *Interpreter of Maladies* in 2000. Lahiri's debut novel, *The Namesake*, was first published as a novella in *The New Yorker* in 2003. It is the narrative of the Ganguli family, which consists of parents who emigrated from Calcutta to the United States and their children, Gogol and Sonia, who were nurtured in the United States. The narrative follows the family in Calcutta, Boston, and New York over the period of thirty years. In 2008, she released *Unaccustomed Earth*, a collection of short stories. Lahiri deviates from her prior literary concentration on first-generation Indian immigrants to the United States and their family troubles with this book. The stories in *Unaccustomed Earth*, on the other hand, are about the second and third generations of immigrants and their absorption into American culture. She has received numerous accolades, including the Henfield Foundation's Trans Atlantic Award (1993), the O. Henry Award for the short story "Interpreter of Maladies" (1999), the PEN/Hemingway Award for Best Fiction Debut of the Year for the *Interpreter of Maladies* collection, and, most recently, the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award (2008) and the Asian American Literary Award (2009), both for *Unaccustomed Earth*.

In *The Lowland*, Jhumpa Lahiri gives ancient literary ideas fresh life. The plot follows the lives of two clever brothers, one of whom is drawn to the Naxalite organisation and loses his life as a result. The other brother, who migrates to the United States, brings his pregnant widow with him in order to provide her with a fresh life.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE LOWLAND

Diasporic identity is built on diversity or pluralism and is the consequence of a process of assimilation, homeland and host land culture. These variances arise because everyone's perception of the assimilation process differs.

As a diaspora writer, Jhumpa Lahiri deals with a heterogeneous culture from both inside and out, seeking both her original and new identities in the host country. They are able to acculturate in the new country, accepting its socio-cultural norms but also feeling nostalgic for Indian culture and sensibility, feeling alienated and uprooted. In the tale of the novel, two key characters, Subhash and his wife Gauri, who were born and raised in India, are depicted as two diasporic identities. Even though they grew up in India, they began to depart in their twenties

and spent the remainder of their lives in America. Subhash, the protagonist, clings to his original culture and eventually adapts to a new society in a new location.

"There were hotels in this section of town where he might have had a whiskey or a drink and struck up a conversation with strangers." To forget about his parents' behaviour, about what Gauri had said." (*The Lowland*, 2013: 134-135).

As a result, when he returns to India, he forgets to act like an Indian and acts like an American instead. Subhash is already acclimating to American society. He even drinks beer as they do when he meets his college friends or instructors at a party or gathering to portray himself as an American. He does everything in the way that Subhash wants the American to define him as an American citizen. Subhash begins to embrace his surroundings and place in America. He merely acts in accordance with American wishes, which is not acceptable in India. Subhash believes that he was able to forget about his parents' reactions and the implications of what he was going to undertake inside this room. He musters the guts to share a room with a lady, believing that American civilization is distinct from Indian culture, and that no one in America is bothered because it is commonplace in their culture. Unmarried women and men in India, on the other hand, are rigidly separated by parents and society. Subhash still pines for his homeland every now and again. When he goes to India to meet his parents after a lengthy absence, he is reminded of the custom.

"The day after they arrived, her father attended a memorial service for her grandpa, who had passed away only a few months previously." (*The Lowland*, 2013: 234).

Gauri, the second character, goes through the same things as Subhash. Gauri gradually adjusts to the new culture when she comes in America. She absorbs and adjusts to American society in a shorter amount of time, thus she foregoes the sari in favour of jeans.

"Saris were worn by the majority of the other Indian ladies." Gauri knew she stood out despite, or perhaps because of, her jeans, boots, and belted cardigan." (*The Lowland*, 2013: 206).

Gauri is proud of her appearance, as seen by the remark above. She appears to be different from other Indians in America, and she believes she does not need to be worried since she can express herself. She becomes more daring and optimistic as a result of her new persona. She has shed her prior identity, which she believes has tied her to her homeland. Similarly, she was once supposed to be picked up by a driver for a lecture, but he mistook her for a servant and instead told her to notify the home owner that he had come.

"Because of her look and accent, people kept asking her where she was from, and some made conclusions." When she was asked to deliver a presentation in San Diego, she was picked up by a driver supplied by the university to save her the trouble of driving herself. When he rang the doorbell, she had greeted him. When she said good morning to the driver, he had no idea she was his passenger. He had mistook her for the person who was hired to open someone else's door. He'd said, "Tell her whenever she's ready." (*The Lowland*, 2013: 286).

This demonstrates that the Indian Diaspora in the Lowlands does not escape their culture in their new home, but rather abandons it and assimilates into the new culture. Because they have spent the most of their life in

America, they consider it to be their home and a better place. As a result, each person has a unique perspective on diasporic identity. When diasporic individuals strive to modify both their previous land values and host land cultural variations in terms of how far they want to return to their native place, they establish a diasporic identity. This situation is depicted in JhumpaLahiri's *The Lowland*.

III.CONCLUSION

In the first instance, diasporic identity may be characterised as the diversity of ways to acknowledge an Indian migrant's identity.

As the omniscient observer, Lahiri uses the dilemmas of her characters to reveal the problem that plagues their lives as immigrants. She also strives to deal with the cultural and diaspora aspects in each situation. As a result, her stories offer a profound healing touch to immigrants who are experiencing estrangement, exile, and solitude. Subhash and Udayan, two brothers born fifteen months apart, are the centre of JhumpaLahiri's newest novel *The Lowland*. Udayan is swift and courageous, whereas Subhash is quiet and submissive. Udayan is a member of the Naxalite movement, a Maoist-inspired peasant revolution that uses guerrilla warfare against government troops to reclaim land to the impoverished.

The narrative jumps back and forth in time and takes on several points of view, allowing readers to witness how wrath and unfaithfulness are passed down down the generations.

Gaurid does not get weapons to fight landowners, but she does present papers at academic conferences. Loss and rage, sarcastically, pave the ground for a rejection of basic politics. Like a poorly mated couple of mosquitoes, Gauri's rage was always greater than her love for Udayan. Anger at him for dying while he might have lived, for bringing her happiness and then taking it away, for trusting her only to betray her, for trusting in sacrifice only to be so self-centered in the end, for trusting in sacrifice only to be so self-centered in the end.

In fact, purposefully abandoning one's personal life is more dangerous than political peril. Gauri abandons Subhash and Bela, her daughter, who never receives anything more. When Gauri realises the harm she has caused her daughter, she feels compelled to be honest. She now realised what it meant to abandon her child. It had been her own murderous deed. It was an act far more heinous than anything Udayan had done.

The Lowland inhabits a diverse landscape. Gauri discovers that the Naxals are blind to a form of brutality that is much closer to home: female cruelty. Udayan had aspired to revolution, but at home he'd most likely be served; his only dinner bequest was to wait for her and serve him.

The books of Kamala Markandaya and Jhumpa Lahiri might serve as an eye-opener at a time when a suspicious, could-care-less attitude is rapidly eroding the basis of sacred ancestral links. They inspire you to appreciate your relationships and keep them in balance. These are the driving forces behind the main protagonists' decision to relocate to America. Similarly, as a developed country, America promises additional benefits such as higher education, employment opportunities, safety, and freedom. This may become a luring element for Indians to migrate to the host country of America in order to achieve their dreams and begin a new and predestined life.

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