

Tribhuvan University

Diasporic Alienation: A Postcolonial Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Namrata Kumari Ahdikari has completed her Master of Arts thesis entitled, “Diasporic Alienation: A Postcolonial Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*” under my supervision. She carried out her research work from December, 2014 to March 2015. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva.

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Approval Letter

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “Diasporic Alienation: A Postcolonial Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*” by Namrata Kumari Adhikari, submitted to the Master of Arts in English, Tribhuvan University has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to explore diasporic alienation from the postcolonial perspective in Jhumpa Lahari's novel *The Lowland*. It tries to present how the work is full up the theme of diasporic alienation. Along with the central character, all the members of the same family are getting tragedy and living self exile life in United States. Their minds vacillate between two contradictory cultures existing in that time. It attempts to analyze the different strands of alienation to make the work more comprehensive and to show the nature of postcolonial world. The origin of the characters and its literary importance has been projected through this paper along with the different meanings of diasporic alienation having a slight difference in their meaning. The concept of diaspora, alienation, and somehow postcolonialism have been mentioned in this research paper to carry out the theme of diasporic alienation. All the presented characters face several unexpected challenges and cultural clash in the pursuing of harmonious life in the diasporic land.

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I. Jhumpa Lahiri, Her Works and the Issue of Diasporic Alienation

The Lowland by Indian-American author Jhumpa Lahiri explores the human predicament and the crisis of identity in the alienated land of America though she has made it her homeland. Marginality, alienation and nostalgia are the prime features of her writings and the same motif has been explored in this novel too. She writes with sensitivity about family's ethnic heritage and the lives of South Asian immigrants in the United States and succeeds to explore the multi-dimensional anxieties of exile life. Her stories revolve around the themes of loss of identity, clashing cultures and homelessness. In the novel *The Lowland* also she captures the current burning issue of the world i.e. migration or alienation especially from the colonized world. The cause of migration has created the situation of homelessness to the central characters.

The novel depicts a poor family and their dream about the future which caused unexpected situation. It begins against the background of Naxalite's insurgencies in post-independent India. Then it drives the story of a mother in diaspora, Gauri, and her American born girl, Bela. This creates the situation of alienation, loneliness. Some of the unavoidable issues like love, marriage, sex and economic lives of Gauri and Bela and their influences on the development and transformation of their psyches have been taken into consideration. The characters and their attitude to life are defined and determined by surroundings and circumstances in which they live rather than their birth or place of birth leads the idea of alienation. Some of the crucial issues after postcolonialism like cultural hegemony, social oppression of women, diasporic crisis, cross-cultural alienation, economic emancipation of women, lesbian divergence, social castration, nihilism and traumatic memories lend much to the complex narrative of the novel.

The Lowland initiate with the story of two brothers Udayan and Subhash who grow up in the early days of independence. However, they get chance to know the impact of British colonialism especially the exploitation and oppression. At the same time, there was great enthusiasm to change India a develop country like England in the most of the Indian youths. The Naxalite drove the movement. Many youths involved in the movement and the youngest brother Udayan too. His involvement in the movement helped to marry a rebellion girl called Gauri and it took the death of Udayan too. The death of Udayan pushed his elder brother Subhash to take more responsibility to his family. To solve the problem of his brother's pregnant wife, he accepted her as a wife. It solve the problems for short time, however for the long time the family faced unbearable tension, psychological pressure, cultural clash, and diasporic alienation.

Although readers get the novel is about a family, the relationship between siblings, parents and children, spouses, and about how one event can shape the life arc of so many people, however, it drives serious issue of alienation, separation, migration, trauma after the detachment in the family. The writer herself states as, “I don’t think of my books as being forms of entertainment. I don’t read books for entertainment. I read books to deepen my understanding of the human condition, and I think that condition is a very complex thing and that people are very complex creatures...” (*The Lowland* cover page). The novel also explores about globalization, colonization and cultural transition and alienation. It seems that the movement of the character from one place to another in the hope of something beautiful achievement however their migration to other places without the advantage of perception after the fact rather presents the vantage point of history; the consequences of this travel

converts into hurting condition. The expectation of Subhash to establish his family a good family converted into alienation and the family faced traumatic situations.

Primarily, the first chapter depicts the social milieu where Subhash and Udayan used to live and also, the name of the novel called *The Lowland* came from there. Once, within this farm, there were two ponds, rectangle shape in side by side. Behind them there was lowland spanning a few acres. In the rainy season the level of the water in the ponds would rise so that the embankment build between them could not be seen. *The Lowland* also filled with rain, three or four feet deep, the water remaining for a portion of the year. The two brothers Subhash and Udayan had walked across *The Lowland* many times. The way was a shortcut to field on the outskirts of the neighborhood, where they went to play football.

Although the two brothers grew under the same roof and the same family background however, both brothers have different perspectives towards their life and their aims was clear, as the novel describes:

Since childhood Subhash had been cautious. His mother never had to run after him. He kept her company, watching as she cooked at the coal stove, or embroidered saris and blouse pieces commissioned by a ladies' tailor in the neighborhood. He helped his father plant the dahlias that he grew in pots in the courtyard. (10)

The attitude of Udayan was different from the very childhood which reflects mature thinking and overall condition and its output as well. While playing games inside home he used to disappearing: even in their tworoom house, when he was a boy, he hid compulsively, under the bed, behind the doors, in the crate where winter quilts were stored. He played this game without announcing it, spontaneously vanishing sneaking into the back garden, climbing into a tree, forcing their mother, to stop what

she was doing, by not answering when she called. As she looked for him, as she humoured him and called his name, Subhash saw the momentary panic in her face that perhaps she would not find him. Perhaps such activities drive him for movement.

A twist Lahari creates focusing the Naxalite Movement in West Bengal and also discusses Naxalite problem in her novel in which Udayan, being a college student, actively participates in the Naxalite movement in the 1960s, an uprising waged to eliminate injustice and poverty. Here, one should also keep in mind that one of the reasons for the proliferation of Naxalite rising was the feeling of nostalgia among the peasants for their own land on which they had become tenants.

The two boys Subhash and Udayan grow up to be promising students of the sciences. Subhash and Udayan are admitted to two of the city's best colleges; Subhash majors in chemical engineering while Udayan majors in physics. In celebration of their academic achievements, the brothers put together a shortwave radio to hear news of the outside world. Together they listen to reports of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's death, the succession of his daughter, the passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and the birth of a new left-wing party, the Communist Party of India i.e. Marxist or CPI (M), which is sympathetic to China. In 1967 they start hearing about a peasant revolt in Naxalbari, a village in the northern tip of West Bengal where feudalism still reigns. What began with a dispute between a sharecropper and a landlord becomes a full-scale militant insurgency with farmers occupying land armed with "primitive weapons, carrying red flags, shouting "*Long Live Mao Tse-tung.*" The movement is organized by Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal, CPI(M) dissidents who try to avoid arrest while the Left Front government begins to retaliate, imposing curfews, making arbitrary arrests and violently cracking down on protests.

Lahiri intensely presents an image of Udayan as the restless youth, who begins championing the Naxalbari cause at home and immersing himself in Marxist theory, listening to news of Che Guevara's guerilla exploits and reading the aphorisms of Mao Tse-tung. To Udayan, the Left Front and CPI (M) are nothing more than the puppets of wealthy landowners, and parliamentary politics has proven futile. Mao and Che's exhortations to bring about a revolution through violent struggle are all that remain for him, and fit his Newtonian sense of history. And conversely, in Subhash, Lahiri presents a more cautious character, skeptical of radical change and uncertain of the future but also distrustful of the government. Though he attends a movement meeting with Udayan and paints pro-Naxalbari graffiti with him, Subhash is less affected by the intoxicating wave engulfing the Red Corridor and is more focused on his studies. In 1969 as Subhash prepares to leave for America to pursue a Ph.D. program, Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal launch the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), or Naxalites. Listening to Sanyal's announcement, Udayan hears him exclaim: "We will certainly be able to make a new sun and a new moon shine in the sky of our great motherland," a revolutionary sentiment that was irresistible to radicals of that era.

Udayan's murky involvement with the Naxalites leads to his premature and abrupt execution via police firing squad, which leaves the reader startled and faltering with nearly half the book left to go. Keeping the reader guessing, Lahiri shrouds the events leading up to Udayan's death in mystery, to be fleshed out little by little until everything is revealed in the very last pages. Upon receiving a two-sentence telegram about his brother's passing, Subhash returns home to find his parents reticent and even angry for reminding them of Udayan. They try not to speak about Udayan's passing; the only monument to his existence, a small marker of the location where he

died, is furnished by the Naxalites and planted in *The Lowland* near their house. The insurgency continues by the Indian state and police forces that embrace more authoritarian policing tactics and give up on their democratic pretenses. The violence, unlike the beating Subhash received at the Tolly Club, frustrates the family. They no longer discuss politics, not out of fear but out of respect for Udayan. The man is remembered by his family but his painful mission is forgotten. Lahiri offers an unvarnished view of a fallen comrade: Udayan accomplished little in life and even his fellow fighters will forget him soon. His only legacy is his wife, Gauri, a philosophy college student who he married in secret, inspired by Mao's criticism of arranged marriages. After Udayan's death, Subhash marries Gauri, who is carrying Udayan's unborn child, out of a sense of duty and takes her to Rhode Island where he is studying maritime biology and conducting research. In death though, Udayan manages to alter the trajectory of his families' lives forever.

Throughout the novel, Lahiri manages to suspend and transform the course of history for her characters. The remainder of *The Lowland* employs the postcolonial tropes familiar to readers of her previous short stories and novels in an unadorned and perfunctory style. Removed from the familiar context of India and its stratified customs and relations, Subhash and Gauri live comfortably, eschewing contact with their families and assimilating into Rhode Island society. Their marriage is strained and treated as a chore, though their daughter, Bela, manages to bring joy to their lives for a while. Gauri, who possesses a revolutionary drive of her own, grows tired of Subhash and the guilt-ridden past that he represents to her. In Gauri, Lahiri has written the most captivating and controversial character in all of her fictional works. She is a thoughtful and impulsive feminist; the perfect match for Udayan and the worst for Subhash and Bela. For Gauri and Subhash, Bela and their marriage are not

only reminders of Udayan and their previous lives together, they're also totems of their guilt of having survived and surrendered the revolutionary cause. In America, where the perennial gale of creative destruction shortens memories, the loss they feel is only realized in each other's company. Gauri and Subhash's relationship with history and each other ebbs and flows through their marriage and is ultimately resolved as they come to terms with the memory of Udayan that haunts them.

As time goes by, it becomes painfully clear to Gauri that she has traded in the practice of revolution for its theory, safely ensconced in academia. Udayan remains Gauri's greatest love, but he looms over her happiness like he does to Subhash, who keeps the truth about Bela's birth father from her for several decades. In the end, *The Lowland* spans four generations of the Mitra family and follows the characters through their long and arduous process of coming to terms with Udayan's death and accepting the role of history in their lives in America. Lahiri's novel is an achievement in mapping the border between the personal and political, while examining philosophical notions of time and history; it is an examination of the role of personality and impulsivity in developing and ultimately forsaking sympathy for revolutionary causes. As a portrait of young Naxalites, *The Lowland* goes back to the beginning of a movement, explaining the poor material conditions that continue to drive skinny, Indian villagers into armed rebellion against a corrupt Indian state to this day. Hopefully, Lahiri will follow suit with more stories that tackle these complex personal and political issues through her shining prose.

Though the book strives for a broad, historical scope, a domestic tale - Lahiri's bread and butter becomes its true center. Gauri's indifference as a mother is at the heart of the story. It begins, during her pregnancy, with her sitting in on philosophy classes at the university where her husband is studying. (Lahiri, whose father was a

librarian at the University of Rhode Island during her childhood, often peppers her stories with outsiders peeking in at insider university culture.) After her daughter, Bela, is born, philosophy begins to absorb her entirely, and she officially signs up for classes. When Bela is a little older, she begins to leave her daughter alone for increasing stretches of time. At first, just to run out to the grocery store; then, for freedom from the maternal responsibility she clearly finds soul-crushing. Subhash discovers Bela alone one day, and the jig is up. Later, when Gauri becomes a Ph.D. student, she is afraid to leave her manuscript alone in the house for fear it might somehow be harmed.

It can be no accident that Lahiri chose to make Gauri, a mother uninterested in nurturing, obsessed with philosophy. Philosophy, of course, is at once deeply concerned with the human condition and also at an academic, theoretical remove from actual humanity not to mention, it's often a male-dominated discipline. Subhash, whom Bela doesn't know isn't her biological father, is the family's nurturer. He doesn't let himself get trapped by the past, as she does, and instead learns to adjust to the present. What happens to a family in which there is a reversal of traditional gender roles, with an ambivalent mother and a flexible, gentle father, is a crucial part of what Lahiri is exploring in the book.

It's a dynamic, that at least in this instance, doesn't work out well in the short term. Gauri isn't just ambivalent, she is stunningly selfish. But it makes wonder that Lahiri intended for Gauri to be quite so unlikable as she ends up being. Gauri is a mother but she behaves like an un-motherly mother, but Lahiri seems unwilling or unable to delve into Gauri's interior life, and so she remains a flat character, a stock psychological motivator for other characters. She is a widow in permanent, stone-faced mourning for her dead husband—a very old-world state of affairs. Though she

has a new-world life, full of temporary lovers and an all-consuming career, Lahiri doesn't seem interested in exploring how the old psychological wounds square, or don't, with Gauri's daily existence.

Partly that is a function of Lahiri's writing, which here seems to be elegant to a fault. I have no doubt that Lahiri has imagined a deep inner life for Gauri, but she can't quite bring herself to break form enough to explicate it. The sentences, like her characters, remain crystalline and rhythmic and detached. "For the first time," Lahiri writes, when Subhash first moves to Rhode Island, "perhaps because he always felt in Rhode Island that some part of him was missing, he desired a companion." It's a tidy, pretty, sentence, but one that appears to ignore, at the very least, human male biology, which I point out only because the book is filled with absurdly dispassionate-seeming characters who are asked to enact a passion-driven plot. It is as if she decided she needed to be a less self-contained writer, and then couldn't quite burst forth. Still, the novel is, despite its flaws, an absorbing one. Larger tapestry notwithstanding, it isn't overly concerned with Maoism or with the details of assimilation, though in tangling the post-70s divorce boom, broken-family narrative with that of a couple figuring out their American identity, Lahiri provides a refreshing slant on a familiar story. *The Lowland* takes as its real subject the unavoidable human need for companionship. Subhash, the man who supposedly never thought of such a thing until well into adulthood, becomes the unlikely standard-bearer for that impulse, for loving until one is loved. In his character, who is emotional without being overtly so, Lahiri's prose finally finds its own proper companion.

Gauri as a "cold, selfish woman," apparently faulting Lahiri for creating an unrelatable character. While Gauri is cold and withdrawn in response to Subhash's kindness, a careful reader sees clues throughout the novel that indicate there is not

only more to Gauri, there is also more to her decision to escape her in-laws by marrying their other son. Gauri's fascination with and graduate study of German nihilist Arthur Schopenhauer centers around his concept of time, a theme that informs the novel and bestows its lovely, slightly elliptical structure. Schopenhauer believed that the present moment is all there is both past and future are simply concept. He pictured time as an eternally revolving sphere, in which the part of the sphere that is sinking is the past and the part that is rising is the future. The point that touches the tangent of these is the extensionless present, and it is always our reality, all that we have. Under this outlook as it is commonly understood, the world and our choices within it are emptied of any intrinsic meaning.

In spite of certain decisions made explicable by her fascination with Schopenhauer's time, Gauri is firmly rooted in the moment of Udayan's death. When Bela asks to stay home rather than walk across a rain-drenched lawn covered with worms, Gauri thinks: "Another mother might have brought her back, let her stay home, skip a day of school. Another mother, spending the time with her, might not have considered it a waste." And then she remembers: How, at the height of the crackdown, the bodies of party members were left in streams, in fields close to Tollygunge. They were left by the police, to shock people, to revolt them. To make clear that the party would not survive. (169)

The moment, the horror of the attempted revolution, is always with her. The genius of this novel is in how, after several pieces of exposition about Bengali history at the start of the novel, it manages to ground the personal within the political, to show how even faraway political events can transform and devastate lives.

The Lowland is a breathtaking achievement, taking into account four generations and almost 70 years. While certain readers, included, may wish for more

of Udayan's perspective which so infrequently see anything of India's dissenters or revolutionaries in realistic literary fiction. It is hard to imagine the thorough application of Lahiri's delicate, observant, American prose to a charismatic revolutionary abroad. Or even to certain conventional axes of Indian social conflict especially caste, religion, language and so forth. Perhaps readers never learn what the brothers' caste is, for example, even though caste in the 1960s was a preoccupation and serious point of division (and is still in some circles). We know that they are likely middle-class, that their father was a railroad cleric, a government employee with little sympathy for radicalism.

Perhaps it's for the best that revolution serves only as a catalyst for the more sedate American story that follows. The pleasure of *The Lowland* is the tension between the political and the personal, the novel's consistent demonstration that the moment may be all that is, but that our individual choices matter intensely, that the knitting together of our relationships through both personal and political actions are crucial to the stories of our lives.

Indeed, reading the novel, one can find it as an epic in sweep, especially when combined with the overloaded, strong themes, the intertwining of politics and sexuality, the emotional wounds and grievances, and the repetition of places and personalities are the strong points which leads the postcolonial ideas in the land India and beyond it. Subhash, who has escaped a city he sees as disorganized as well as violent, and who studies oceanography, finds in the beaches of Rhode Island a resemblance to the delta lowlands surrounding Calcutta in search of career and new opportunity in the new land. Bela, brought up almost entirely by Subhash, seems to inherit not his passivity but her biological father's radical streak in becoming a wanderer working on organic farms. Throughout, Lahiri's prose hums along as

efficiently as a well-tuned engine, showing us the melancholy beauty of coastal New England; the surreal perceptions of an immigrant which can be seen when Subhash sees in the turning leaves of fall the “vivid hues of cayenne and turmeric and ginger pounded fresh every morning” (82). Not only this, there is clear tension between the generations, from the sense of abandonment and vulnerability felt by Bela to the terror of parenting. Who sees the visions of failure and foreboding, faced by Subhash and Gauri. The parents are in the dilemma of life, culture, and the space where they are still searching a place for calm.

In addition, the novel *The Lowland* can be considered as an emotional novel. Even though it plays with secrets and emotional turning points when Bela finds out about her biological father, whether Udayan was a victim of police brutality or a deluded, violent man, it seems to possess no singular route and no dominant idea beyond that of generational drift. Similar nature of things can be found in the Lahiri’s previous novel *The Namesake* which depicted the angst of a young Bengali-American named Gogol, had the virtues of a ferocious devotion to realist description, a satirical edge when probing upper-class New York pretensions, and a simple, linear plot. Here, the narrative moves back and forth through time and across the points of view of all the principal characters, but this diffusion does not appear to be in the service of formal playfulness or experimentation in the spirit of one of the many variants of modernism. The modernism which flourished in the third world and sometimes considered as post-colonialism. The character what Lahiri presents in the novel are the beautiful examples of postcolonial men who are homeless in search of home.

The characters which Lahiri presents in her literary works are tough in nature. Not only this novel, *The Lowland*, in other works also seem difficult in nature and the character need to confess the situation what they took before, mostly as compulsion.

For instance, her first collection, *Interpreter of Maladies*, displayed a high technical virtuosity while introducing readers to what has become her fictional realm: that small, claustrophobic milieu of Bengali Hindus working research and academic jobs in New England, Boston Brahmins twice over. Likewise, *The Third and Final Continent*, the last story in the collection and one popular in high schools and writing programs, probably as much for reaffirming assumptions about America as a benevolent, welcoming place for immigrants as for its controlled prose. It had the male Bengali immigrant working at a university, the sheltered wife who follows him abroad and the white American who, initially forbidding turns out to be a paragon of humanity. That realm of South Asian privilege took on a darker tinge in Lahiri's second collection, *Unaccustomed Earth*, where the veneer of professional success was shot through with alcoholism, suicidal impulses and depression, especially among the women. America, or India, or the world at large remained a backdrop, more or less faint, as the characters maneuvered through their heavy psychological landscape, but the narrow focus rarely felt like weakness. There was too much mystery about the peripatetic characters, unfinished, contingent selves moving through stories as neatly structured as the suburban housing divisions they emerged from. In the novel *The Lowland* also presents the unbearable tension what they face unknowingly.

The subject matter, the design of the novel, the selection of the character and their tension and contemporary idea of two cultures i.e. the Western and the Eastern are itself difficult in nature, again Lahiri has handled properly. It is her strength to present in the new novel. Besides this, there is balance between time and space. Taking the idea of politics she ends the novel in tension which educated postcolonial people are facing in the current days in the third world. Apart from Gauri, compellingly opaque at moments, the characters seem frozen into types Subhash, a

brilliant and educated man is in trap, Udayan a charming and easy to understand boy has become irresponsible for the family, and Bela a girl who is unknown for the long time about her personal identity, we find her with a tattoo on her ankle and a compost bin in the backyard. Their misery, although powerfully depicted in scenes of confrontation or isolation, seems to be deeply private, personal, ultimately without reference to the ostensible political background introduced every now and then as Lahiri returns to the execution scene, playing it one way in depicting the brutality of the police and then the other in revealing Udayan's own complicity in a crime, which drives the clean family's situation in complex and unexpected condition.

Lahiri scrutinize the poor condition of the Indian people and their optimistic ideas in the development of the nation. She mentions the Marx and Adorno; of S.D.S.; and of Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal, the two central ideologues of the Naxalite movement which attract the readers and ends the life of Udayan, who bears the ideas of changing poverty from the Indian land but such things never happens. To highlight the political situation there are somewhat rote descriptions of demonstrations, political meetings and slogans on the wall, but not a single line of the Naxal poetry or songs that flared through India at the time, in numerous languages, and that formed a far more defining aspect of the movement than the badly made bombs and dense theoretical tracts mentioned in the novel, which plays vital role in the insurgency of the Naxalities.

The death of Udayan twists about all the setting and situation of the novel. The honest Udaya's brother Subhash gets never expected situation when he accepts his brother's wife. It seems that he easily bears Gauri but she present her as a complicated women, whom Subhash never able to change rather she bears several cultural, psychological tension with obviously Subhash also need to take. What Subhash thinks

leaving the land would be solved overall situation what he is getting there but situation becomes quite contrary. Finally, the situation takes all the members in the situation of isolation, fragmentation, and tension.

In sum, the overall idea of novel holds the idea of marginality, alienation and nostalgia in the depicted character from the land of India. The cultural heritage, values and norms of Hindu's people quite converts into tension when Subhash thinks the Western land as the place to forget all the troubles. Indeed, it is the present of the sensitivity about family's ethnic legacy and the lives of South Asian Immigrants in the United States and succeeds to explore the multi-dimensional anxieties of exile life. In search of home for peace, prosperity in life, the both brother faces troubles which Lahiri present taking the reference of the Naxlities movement and the shift of Subhash in the American land. Lahari depicts the Indian land Naxalite's insurgencies in post-independence India. Leaving all the situation of Naxlities insurgency it drives them in diasporic situation which creates the situation of alienation, loneness. Besides the complicated political situations, she presents the issues like love, marriage, sex and economic lives of Gauri and Bela and their influences on the development and transformation of their psyches have been taken into consideration. Since all these happens after postcolonial era, and then in can be seen from the postcolonial perspectives.

In addition, the novel *The Lowland* is an example of the modern Indian diaspora which constitutes a major part in some respect as a unique force in world literature. A large number of Indian diasporic writers have been giving expression to their creative urge and have brought the name to Indian English Fiction. Writers of Indian Diaspora, who were earlier called the expatriate writers, have carved a special niche in the arena of literature. Tapping their varied experiences and rich exposure to

advantage, these writers wrote with a broad vision and perspective. In the modern world of flux, uncertainty and confusion, and constant erosion of identities, they explored major issues like cultural conflicts, immigrants' alienation, psyche and changing social values. The writing of *The Lowland* deserves it.

In the fleet of recent diasporic writers, Jhumpa Lahiri is the foremost writer. She can be acclaimed as one of the shining stars in the galaxy of diasporic writers. Migration has been part of her narration. Her latest novel *The Lowland*, convincingly illustrate the lives of both first generation and second generation Indian migrants in the US. She can be categorized as a multi-cultural, diasporic, Post-colonial, marginal, South-Asian woman writer.

Like other diasporic writers Jhumpa Lahiri is also caught between two worlds, one which is dead as they have left it behind with the immigration of her parents and the other which is not yet accepted by them. Lahiri's case is different as she belongs to second generation diaspora and does not have firsthand experience of her motherland. The concept of diaspora has defined by some of the postcolonial writers like W Edward Said, Salman Rushdie, John Simpson, Makarand Paranjapa and so forth.

The novel *The Lowland* immerses on the background of postcolonial world i.e. India. It attempts to deploy the desire and effect of colonialism after the demise of British colonialism from India. In general colonialism is a means of claiming and exploiting foreign lands, resources, and people. Enslavement, indentured labor, and migration forced many indigenous populations to move from the places that they considered home. Postcolonial literature attempts to counteract their resulting alienation from their surroundings by restoring a connection between indigenous people and places through description, narration, and dramatization. In this sense, Asnasi states in *Critical Response to Indian English Fiction* as:

Jhumpa Lahiri puts so large an emphasis on the stories of Indians in what for them is a strange land. Modern dilemma, rootlessness, alienation, emotional sterility and even isolation are the main themes of her writing: The contemporary literature, which deals with emotional problems, clearly reflects the pathetic condition of the modern man. Getting uprooted from the native cultural traditions and values, the loss of indigenous, language, man's position as a mere outcast or an unaccommodated alien together with multiple injuries and lacerations of psyche. (184)

Postcolonial literature can be identified by its discussion of cultural identity. The piece of literature which can be a novel, poem, short story etc. may be about the change that has taken place or question the current change. Postcolonial literature tends to ask the question: what was in the past? Is there effect in the present? What legacies are influenced in the current situation? and so forth. In this novel the writer actually created a kind of controversy by raising doubts at the use of term immigrant fiction in one of her latest Interviews with Barbara Kantowitz, Lahiri says as:

I don't know what to make of the term "immigrant fiction." Writers have always tended to write about the worlds they come from. And it just so happens that many writers originate from different parts of the world than the ones they end up living in, either by choice or by necessity or by circumstance, and therefore, write about those experiences. If certain books are to be termed immigrant fiction, what do we call the rest? Native fiction? Puritan fiction? This distinction doesn't agree with me. (Interview NYT)

To Lahiri, she does not straightly accept that she has been writing for migrant people or alienated people. But she accepts that she is writing the current situation around the world and she is writing about the alienation and assimilation. She further states in the interview with Barbara Kantowitz as:

Given the history of the United States, all American fiction could be classified as immigrant fiction. Hawthorne writes about immigrants. So does Willa Cather. From the beginnings of literature, poets and writers have based their narratives on crossing borders, on wandering, on exile, on encounters beyond the familiar. The stranger is an archetype in epic poetry, in novels. The tension between alienation and assimilation has always been a basic theme. (Interview NYT)

Considering, the above mentioned ideas, it can be possible to present alienation in the novel *The Lowland*. The writer depicts the setting from the colonized world in the past.

II. Diasporic Alienation in Jhampa Lahiri's *The Lowland*

In general the idea of separation, suppression, thinking the Western countries and people are civilized like this seems crucial to discuss from the beginning to end of the novel. Possibly the idea encompasses the idea of diasporic alienation and the setting of the novel indicates the colonized land and after the demise of British colonialism what effect that people get, show, and pursuing indicates post colonialism. Indeed, *The Lowland* is buoyantly ambitious in both its story and its form. From the initial line onwards this book is just a magic recreated with an amusing and mesmerizing art of writing. There is no relief in the storyline:

It strangles the reader with one tragedy or the idea of alienation after the other. As Hosseini states in *And the Mountains Echoed* commented his novel. My new novel is a multi-generational family story . . . revolving around brothers and sisters, and the ways in which they love, wound, betray, honour, and sacrifice for each other. (Driscoll)

About the similar thing can get in the Lahiri's writing in relation the relationship break up in a family, recreates them unbearable troubles, and way of using language. While Sketching *The Lowland* at first it finds the two brothers preternaturally closes in their youth, who forge very different paths for themselves as they grow up in Calcutta during the 1950s and 60s. They look and sound alike but are very different from each other. When the novel begins, "Subhash was thirteen, older by fifteen months. But he had no sense of himself without Udayan. From his early memories, at every point, his brother was there" (6). Subhash has shown himself to be very cautious from his early childhood and his favourite moments were when he alone preferred to live in his own world. It indicates that from his early age he loves to live

isolated life. In contrast, the younger brother loves to hide himself when their relatives at large gatherings sometimes said, " While Subhash stayed in clear view, Udayan was disappearing: even in their two-room house" (10). His nature was hiding compulsively, under the bed, behind the doors, in the crate where winter quilts were stored. He played this game without announcing it, spontaneously vanishing; forcing their mother, to stop what she was doing to seek him out. When they were old enough, they were permitted to leave the house but were asked "not to lose sight of one another" (10). The activities about Udayan indicate the foreshadow of disappearance. The boys were also taught to honour their parents and observe the old customs. While Subhash jelled wonderfully with his ambient, Udayan, the more daredevil brother, was always in search of new pastures. Subhash, in contrast, dutifully dedicated himself to personal, rather than collective, improvement. It has shown much mundane details about their day-to-day lives to let them conclude that the two brothers, close in age, were very different - one, angry, restless, protesting corruption, but also selfish, impulsive; the other, static, taking the easier road, detached, settled in his own loneliness - and that they remained different; they didn't change or learn or grow or develop as human beings, and their motivations for doing anything was felt thrice-removed. Although they were in different in nature again both are leading the way of alienation.

In addition, in spite of their differences one was perfectly confused with the other, so that when either name was called both were conditioned to answer and sometimes it was difficult to know who had answered, given that their voices were nearly indistinguishable. They were similar enough in build to draw from a single pile of clothes. Their complexions, a light coppery compound derived from their parents, were identical. Subhash, is a passive conformist who has pre-defined limits that

adhere to the laws of society. Subhash's conduct is contrary to that of Udayan's, who loves to take risks and challenge the conventional, and compared to whom Subhash considers himself inferior. As Larihi states:

Subhash wondered if his calm nature was regarded as a lack of inventiveness, perhaps even a failing, in his parents' eyes. His parents did not have to worry about him and yet they did not favour him. It became his mission to obey them, given that it wasn't possible to surprise or impress them. That was what Udayan did. (11)

Both boys did good in school years, they were admitted to two of the city's best colleges -Udayan would go to Presidency to study Physics and Subhash, for chemical engineering to Jadavpur. They had their unique preferences in matters of study or play.

Subhash is close to do general works and even study but Udayan was different and wanted a shortwave radio. He wanted more news of the world than what came through their parents' old valve radio. In 1967, in the papers and on All India Radio, they started hearing about Naxalbari, one of the strings of villages in the Darjeeling District, "a narrow corridor at the northern tip of West Bengal. Tucked into the foothills of the Himalayas, nearly four hundred miles from Calcutta, closer to Tibet than Tollygunge" (20). Most of the villagers were tribal peasants who worked on tea plantations. For generations they had lived under the feudal system. They were preyed upon by moneylenders, manipulated by wealthy land owners, deprived of subsistence wages, pushed off fields they had cultivated, and denied revenue from crops they had grown. When a sharecropper in Naxalbari tried to plough the land from which he had been illegally evicted, his landlord sent thugs to beat him up and loot his belongings. After this, groups of sharecroppers began retaliating armed with primitive weapons,

carrying red flags, shouting "Long Live Mao Tse-tung" (20). They started burning deeds and records that cheated them. The Government authorized about five hundred officers to raid the region. "They searched the mud huts of the poorest villagers. They captured unarmed insurgents, killing them if they refused to surrender. Ruthlessly, systematically, they brought the rebellion to its heels" (22). Both the brothers were speechless and shocked when they heard over the radio how the government arbitrarily brought the rebellion to its end.

Udayan, by nature a dynamic idealist, charismatic and impulsive, finds himself propelled by social conscience into the Naxalite movement, a rebellion waged to eradicate inequity and poverty; he will give everything, risk all, for what he believes. He was affected so much by the police action against the sharecroppers that he was reacting as if it were a personal affront, "People are starving and this is their solution, he eventually said. They turn victims into criminals. They aim guns at people who can't shoot back . . . This could only be the beginning of ... Something bigger. Something else" (23). True to the spirit of the movement, Udayan, becomes convinced that he should set himself on to better the living conditions of India's poor through violent uprising. When their father sensed the danger of Udayan's deep emotional involvement in the movement, he accusingly admonished them, "I've already lived through change in this country. . . I know what it takes for one system to replace another. Not you" (23-4). But Udayan persisted:

Challenging their father, in a way he used to challenge teachers at school. He started reading pamphlets written by Charu Majumdar who said India has turned into nation of beggars and foreigners. The reactionary government of India had adopted the tactics of killing the masses; they are killing them through starvation, with bullets" (24).

Lahiri says at an interview, "Udayan and his comrades are "basically kids... I mean, they're college students. And so one can see how a certain ideology can be very attractive, and appear to be the solution, and appear to be the key to solving an enormous problem in a country and a society" (Neary). His vision of life and reality was born anew in the new ideology of the Naxalbari movement so much so that if he happened to pass through the Tolly Club - where he had once sneaked in to play golf - on his way to or from the tram depot, Udayan called it an affront." People still filled slums all over the city; children were born and raised on the streets. Why were a hundred acres walled off for the enjoyment of a few?" (25). Udayan now considers golf as "the pastime of the comprador bourgeoisie" (25). The involvement or the desire of Udayan can be taken as an influence of British colonialism. Since the Indian people saw the prosperity and development of the colonial world i.e. British colonialism then the idea emerged to develop their nation as them. The movement of Naxal work as a legacy of post colonialism.

Once Udayan says in a Tolly Club that there is a proof that India are still a semi-colonial country, behaving as if the British had never left the place. He used to be out for meetings in a neighbourhood in North Calcutta, to hear a wispy-haired medical student named Sinha, who asserted with emphasis, " If history is to take a step forward, the parlour game of parliamentary politics must end" (27). As Shina Roy states:

The leaders of the Naxalbari movement considered the path of 'people's war' as the only relevant method of bringing in revolution in the 'semi-feudal', 'semi-colonial' condition of India. Naxalites activists came to be known after the place Naxalbari) embarked on a journey of violent armed struggle against the state after forming the third

communist party in India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI-ML), in 1969. (16)

The term semi-colonial indicates that there is still great effect of colonialism. However, Subhash was never convinced that an imported ideology could solve India's problems. He was already normalized with the influence of the Western society especially American and European. Yet Subhash often went with his brother because "He was sick of the fear that always rose in him: that he would cease to exist, that he and Udayan cease to be brothers, were Subhash were to resist him" (30).

Whatever the excited activities and rampant student boycotts and unrest against prevailing system going on do not prevent them from pursuing their studies: both brothers began postgraduate studies, Udayan at Calcutta University, Subhash continuing at Jadavpur. After their studies ended, Subhash and Udayan found themselves among so many others of his generation, overqualified and unemployed. Udayan turns to radical politics because of the injustice and poverty he sees around him. But the more Udayan becomes involved in politics, the more Subhash feels alienated from him and wish to disappear from the Udayan's ideology. Then, Subhash decides to apply for a few Ph.D. programmes in the United States while Udayan thought that by such a decision Subhash was being quite irresponsible to the issues of people. He said quite thoughtfully, " How can you walk away from what's happening? There, of all places?" (30). The expressed statement indicates that Subhash wants alienation forgetting the ideology of Udayan's.

The very interesting thing is that on the one hand Udayan is blaming for Subhash and on the other hand Subhash retaliating in the same coin posing a few questions to Udayan, "This isn't a game you're playing. What if the police come to the house? What if you get arrested? What would Ma and Baba think? . . . They're people

who raised you. Who continue to feed and clothe you? You amount to nothing, if it weren't for them"(30). Though Udayan got flared up initially, he comes to acknowledge the worth of his gracious presence for the first time in his life: " You're the other side of me, Subhash. It's without you that I'm nothing. Don't go. It was the only time he'd admitted such a thing. He'd said it with love in his voice. With need" (31). It seems that there was great interest in Udayan to do for the nation after the colonialism in India. Sina Roy states in "Metropolis and its Others: Reading Women's Speech and Silence in the Naxalbari Movement" as:

After achieving independence from British colonialism in 1947, the nation state of India began its journey as a parliamentary democracy which relied on harnessing diverse political trends into a process of nation building. Industrial recession, severe food shortage, unemployment, and government policy failures in alleviating poverty from the late 1950s, however, led to a rising popular discontent in the 1960s. The communists in India were in an ideological conundrum as the international Sino-Soviet debate had its repercussions on deciding the proper course of radical politics. Twenty years after achieving independence from British colonialism, the Naxalbari movement became a moment of re-evaluating the benefits of independence from the point of view of the nation's poor--millions of marginal peasants, rural landless laborers, and urban proletariat. (2)

It indicates that there was a type of anger and frustration after British colonialism. There was political tension, which lead Naxalbadi to move ahead and young student like Udayan involved on it.

As Larahi mentions on the text about the Naxalbadi movement with closely examine. It is find that on Lenin's birthday, April 22, 1969, a third communist party named the Communist Party of India, Marxist-Leninist was launched in Calcutta with Charu Majumdar as the general secretary, and Kanu Sanyal, the party chairman. The members called themselves Naxalites, in honour of what had happened at Naxalbari. "The chief task of the new party was to organise the peasantry. The tactic would be guerrilla warfare. The enemy was the Indian state" (33). In the rally that was held to mark the day, Sanyal said, "We will certainly be able to make a new sun and a new moon shine in the sky of our great motherland" (33). The news papers published photographs of the huge crowd who gathered to hear Sanyal's speech announcing the birth of a new communist party - CPM(ML). The narrator records what might have passed through the mind of Subhash as he glanced through these photographs:

It was a portrait of a city Subhash no longer felt part of. A city on the brink of something; a city he was preparing to leave behind. Subhash knew Udayan had been there. He hadn't accompanied him to the rally, nor had Udayan asked him to come. In this sense they had already parted. (33)

The moment is the separation of two optimistic brothers. Speaking about the contrast in the character traits of the two brothers, Lahiri said:

I thought it would be much more interesting for the story to set up a contrast between these two brothers, to have one involved politically and one to be aloof, because I think it creates an inherent tension between the brothers . . . And I wanted to show how the movement could seduce one while leave another indifferent. (Neary)

Subhash's dream of doing Ph.D. in America is soon materialized when he gets a scholarship to settle in Rhode Island (where Lahiri grew up) for his research. He thus steps out of Tollygunge "as he had stepped so many mornings out of dream, its reality and its particular logic rendered meaningless in the light of day" (34). Life in Rhode Island was entirely different. He breathed a sense of freedom because unlike his days in Tollygunge, life ceased to obstruct or assault him. "Here was a place where humanity was not always pushing, rushing, running as if with a fire at its back" (34). He lived at the top of a house, sharing a kitchen and bathroom with another Ph.D. student named Richard Grifalconi, a student of sociology. Subhash learned to settle down quietly without joining in any of the student protests against the government's policies on Vietnam. He knew "he'd been invited to America as Nixon's guest... He knew that the door could close just as arbitrarily as it had opened. He knew that he could be sent back to where he'd come from, and that there would be plenty to take his place" (36). For a couple of lonely years in a student boarding house, he learns to live without the voices of his family. He himself feeling as a diasporic alienation.

In addition, he was in a sense proud to have come to America alone to study oceanography. Soon he learned to live here, "as he once must have learned to stand and walk and speak. He'd wanted so much to leave Calcutta, not only for the sake of education but also -- he could admit this to himself now-- to take a step Udayan never would" (40). Yet his motivation had done little to prepare him. He felt quite uncertain though he was happy to escape from a city he sees disorganised and violent. "Here in this place surrounded by sea, he was drifting far from his point of origin. Here, detached from Udayan, he was ignorant of so many things" (40). He found in the beaches of Rhode Island a resemblance to the delta lowlands surrounding Calcutta and he learned to live by this association with his homeland. He has created Rhode

Island as an imaginary homeland as if he himself has exiled from his own motherland as diasporic people experience.

Meantime Subhash receives a letter from Udayan. He felt their loyalty to one another once more, their affection stretched half way across the world. Yet, "stretched to the breaking point by all that now stood between them" (43). Udayan hoped that Subhash, after his studies would come back to "an altered country, a more just society" (42). The final lines of the letter was almost melodramatic and indicated the place of Subhash in his life. For instance as Lahiri states for the voice of Udayan as:

The days are dull without you. And although I refuse to forgive you for not supporting a movement that will only improve the lives of millions of people, I hope you can forgive me for giving you a hard time. Will you hurry up with whatever you are doing? An embrace from your brother. (42-43)

Similarly, the second letter informed him of his marriage to Gauri, who was doing a degree in Philosophy at Presidency. She was a girl from North Calcutta, Cornwallis street, whose parents were dead and who lives with her only brother Manash. And Manash had befriended Udayan at Calcutta University, where they were both graduate students in the Physics Department. To Subhash, this was another instance of Udayan forging ahead of him and of getting on his way. "Not only had Udayan married before Subhash, he'd married a woman of his choosing. On his own he'd taken a step that Subhash believed was their parents' place to decide" (47). Udayan had sent him a photograph of Gauri as a proof of what he had done. Once more Subhash felt "defeated by Udayan" for having found a girl all by him. All these things indicate that Subhash has been keeping himself far from his brother and love to his own land.

In the second year of his Ph.D. Subhash lived on his own because Richard had found a teaching job in Chicago. Though he used to receive a few letters from Udayan, he no longer referred to Naxalbari or to his political activities. He wondered what was happening in Calcutta and what Udayan might be masking. He also wondered if Gauri had replaced him in his house. During this time, he had a short relationship with a thirty-six year old American woman named Holly who lived with her son Joshua, separated from her husband, Keith. However, the relation cannot extend much with Subhash. He began his third autumn in Rhode Island and he was reminded of the days of Pooja in Calcutta. But quite unlike the other two years, he did not receive any parcel; instead he received a telegram which said, "Udayan killed, Come back if you can" (83). It was just like the game like seek and hide that the two brothers used to play at home. Udayan used to hide more closely as if nobody would get him easily. In the same way, there was the permanent separation of Udayan for brother, wife and family.

When Subhash managed to reach Calcutta, he expected his parents at the station to welcome him. There was only the younger cousin of his father's, Biren Kaka and his wife who had come to receive him at the station. Subhash recalled how Udayan had bid him farewell at the same station when he left for Rhode Island and the promise of his mother that he would receive a "hero's welcome" (88) when he would return from the US. During the train journey from Delhi to Calcutta, he had learned about the atrocious crimes of the Naxalites which were sadistic, gruesome and intended to shock. The old law which had been created by the British, to counter self-government had been reinstated by the government. These were the police who used to work on the British colonialism were most of the same and they used to behave as they used to do in the past. It is obvious that the effect of the colonialism in the

postcolonial world was obvious. This also helped to control the situation. The laws was authorized the police to enter homes without warrant, and to arrest young men without charges.

Subhash met his parents on reaching home. Their faces conveyed disappointment, "calloused by grief, blunted by what no parent should have seen" (91). Subhash stood before the image of Udayan and wept. Soon he came to understand that his parents received Gauri coldly and treated her badly because the marriage was not an arranged one. Gauri herself was helpless and powerless but again isolated by the family, living a very tragic life. He also learned that she was expecting Udayan's child, a legacy of Udayan which in fact was a burden to Gauri for the freedom of her individual life. Consciously or unconsciously Udayan had given like a gift soon of his marriage is an obstacle of her freedom. If Udayan was involving in war and there was not favourable situation then there was not necessary to give the birth of new child to Gauri who was already hated by family and Udayan could understood it very well. In this sense Udayan was prime cause to push Gauri to live isolated life. Moreover, his parents refused to talk to her or acknowledge her presence in the house.

After lunch Subhash went out, walking past the two ponds. He noticed a small stone marker on which was written Udayan's name with the years of his birth and death, 1945-1971, inscribed on it. It was a memorial tablet, erected for political martyrs. His efforts to make his parents talk resulted in a bare few broken phrases. They did not ask him any news about Rhode Island nor asked him to stay back in Calcutta and abandon his studies abroad. It shows that the family was not expecting much from like the isolated son. If they were expecting much then they could expect something from him and also think about his marriage. Rather they were in no

position to plan his wedding or to think about his future. "The shared quiet fell over them, binding them more quietly than any conversation could" (96). His parents felt uneasy to talk about Udayan's death. The parents were also living tragic life that their loveable very young son's demise had driven them not expecting much from even the elder son.

Gauri says the intolerable incident and Subhash could gather what actually took place on that fateful day. She described to him briefly how "she and his parents had watched Udayan die" (113). It happened a week before Durga Pujo in the month of Ashvin. Gauri and his mother were returning from a day of shopping with packets containing gifts for the extended family. When they reached their house, they found that policemen and soldiers were stationed in and around the house. Gauri saw her father-in-law descending the stairs, his hands raised over his head with a policeman pointing a rifle at his back. Then Gauri and his parents were ordered to exit the house, forming a row. The police told them they were under orders to locate and arrest Udayan Mitra. Soon they spotted Udayan hiding behind the water hyacinth, in the flooded water of the lowland. The police announced over the megaphone that they were prepared to eliminate the family members if he did not surrender. Presently Udayan surrendered. His hands were bound; he was pushed into the police van. They took him to the damp grass that edged *The Lowland* and shot him dead. They dragged his body by the legs and tossed him into the back of the van and drove away. The body was not returned to their parents. The police had discovered a diary in their bedroom which contained all the proof they needed. In this way she says the measurable death of Udayan, a tragedy of her life.

Although Gauri was not accepted heartily in the family again they could not avoid her since she is taken as a sister in law according to Hinduism. She was given a

white sari to wear in place of coloured ones, so that she resembled the other widows who were three times her age in the family. She knew that as Lahiri states:

In less than nine months a baby would come. But its life had already been started, its heart already beating, represented by a separate line creeping forward. She saw Udayan's life, no longer accompanying her own as she'd assumed it would, but ceasing in October 1971. This formed a grave in her mind's eye... She wished the days and months ahead of her would end... And yet somehow she was breathing. Just as time stood still but was also passing, some other part of her body that she was unaware of was now drawing oxygen, forcing her to stay alive.

(111)

When Gauri were live a measurable life then she wanted to suicide but there was the legacy of Udayan that urged her to live further. Although Subash' s parents did not want her, they only wanted her child. They often repeated to her, "You won't be of help" (110). His mother said she could choose to go somewhere to continue her studies. Subhash pleaded for her saying, "You can't separate them. For Udayan's sake, accept her" (114). His mother was very angry and she spoke in an insulting tone: "Don't tell me how to honour my own son"(114). Piecing together the various data he had garnered, he soon came to the conclusion that Udayan had given his life to a misguided movement that had already been dismantled. The only thing he had altered was what their family had been. His parents had been lenient regarding Udayan, as they had always been. He had kept Subhash deliberately in the dark as he went on clandestinely, putting together bombs, blowing up things. Gauri was the only one he had trusted. He had inducted her into their lives only to strand her there. There was nothing Subhash could do to console his parents. It had mattered little if he had come

all the way from Rhode Island at all. His mother's deliberate coldness toward Gauri, reinforced by his father's passivity was intended to drive her away from the house. Directly or indirectly the parents wanted to impose the trouble or tension of Udayan to Gauri although there is no way out in the life of Gauri, only pushing life in tragic way.

On the other hand police were taking inquiry to Gauri frequently and was to take her away legally by marrying her, "To take his brother's place, to raise his child, to come to love Gauri as Udayan had" (115). Subhash knew only too well that even if the police were to leave her alone, his parents would not. Subhash tried to convince her of the most obvious facts, "that in America no one knew about the movement, no one would bother her. She could go on with her studies. It would be an opportunity to begin again" (119). Giving due consideration to what Subhash suggested to her, Gauri decides to accompany Subhash to Rhode Island as Stephen Morten takes the reference of Spivak in 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in the book *Routledge Critical Thinkers* as:

The voice of 'the worker' or 'the woman' in political discourse is often represented by a political proxy, or an elected representative, who speaks on behalf of these constituencies. Such political discourses tend to represent these disempowered groups as if they were speaking collectively as a unified political subject. For Spivak, however, this coherent political identity is always already an effect of the dominant discourse that represents these groups, rather than a transparent portrait of the true worker, or the true woman. (295)

In the same way the Gauri is marginalized and powerless women, there is nobody who could speak to her. She was like paralyzed and need someone to speak to her. Meantime, Subhash speaks to her or on the support of her possibly the love she felt

for Subhash, but it offered an alternative for change and academic prospects which she longed for.

Gauri was uncertain about her future however before accepting to Subhash she observed that two obvious facts which reminded her of Udayan's presence. The first was the voice of Subhash, "Almost the exact pitch and manner of speaking. This was the deepest and most startling proof of their fraternity. For a moment she allowed this isolated aspect of Udayan , preserved and replicated in Subhash's throat, to travel back to her" (122). The second and most unavoidable fact was that she was carrying Udayan's child: " She felt as if she contained a ghost, as Udayan was. The child was a version of him, in that it was both present and absent. Both within her and remote" (124) She was beset by many irrational fears of the child forming within her, "she'd momentarily feared that the child would dissolve and abandon her" (124). Her life had always been stretched to the extremities by choice or circumstances.

With Udayan's death, Gauri felt, the ligaments that had held her life together had perished. Now her impulsive and calculated decision to be Subhash's wife, to flee to America with him, and with that action also to flee from Tollygunge, to forget everything her life had been, she felt even more extreme. When Udayan was killed, Subhash's mother had lashed out that Udayan would not have been killed had he married another sort of girl. Now her second marriage to Subhash, she considers it most unchaste because she was expected to honour Udayan's memory and his martyrdom. Besides, she did not want a girl in her family, "to become her daughter-in-law twice over" (186). She had warned Subhash that he was risking everything. She had forbidden Subhash and Gauri never to enter the house as husband and wife. The thing was leading their alienation from the birth place or home that is very crucial in everybody's life. It seems that Subhash wants to accept Gauri as wife and Rodi

Island as home, a home far from the original birth place. Where he had been living for few years as if forgetting the birth place. As Avtar Brah in *Cartographies of*

Diaspora: Contesting Identities writes:

What is home? On the one hand, 'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'. On the other hand, home is also a lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, sombre grey skies in the middle of the day...all this, as mediated by the historically specific of everyday social relations. In other words, the varying experiences of pains and pleasures, the terrors and contentments, or the highs and humdrum of everyday lived culture that marks how, for example, a cold winter night might be differently experienced sitting by a crackling fireside in a mansion compared with standing huddled around a makeshift fire on the streets of nineteenth century England. (192)

Subhash has hope to establish new home in America and possibly live life there as a husband of Gauri. Gauri also would get new life and simultaneously Subhash too but choosing a diasporic life accepting a married woman Gauri cannot establish a beautiful home of them.

On the other hand, Gauri had married Subhash also as a means of staying connected to Udayan. "In the back of her mind she told herself she could come one day to love him, out of gratitude if nothing else" (127). But even as she was going through this phase of her life, she knew it was useless, "just as it is useless to save a single earring when the other half of the pair was lost" (128). In Rhode Island, she

was not receptive to Subhash either; she continued to maintain the distance and her independence from him. She was unable to express her gratitude for what he had undertaken or to convey the ways he was a better person than Udayan however they lived separately in the same apartment. Although they were far from their mother land and culture however they lived like isolated life.

Subhash hopes things would be different in the course of time. He felt, "he had inherited his brother's wife; in summer he would inherit his child" (141). Initially she tried to mingle with the mixed Indian community: for instance, she was happy to mix with other women of the University at the dinner party of Narasimhan and Kate. Later she withdrew saying she did not have anything common with them. Subhash found it quite disturbing when she cut her hair short, dramatically altering her face and adopted the American style of dressing. As Mandaville points out in the article *Reimagining Islam in Diaspora: The Politics of Mediated Community*:

The estrangement of a community in diaspora – its separation from the ‘natural’ setting of the homeland – often leads to a particularly intense search for and negotiation of identity: gone are many traditional anchor points of culture; conventional hierarchies of authority can fragment. In short, the condition of diaspora is one in which the multiplicity of identity and community is a key dynamic. Debates about the meanings and boundaries of affiliation are hence a defining characteristic of the diaspora community. (172)

Gauri feels diasporic feeling and accepts the American culture to adjust in the American land. She does less concern to Subhash who has been opening his new door in her life and pushing his life in the tragic path.

The hope of Subhash to see Gauri as his loveable wife and changes after getting the birth of her child cannot change into true rather she shows irrational fears before and after the birth of Bela, her child. After Bela was born, Gauri was aware, "how the slightest oversight on her part could cause Bela to be destroyed" (145). She felt Bela was her child and Udayan's, and Subhash for his helpfulness was simply playing a part. But soon Bela seemed to recognise Subhash, "To accept him, and to allow him to ignore the reality that he was an uncle" (146). As the years passed Gauri is found to be withdrawing little by little from her role as a mother, contrary to the position she had naturally asserted earlier stating, "I'm her mother" (146). On the other hand, Subhash, who according to Gauri was just role playing, strives to achieve the implication of his promise to Gauri, "I'll make it [Bela] mine, Gauri" (137). Gauri a cruel hearted women pushes the innocent Subhash in difficult, tragic and isolated life in abroad.

After Bela began to go to school, Gauri spent her time at the University library on Philosophy. Her readings and ruminations on the concept of time in the context of her own future haunted her but they also kept her alive: "it remained her sustenance and also her predator" (151). Most people lived willfully anticipating future and the narrator delves into its significance in the life of the major characters as Larihi writes:

Her [Gauri's] in-laws had expected Subhash and Udayan to grow old in the house they had built for them. They had wanted Subhash to return to Tollygunge and marry someone else. Udayan had given his life for the future, expecting the society itself to change. Gauri had expected to stay married to him, not for less than two years but always. In Rhode Island, Subhash was expecting him Gauri and Bela. For Gauri to be a mother to Bela, and to remain a wife to him. (152)

But the expectation never changes into true rather it tormented to Subhash more than others.

Subhash used to care to Bela as parents. At Bela's insistence, Subhash used to lie beside her until she fell asleep. It was a reminder of his paternal connection which overwhelmed him, a connection at once true and false. Sometimes Bela would hold his face in her hands and ask him: Do you love me? Yes, Bela. I love you more. More than what? I love you more than you love me. That's impossible. That's my job. But I love you more than anybody loves anybody. (156) Subhash wondered how such powerful emotions as this could emanate from within a small child. Each night getting out of her bed, after she has fallen asleep, he wondered what she might say, the day she learned the truth about him. However, the fatherly tenderness Subhash felt for Bela, was not the same on Gauri's end. Though she cared for Bela capably, she seemed quite distracted. Bela was quick to observe this, "You're not paying attention, Bela protested, when Gauri's mind strayed" (161). She behaved "as if she'd reversed their roles, as if Bela were a relative's child and not her own" (159). She was even alienated to Subhash from his beloved child although she was not her own but he had given food to eat and roof to stay under it.

Though Subhash was right from his own point of view, she would never risk no such compromises, "that though she had become a wife a second time, becoming a mother again was the one thing in her life she was determined to prevent from happening" (161). With Subhash she learned that sexual union intended to express love could have nothing to do with it; that her heart and her body were different things. One day she asked Subhash if they could hire a babysitter to give her time to take a survey of German philosophy. Subhash did not agree to this on principle because he did not want to pay a stranger to care for Bela. He reminded her that her

first priority under the present circumstances should be Bela and not her studies. But she begrudged Subhash's absence when he was at work and resented the few moments of the morning he enjoyed with Bela. "She was failing at something every other woman on earth did without trying. That should not have proved a struggle" (164). In her moments of distraction, she was angry at Udayan "for dying when he might have lived. For bringing her happiness, and then taking it away. For believing in sacrifice, only to be selfish in the end" (164). Gauri often left Bela alone leaving her engaged while she took a walk alone. She urged to think Bela that she were as if a careless child under a unmatched parents.

Indeed, Gauri had never recognized the joy in sacrifice that motherhood always offered. Her professor Otto Weiss had offered her the requisite assistance to get her into the doctoral programme and she was looking forward to this. In Tollygunge, Bijoli made it part of her routine to wash the memorial tablet erected by the party members in honour of Udayan's martyrdom, placing the flowers on it each day. She recalled how Udayan went about doing little acts of charity: he would collect worn out items, old bedding and pots and pans, to distribute to families living in slums; he would do the needful to bring a doctor to the poorest ailing sections of society, "and so on. After Subhash's father retired from service, he spent his days reading books. The house stood practically empty. It has turned out to be a "mockery of the future they'd assumed would unfold" (181). Udayan has not lived to inherit it, and Subhash refuses to come back. At times, Subhash's father suggested selling the house and moving away from Tollygunge. The suggestion of Subhash help to add pain in the heart of parents and when Bijoli did not accepted it then his father also died in sudden. He alienates himself from children and even from his wife, to whom he used to expect his future.

After the death of her husband she became more alone and isolated. There was nobody to talk with her although she had got two sons, husband, and even grandchildren. She used to walk to the memorial stone. Then pathetically she used to re-enact a reworked version of what took place in the final moments of Udayan. As Lahari states:

Come forward, she calls out to those who are watching from their windows, their rooftops. She remembers the voice of the paramilitary, speaking through the megaphone. *Walk slowly. Show your face to me.* She waits for Udayan to appear amid the water hyacinth and walk towards her. It is safe now, she tells him. The police have gone. No one will take you away. Come quickly to the house. You must be hungry... Your brother has married Gauri. I am alone now. You have a daughter in America. Your father has died. She waits, certain that he is there, that he hears what she tells him. (190)

She used to confess all her compressed desires or words with that non-living thing as if died son would listen it. She used to search presence of somebody in the absence.

Subhash along with Bela came to Calcutta three months after his father's death. During the six weeks he would be there, he has planned a few lectures to be delivered in the nearby universities. The day after they arrived, Subhash sat for a ceremony to honour the demise of his father. Bela quickly got acquainted with her grandmother and Deepa. In the course of her stay, Bela came to know about Udayan, not as her father but as her uncle. She spent the afternoon of her twelfth birthday happily at Tollyclub, though she felt the absence of her mother. After their planned period of stay at Tollygunge ended, they flew back to Rhode Island. When they reached their house, they were in for a shock: Gauri left the place for good to

California leaving a farewell letter on the table. She had accepted a teaching position in a college just to get out of the mess she was in, exposing “only her self-interest, her ineptitude . . . She'd done it, the worst thing that she could think of doing” (232). The hope of Bela to share the thing what she had heard that Subhash was not her father remains pending, her desire to meet and talk about the reality cannot be possible rather Bela thinks herself as if thrown object.

At the same time, Bela intensely felt her absence which Subhash's exclusive fatherhood could in no way compensate. Gauri's absence led to certain observable changes in Bela's behaviour. She performed badly at school and Subhash was asked to seek the help of Dr. Emily Grant, the psychologist. But soon her grades improved and apparently she seemed to be getting back her earlier self after she was promoted to the eighth grade. The year she graduated from school, Subhash received news from Deepa that Bijoli suffered a stroke. Since Bela preferred to remain at Rhode Island, Subhash flew back to Tollygunge alone to be beside Bijoly in her final hours. By the time he reached, she had died on her own in the hospital and the death finally separates the close blood relation from the birth place.

Bela chose a small liberal arts school in the Midwest. She did not want to spend her life inside the university researching things like her parents. It was the closest she came to rejecting how both Subhash and Gauri lived. At times Bela talked about the Peace Corps, wishing to travel to other parts of the world. After graduating she moved to Western Massachusetts, where she got a job on a farm. There she was engaged in putting in irrigation lines, weeding and harvesting, cleaning out animal pens. A series of jobs across the country became her routine. She went roaming in the enormous county, on either side of which Gauri and Subhash lived apart. Bela was restless and “forged a rootless path” (225). One which seemed insecure to Subhash

after getting her as if isolated child from parents she also feels lonely. As Lahari states for the voice of Bela:

She was spending time in cities, in blighted sections of Baltimore and Detroit. She helped to convert abandoned properties into community gardens. She taught low-income families to grow vegetables in their backyards, so that they wouldn't have to depend entirely on food banks. (224)

In the meantime, Gauri, away from Subhash and Bela, got settled in southern California, in a small college mainly meant for undergraduates. Her job was not only to teach students but also to mentor them. She was expected to be approachable and to maintain generous office hours. This obligation to be open to others and to forge alliances had in the beginning brought an unexpected strain. But she was quite successful with her colleagues and students. Yet she preferred isolation because it offered its own form of companionship, “the reliable silence of her rooms, the steadfast tranquillity of evenings” (237).

Gauri gets various up and down in her life. She could live beautiful life even after the death of her beloved death. She wished to live an individual life as if there is nobody to help her. Her role had changed so many times in the past as Lahari states:

From wife to widow, from sister-in-law to wife, from mother to childless woman . . . She had married Subhash, she had abandoned Bela. She had generated alternative versions of herself, she had insisted at brutal cost on these conversions. Layering her life only to strip it bare, only to be alone in the end. (240)

She felt that the silence of Bela and her absence was a fitting punishment for her crime. Though late she understood what it meant to walk away from her own child.

After the funeral ceremony of Richard's wife, Subhash happened to meet Elise Silva one of Bela's teachers at high school. He learnt from her that her daughter had been a member of a religious sect begun in the eighteenth century, dedicated to celibacy and simple living. Getting back home, he felt terribly alone and unable to sleep at night. He thought the terrible need to tell Bela what she only deserved to know, which is to lay bare the story of Udayan. This, he felt, was the unfinished business of his life. Bela was now old and strong enough to handle it. Since she was all he loved, he could not collect the strength to tell it to her. Everything in Bela's life has been a reaction. It is during this time that Bela reveals that she is pregnant for more than four months. Her male companion was not a part of her life; he was simply someone Bela had known. She wanted to keep the child and become a mother. Subhash felt that hers was a version of what had brought Gauri to him years ago, "The coincidence coursed through him, numbing, bewildering. A pregnant woman, a fatherless child. Arriving in Rhode Island needing him. It was a re-enactment of Bela's life" (264). It was like urge to think Subhash like Gauri she was also choosing an isolated life, a life without life partner.

Summoning all the strength of his will, and abandoning everything to chance, he tells her plainly that he is only her uncle and her real father is Udayan. Initially she could not accept the information and felt the strain it sent through her body. She left the house to stay with a friend in Truro without informing Subhash. But she did call a few days later and thanked him for telling her about Udayan and said, the information helped her to clear certain things. After her daughter, Magna was born, after she became a mother, she told Subhash that it made her love him all the more, knowing the import of the sacrifice he had done for her sake. When Magna was four, she started attending a summer programme run by the school where she would begin

kindergarten in the fall. Since Magna was old enough to be apart from the mother for a time, Bela started working again in a farm. It was during this time she came into contact with a person named Drew. He was running a farm which belonged to his family. Bela began seeing him on weekends, keeping him company at an outdoor market in Bristol. He was married and divorced long ago. After a month of her regular contact with him, she introduced him to her father and to Elise. Towards the end of the summer, Drew told Bela that he wished to be a father to Magna, if Bela would allow him.

When Subhash was nearing seventy, he felt that he was entering a phase of life when anything might happen. He wanted to resolve a few things. He planned to sell his house in Tollygunge and surrender the ownership of the house in Rhode Island to Bela. He wrote a letter to Gauri asking her to sign a few papers for a divorce. Gauri had to spend many hours weighing the pros and cons, in case, she should decide on a travel to Rhode Island to give those papers personally to Subhash. It was then that she decided to attend a conference in London. And for this she arranged a connecting flight with a night's stay at an inn in Rhode Island. After imagining possible encounters with Subhash in his house, and rehearsing her possible reactions, weighing all the presumptuous chance, she walked up the path and rang the bell. It was after much hesitation that Bela opened the door. Subhash was not at home then. Bela was too overcome by mixed emotions that she was not ready to answer the questions Gauri asked her. "They were simple questions, ones that Bela did not mind answering when posed by strangers. But coming from her mother each felt outrageous. Each was an affront. She was unwilling to share with her mother, so casually, the facts and choices of her life" (309). Gauri collected bits of information from Magna about Subhash, Elise, Magna's age and her father, and so on. Gauri put the envelope of

signed papers on the coffee table and slid it towards Bela. A storm was forming within Bela, before which Gauri is too puny to resist. Bela let Magna go out to collect fresh flowers for the table and shut the door. She told her mother:

How dare you set foot in this house... Go back to whatever it was that was more important . . . I can't stand the sight of you... Nothing will excuse what you did . . . You're not my mother. You're nothing... You are dead to me as he [Udayan] is. The only difference is that you left me by choice. (312-13).

Bela had never felt such violent emotion before and the force of that anger had crushed her. Even after many moments," Bela felt the urge to strike her. To be rid of her, to kill her all over again" (314). At the end of the encounter, Bela was thankful that it was she, not her father who had to confront Gauri. Gauri was not mentally at peace to attend the conference in London. She arranged for a week's stay at Calcutta. She tried to meet Manash without success as he was away in Shillong. She visited Tollygunge, where no one recognized her and where she was once more haunted by the past images of Udayan. When she got back to California, there was a letter from Bela. The final lines of the letter posed a challenge as well as vague assurance, "You've already taught me not to need you, and I don't need to know more about Udayan. But maybe, when Meghna is older, when she and I are both ready, we can try to meet again" (325). It made Gauri totally isolated from the family and even the land where she had get birth.

The final two chapters describe Subhash's second marriage to Elise Silva witnessed by a group of friends and family at a church in Rhode Island. It also does not seems so successful the marriage at the very old age. Overall the novel concerns, obligations and passions, parental love and abandonment, choices that we make and

the blood and genetics that run in our blood, and the destiny that we cannot shake.

The novel explores lives across India and America, in a span of 50 years, taking the narration style of flipping between two different geographical locations and the past and the present. Whatever the character and the location it would they could not live mutual and understanding life style however they may consider the land of civilized.

III: Cultural Identity and Diasporic Alienation

The novel *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri deals about the crisis of identity in the alienated Indian characters who are in America leaving their homeland after post-colonialism. Besides she explores about marginality, alienation, tragedy, cultural clash, prescriptive to see the Western land, nostalgia and so forth with explicit ways. Not only this, the novel explores the sensitivity about family's ethnic heritage and the lives of South Asian Immigrants in the United States and succeeds to explore the multi-dimensional anxieties of exile life. It encompasses the plight of Indian migrant people who get tragedy for three generations and again there is no good indication that it would see their life more fruitful and beautiful. Identity, homelessness, cultural issues are the prime things that Jhumpa Lahiri has presented quite explicit ways.

Depicting about a postcolonial Indian family's scenario and their dream about the future the novel presents the unexpected situation of homelessness and alienation. After the British colonialism in India, undoubtedly there was great expectation to flourish India beautifully and prosperity to all Indian people, the Naxalite's insurgency emerged in post-independence India. A beautiful family's young member called Udayan involved on it, which derived the three generation's life in miserable condition. One after another they got troubles, unexpected situation in the hope of something beautiful situation. After the death of Udayan his brother and Gauri saw the Western world more civilized and planned to move there. But the thing did not convert in to harmony in life; rather it pushed them in separation, alienation in the diasporic land. Not only this, the rest generation got cultural clash and troubles and so forth in the American land. It made unhappy to them all, that the novel highlights very beginning to end. Again it does not present the clear way out of characters in their live.

Lahiri presents some of the unavoidable issues like love, marriage, sex and economic lives of an Indian culture or family. However, she has presented some the more crucial issues like cultural hegemony, social oppression of women, diasporic crisis, cross-cultural alienation, economic emancipation of women, lesbian divergence, social castration, nihilism and traumatic memories along with isolation and alienation. The characters like Udayan, Subhash, Gauri, Bela and their attitude about life determines the surroundings and circumstances in which they live rather than their birth or place of birth leads the idea of alienation. The deep rooted cultural concept and British influence after colonialism creates complex narrative in the novel.

The research paper has not clearly presented to theory of postcolonialism, however it has concerned after the situation of colonialism in the Indian land. The people and concept about the colonial influence are the base of it. It is possible to interpret the concept of postcolonialism but the text has given focus to diasporic alienation. After the demise of British colonialism the colonized people saw the land of colonizer especially the Western land more civilized and left their land in the pursuit of happiness. But in this novel it presents that the alienation from family and the Indian culture has granted tragic situation to all the migrant characters.

In sum, reading the text it has found that the text clearly depicted the diasporic alienation in the characters. All the characters for the three generation are getting the situation of homelessness. Neither they can accept all the things of Indian land nor can they accept the culture of the Western. Neither they have got the home and society in their birth land nor could they create favourable situation the American world. They are urged to live in the imaginary homeland. The death of Udayan, the separation of Subhash and Gauri, the attitude and activities of Bela explicitly show the concept of alienation in foreign land. Everyone has got tragic and isolated life and there is no way out as well.

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