

# Alienation as Forced Identity: A Study of Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Namesake and Unaccustomed Earth'

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## Abstract

Diaspora is the fusion of several cultures. The widely dispersed populace feels a sense of cultural identity. People have relocated from the beginning of time in quest of better possibilities. They integrate outside of their home and absorb values from their country. Their minds split into two halves, which they must reunite. Many obstacles stand in their way, but they eventually affect the surroundings. When moving from one area to another, not only do eating habits, wardrobes, lifestyles, and languages change, but a person's whole behavioral pattern also transforms. Multiculturalism and hybridity provide a fresh avenue for transformation. Conversely, it causes isolation, a lack of roots, and homesickness. There is always a longing about "Where do they belong?" They feel distant despite the mixing of two cultures. Their hybridity becomes an integral part of who they are. The result is linguistic, social, psychological, and historical progress as they combine the finest elements of both cultures. They are bound to earthly reality by their affinity. While this transfusion happens, the following generation adds fresh perspectives and broadens its reach. The battle between anxiousness and a lack of roots never ends. With time, individuals tend to cultivate a more nuanced perspective on life, recognizing the value of striking a harmonious balance between tradition and modernity as the most optimal approach for the collective.

**Keywords:** ethnic criteria, sociocultural upbringing, behavioral transition, cultural belonging, alienation, diasporic literature

## 1. Introduction

The Ancient Greek word *ethnos*, means a people or group of people who share a common ancestor, which is the source of the word *ethnic* and the concept of ethnicity. Factors contributing to a person's ethnicity include a shared history, similar cultural mythology, and a connection to a historic area or a homeland. Their upbringing in society and culture prevents them from establishing roots. Disagreements are a natural byproduct of the human condition. Despite a persistent want to return home, individuals are often forced to make do with what they have at the time and make the most of their current situation, owing to a lack of options and resources. "No matter where you are, your first memories will always remain close to your heart. Even if you physically change locations, your mind will never find rest." "There are various scenarios in which immigrants encounter multiple obstacles and are thus compelled to adhere to local laws. In the context of Jhumpa Lahiri's works, 'The Namesake' and 'Unaccustomed Earth,' this proposed study investigates literary representations of the diaspora from the perspective of the Indian American experience. The central question addressed in this article is, 'How did immigrants experience isolation due to their identity and conflicts arising from their ethnicity?' It is believed that the findings of this article will shed light on the cultural divide between Indian and American societies and the process of hybridization that has occurred over time."

"It is impossible to transplant a tree that has been uprooted. A plant can be seeded in any location and will grow there if the conditions are right. This concept also applies to the offspring of immigrants. With this idea, I would like to discuss my thoughts on the Diaspora. The Greek term 'Diaspora' means 'to scatter about.' "A diaspora occurs when group members disperse from their homeland to other locations worldwide, taking their culture with them. Humanity's global migrations are an integral aspect of our past. Countries such as Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Malaysia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Canada have all welcomed new residents of Indian descent. Following the declaration of the Immigration and Nationality Act as unconstitutional in 1965, a significant number of individuals from India began migrating to the United States of America. These Indian immigrants often possessed high levels of education and professional success, occupying roles such as scientists, mathematicians, educators, and entrepreneurs. The United States of America serves as a host country for individuals originating from various regions

across the globe, and Indian immigrants have made noteworthy contributions to American society and culture” (Bressler, 1999).

Many factors, including environmental degradation, political and religious oppression, economic difficulty, and a desire for adventure, push people to leave their homeland. They leave their homes to get food or to seek better economic opportunities (Dubey, 2003). “The quality of living they have here is so much higher than that of their fellow Indians in the same socioeconomic bracket that they are hesitant to give it up... There is no question of returning to one’s own country for many whose children have grown up in the Western environment and cannot adapt to an “alien” way of life in their home nation” (Dubey, 2003).

Indian Americans are now a sizable minority in the United States. When immigrants from one culture strive to assimilate fully into another, cultural alienation occurs on both sides. Although they live in a multiethnic society, they maintain their ethnic identities. Cultural reproduction is important to them. Therefore, they attempt to blend elements of their native and host cultures in ways that suit their needs. The immigrants’ failure to assimilate into American society, even after decades of residence, is another problem. The need to return also brings with it feelings of isolation and loneliness. Internal conflict, confusion, and misery are heightened by the challenge of adopting the other culture. When a group experiences geographical, physical, and temporal upheaval but cannot undergo similar cultural, emotional, and psychological changes, a fractured sense of identity exists in a cultural void. Sadness like this may cause people to withdraw their sense of self, leaving them feeling alone even in large groups. This shift is reflected in works of diasporic literature, which show how the following generation has synced with the current situation and embraced a binary cultural norm.

Diaspora writers' literary works also explore themes such as the erosion of ancestral lineage, and cultural traditions, the blending of diverse cultures, the distress of feeling disconnected, and the experience of being alienated, estranged, and isolated. The negotiators have engaged in discussions with various life forms, both internal and external, thereby facilitating the expansion of their civilization's frontiers. Prominent literary figures such as Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Divakaruni, Meena Alexander, and Jhumpa Lahiri, among others, engage in discourse about the advantages and challenges associated with residing in a diasporic context. According to this perspective, Jhumpa Lahiri's literary works explore the experiences of Bengali migrants from the diaspora who have established themselves in the United States. "Jhumpa Lahiri, a highly esteemed author within the Indian diaspora, focuses her literary works on the challenges associated with living in a foreign country and adapting to a new cultural environment. She was born in the city of London to parents of Indian descent in 1967. However, her upbringing took place in Rhode Island, where she spent her formative years. She pursued higher education at both Barnard College and Boston University. Her initial collection of short stories, titled 'Interpreter of Maladies,' received prestigious accolades, including The New Yorker Debut of the Year, the Pulitzer Prize, and the PEN/Hemingway Award."

The novel *The Namesake* was recognized as one of the year's best books by several publications, including USA Today and Entertainment Weekly. It made the Los Angeles Times Book Prize shortlist and was named a New York Times Notable Book. She deftly depicts the transformation by focusing on the perspectives of women stuck between the old and the new, with dreams for the future and the past. These heroes take on new identities in the global community. “Uprooted from their hinterland and cluttered into an alien land, these diasporic women counter the problematics of belonging by reconfiguring their subjectivities” (Goswami & Kumari, 2023). Her struggle to find her place in the world as a diasporic individual is explored via a series of personal experiences. Homi K. Bhabha defines "hybrid" space, or "in-between space," as diasporic awareness where newer cultural norms combine with traditional ones to create something new (Bhabha, 1994). Additionally, this area allows women to reshape their identities and evaluate the validity and durability of the old sociocultural value system. In one of her interviews, she admits that her vacuity troubled her, saying, “It bothered me growing up, the feeling that there was no single place to which I fully belonged” (Mhatre, 2008).

In her book *Unaccustomed Earth*, she tells tales of relationships that explore their feelings of dislocation and alienation. It is hard to erase the past, a fact that interferes with the lives of diasporic authors. She elaborates further in an interview, stating, “The difficulties of exile, loneliness, a pervasive feeling of estrangement, and awareness of and desire for a lost world, in my opinion, are more obvious and unpleasant for immigrants than their children. Conversely, the issue for immigrant children with strong links to their nation of origin is that they do not feel either way. Anyhow, this has been my experience” (Mhatre, 2008). This demonstrates how, in her capacity as a diaspora writer, she invites the characters to evaluate their solitude and search inside. She also shows the mystery of the human being on a compass that precisely captures the inner self to collect the awareness matrix. Lahiri’s skill in articulating the innermost feelings of the human heart is evident in her shaping of identities.

The *Custom House* by Nathaniel Hawthorne is the source of the term *Unaccustomed Earth*. The book's opening passage, which expresses that human nature would thrive more when exposed to various situations, sheds insight into the Diaspora. This illustrates the idea of turning over a new leaf by suggesting that to move forward, one must let go of the past. This *Earth is Unaccustomed* suggests that one must grapple with unfamiliar circumstances. It grabs people's attention, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the diaspora and triggering cultural conflicts. The novel delves deep into the minds of individuals as they navigate the darker aspects of life and clash with different cultures. Their identities are thrown off balance, leaving them isolated and vulnerable. American culture appears to be trying to assert dominance over Indian culture, escalating the conflict and causing confusion for those caught in the middle. As the camera zooms in on their lives, some bask in glory, some discover newfound hope, and others settle old scores. They are overwhelmed by emotions, hindering their ability to merge cultures. This represents a significant development in the study of ethnic conflict and the diaspora *Unaccustomed Earth*, the story of people who were transferred and uprooted, is an example of how diaspora is more than just an occurrence; it is a whole migration process. The book's title is taken from a passage in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Custom House*, which suggests the process is continuous and useful. Earth is a right for everyone, yet no one is familiar with it. Distinct generations of various

species generate distinct flavors; just as various species of different species do. Thus, it can be shown that mixed cultures have thrived since the birth of mixed races. There is no need for anybody to relocate at this time. Since data reveal that many Indians have emigrated to nations like America, England, Australia, etc.

This research uniquely portrays the select novel of Jhumpa Lahiri under the purview of diasporic studies. Analyzing the novels "The Namesake" and "Unaccustomed Earth" provides a distinctive view of approaching Jhumpa Lahiri's novel as a search to uncover the identities of every character living in America amidst the cultural hyperbole. In particular, this study focuses on fulfilling the research gap by interpreting American culture and the traditions under the purview of Jumpha Lahiri's novels.

## 2. Methods

Jhumpa Lahiri's selected works are examined in this study using a qualitative methodology from a diasporic perspective. In this study, Jhumpa Lahiri's novels "The Namesake" and "Unaccustomed Earth" are chosen to examine the characters' search for identity amid the hybridized modern American lifestyle.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

Cultural Fusion, which forms the basis of Diaspora Narratives, deals with the concepts of Rejection, Hybridity, and Adaptation, etc., Considering these concepts, this research article takes Homi. K. Bhabha's concept of 'Hybridity'; and Sudesh Mishra's concepts of 'Rejection' and 'Adaptation' to locate the arguments.

Longingness for home and the unwillingness to accept the rootlessness are very common among the Diaspora community. Establishing this idea, Sudesh Mishra says that 'Home' signifies an end to itinerant wandering; in the putting down of roots, 'home' for masala diaspora is linked to the strategic espousal of rootlessness, the constant mantling, and dismantling of the self in makeshift landscapes. (Mishra, 2003).

Any individual, regardless of their settlement in the host land, may experience homesickness. However, the pain and agony of forgetting their roots, perhaps leading to rootlessness among diaspora people, cannot simply be termed as homesickness; it is the enduring longing for 'root' and 'self.' Before accepting this reality, this loneliness goes through three distinct phases:

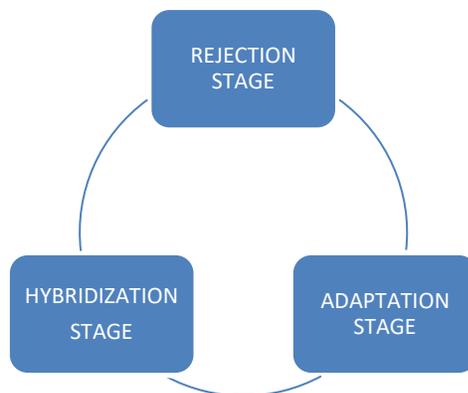


Figure 1. The Three Phases of Loneliness

### 3.1 The Rejection Stage

The 'rejection stage' is a condition when the immigrant rejects the new culture and maintains the old ways of doing things in the host land.

### 3.2 The Adaptation Stage

When it is decided that they can only live in this environment and make the necessary adjustments accordingly.

### 3.3 The Hybridization Stage

It is when one's characteristics are considered and adopted. Through these lenses, we can observe how cultures are either obliterated, reborn, or blended. Matthew Arnold argues, 'Culture is a study of perfection within the individual, a study that should elevate and aid in one's pursuit of beauty and intelligence through a fresh and free search.' This encourages an open and honest pursuit of aesthetic and intellectual excellence. However, according to Homi K. Bhabha's 'The Location of Culture' (1994), the colonial subject, the colonized person, becomes a psychological refugee when experiencing homesickness, caught between two warring cultures, and unhomeliness, a concept known as double consciousness. While both men and women may relate to feelings of melancholy, it is traditionally the role of women to pass on cultural traditions such as holidays, dishes, and clothing that imbue intangible emotions with meaning. Ethnic clothing,

jewelry, spices, and attire evoke nostalgic sentiments yet are often out of reach. Many Indian immigrant women opt for Western attire in the workplace, but they continue to wear their ethnic attire within their households and during communal gatherings to demonstrate their role as custodians of their religious and cultural customs (Kurien & Rayaprol, 2000).

There is no better or inferior when two cultures collide in writing. They coexist while each believes their culture is better and the Other's is inferior. Both dominant cultures are based on distinct worldviews and ethnic identities, and one is actively working to undermine the other. They have a low opinion of themselves since they have to adjust to new ideas that cause them to feel uneasy on a fundamental level and bring up old issues. Because of the outflow of their dominant culture from the inside, they lose their sense of who they are as a people. The cultural assets of the two groups may be best shown by comparing how they approach issues of language, gender, race, and society.

The works of migrants, exiles, and expatriates who have written their existential stories in various literary styles are included in diasporic literature. In this Literature, "the writer's concern is to project oneself as an ambassador and a refugee. Implicitly it includes the loss of inheritance and a sense of ability to project one's native culture outside the native context... The geographical shift, migration from the native place to the non-native has been the ground for traveler's sensibility reflecting the loss of home and identity, quest for belonging and the pain of isolation in the state of estrangement" (Goswami & Kumari, 2023).

#### 4. Discussion

There are significant differences across generations. The tales all began in America, although there are flashbacks to the Indian subcontinent. Although the psyche is Indian, the geography is American. Conflicts do not exist between characters; rather, they exist inside a character as a decision that manifests as chaos on an emotional rather than a physical level. Unaccustomed Earth enters the emotions and shatters sadness even if synchronization is being done for connection. No character seems happy, content, or joyous, and the tension between their competing feelings only furthers their search for themselves. By crafting short tales, she effectively captures the balance between Indian and American characters while surrounding each with a sense of self-importance. Unaccustomed Earth comprises a compilation of eight narratives that are divided into two distinct sections. The initial half consists of five individual stories, while the latter focuses on the romantic relationship between Hema and Kaushik. The distinct personalities of individuals within the Diaspora interconnect the narratives. Jhumpa Lahiri eloquently portrays the sense of isolation experienced by the protagonists as a consequence of their journey, evoking a profound and captivating sentiment.

Ruma, the protagonist of the short story 'Unaccustomed Earth,' grew up in a Bengali family but married an American and adopted American culture after her husband's death. She felt an emptiness when her mother died, and her father became distant. Since leaving her homeland, her mother had exemplified Bengali culture but found it impossible to fully adapt to her new environment. She remained faithful to her traditions and experienced homesickness. She once said, 'Growing up, moving to a foreign place for the sake of marriage' (11). In contrast to her mother, Ruma preferred wearing slacks and skirts over saris. She would stand out in the soggy northern setting in her mother's vividly colorful saris, her dime-sized isolates, and her diamonds. The dominance of English over Bengali has led to a transformation of language, prompting the protagonist to express her concern about her diminishing command of her native Bengali language (12). The mother often expressed concern about not having a designated heir for her belongings. Language, attire, cuisine, and even the aesthetics of a person's home can serve as potential markers of the diaspora."

Akash has a radically different mentality; he dismisses Bengali culture and is completely ignorant of it. Akash, who preferred macaroni and cheese to Indian cuisine, was forbidden to eat with his fingers as Ruma and her father did. When he was a youngster, he was given Indian cuisine, but now, as an adult, he eats out of boxes, highlighting the popularity of American culture. The disintegration of family values is evident in the case of Ruma's father, who chose to forsake his 80-year-old mother in favor of his siblings in India following the demise of his father. He stated, 'There was no question of moving the family back to India.' Men seem to find it easier to move on from their pasts than women, as indicated by the phrase, 'The isolation of living in an American suburb, something about which his wife complained' (29). Ruma adopted a foreign culture while absorbing her mother's cultural history, creating a hybrid. Her mother's passing signifies the abandonment of the homeland, but her inclusion in the narrative shows that, despite death, she lives on in remembrance. The narrative takes an unexpected turn when Ruma learns that her father is having an affair instead of mourning her mother, leaving her shocked and scared. As a hybrid, combining two cultures, she feels alone since she belongs nowhere. Ruma's father assigns her the task of farming the land, emphasizing the importance of their culture's heritage and core principles, as well as her desire to educate Akash about her origins."

The linguistic representation of Bengali culture can be observed in the second narrative, Hell-Heaven, where terms such as "Kaku," "Da," and "Boudi" are employed, serving as equivalents for uncle, brother, and sister-in-law, respectively. The Bengali married women's custom of wearing red and white bangles and vermilion in the middle of their hair strikes a nostalgic note. In this tale, the husband keeps the ancient customs as the husband advances, but the wife feels homesick when a visitor from her country enters their life. He is Pranab, who experiences homesickness similar to Aparna, thereby reviving a custom lost to modern culture. The story claims that music plays a significant role in a person being enthralled by their culture. The compilation of musical compositions from classic Hindi films featuring renowned actors Raj Kapoor, Nargis, and Dev Anand, effectively portrays the poignant experience of the community's return to their homeland.

The course of events unfolded according to the intended trajectory until Pranab developed romantic feelings for and subsequently entered into matrimony with Deborah, an individual of American nationality. This union was not aligned with the desires of Pranab's parents, who

harbored the expectation that their son would espouse a woman of Bengali origin. Pranab endeavored to familiarise Deborah with Bengali culture by utilizing the phrases "khub bhalo and aacha" and encouraging her to practice eating with her fingers instead of employing a fork. Each character in the story appears to experience a sense of isolation due to Pranab's deceitful actions, which extend to his parents, his wife Deborah, and Boudi Aparna. Furthermore, he lacked fidelity towards his family by forsaking his marital obligations and neglecting his two children, despite his admiration for married Bengali women. Aparna experienced profound emotional distress, leading her to engage in a suicide attempt. However, her neighbor intervened and prevented the tragic outcome. This intervention was motivated by Aparna's concealed affection for her neighbor, which had developed over time.

Given that they were born and reared in American society, Deborah and Pranab's twin daughters Srabani and Sabitri, known by the nicknames Bonny and Sara, hardly looked Bengali and solely spoke English. This implies that the younger generation seldom practices Bengali culture. Aparna also disapproves of wearing a salwar kameez. In this novella, the dislike of suburban living and loneliness are both emphasized.

In the two stories, Lahiri emphasizes the contrasts between Indian and Western women. In the first story, Ruma and Usha don't see their moms as role models and feel bad for them for choosing bad life partners. Lahiri has given all the ladies who are the daughters of immigrants a weird sense of exoticism. They ostensibly adopt American society, yet their hearts remain loyal to their cultural origins. The identification dilemma is even more baffling in the third narrative; the novel "A Choice of Accommodations" revolves around Amit, who grapples with feelings of detachment resulting from the fusion of two distinct cultures. Amit had limited communication with his acquaintances from Langford and had no nostalgic recollections of the institution. The young women were of American origin, except for Maya and Monika, who possessed Indian names. Amit's father wanted to travel to India to enhance his laser methodology. However, he ultimately decided to remain in America, as he did not experience any emotional or homesick sentiments. Amit secretly wed Megan, an American woman, since his parents wanted him to marry a Bengali woman, but the union was unhappy and hateful. His parents abandoned him in America so that they could pursue another degree in the medical sector, which is what caused him to leave. He feels alone since his wife is still preoccupied with her career. Megan never wore Amit's mother's jewelry because it was "too ornate for her taste." Thus, it can be observed that American culture dominates Indian culture. The breakdown of the ego results from the shaping of identities brought on by two cultures.

In the fourth tale, "Only Goodness", the comparison between the opposite siblings, Sudha and Rahul, resonates. Sudha demonstrates exceptional abilities and is successfully meeting her parents' aspirations. At the same time, Rahul exemplifies the challenges some immigrant children face who may experience emotional distress and psychological disconnection, potentially impacting their life choices. Both individuals have integrated American culture, although the extent to which they have done so differs. For example, Sudha enjoyed drinking, but her parents disapproved, so she did it covertly. They have begun celebrating Christmas, and Rahul now refers to Jesus instead of their god, demonstrating how much he has absorbed from American culture. The American houses of Sudha's friends were "crammed and piled with things, soft beds left unmade, toothpaste in their sinks," according to Sudha (UE 86). When renting a home in London in the 1960s, there was racial discrimination since half of the advertisements indicated white people exclusively. Mr Pal (a Bengali) let them dwell at that time. Her parents were suddenly sentenced to life as foreigners. Rahul and Sudha had opposite opinions on immigration; Rahul believed that his father fled India to become wealthy. Sudha saw immigration as a disease that "ebbed and flowed like cancer."

While her life was not about pleasure when she was young, their mother argues that America has too many freedoms and enjoyment. There are difficulties in India that are not present in America. Both of them wed Americans; Rahul preferred Elena, who was eight years his senior and the mother of a daughter, while Sudha chose Roger. Rahul's marriage was forbidden since it was secret, while Sudha's was permitted because Roger was born in India. The observation that all of Sudha's wedding attendees belonged to the Bengali community highlights the significant influence of Indian culture.

Additionally, it may be seen in the Anna prashan for Neel, Sudha's son, which serves as a ceremonial act. The worst example of Rahul's carelessness was when he left Neel in the bathtub and fell asleep after drinking. After being rescued by his parents, who arrived just as he was about to drown, Sudha felt repulsed and begged Rahul to go, leaving Neel alone.

In the sixth tale, a girl named Sangeeta is deceived by her fiance after rejecting many marriage offers. The first period of her isolation, in which she refused to adopt either her host countries or her own culture, ends. In the first section, it is clear that there are two degrees of diaspora: the first generation rejects new culture while maintaining the old, while the second generation rejects the old while assimilating the new. It may be seen in the language, eating habits, clothing, home decor, and cultural beliefs and standards that the characters tend to follow. This way of life mentality, where one is caught in a web of what to do and what not, sparks interethnic conflict. Age-old culture eventually seems weakened as a result of degradation with time.

Additionally, the younger generation finds that annoying. Due to this, family ties are also in jeopardy since Bengalis condemn Bengali-American marriages while Americans tend to adjust to them because of how freely they may mingle and marry in America. Most people like Indian food, such as rice, mishti, and pickles. Every narrative keeps the female protagonists front and center and assesses from the inside out for accepting or rejecting the traditional society. When exposed to various surroundings, males don't appear to change. The inner fight of the heart, which yearns to escape the present and return to the past, is characterized by recollections, a lack of roots, anxiety, and homesickness. However, grasping the current situation leads to confusion, creating a hyphenated existence.

The second part of the collection focuses on the lives of Hema and Kaushik. "Once in a Lifetime" delves into their childhood experiences, while "Year's End" explores their adolescence. Lastly, "Going Ashore" portrays their ultimate acceptance of their predetermined paths. Despite contrasting lifestyles, Hema and Kaushik have been brought together by fate. These two individuals exhibit contrasting viewpoints and are inexplicably attracted to each other, much like opposing magnetic poles. The initial narrative, titled "Once in a Lifetime," vividly portrays the traditional Indian garment known as the kurta, evoking a strong sense of Calcutta. The description includes "white pajamas with tapered legs, waist wide enough, a turquoise kurta and a black velvet vest embroidered with plastic pearls," the grandmother from Calcutta sent. They have left behind the lives they led in Calcutta and are now living new ones. Although the socioeconomic classes of Hema and Kaushik's families differed significantly, they shared the same standards in America, demonstrating that immigration forces people to start over from scratch and promotes social equality. Furthermore, once you change, there is no turning back since life is no longer the same.

Hema's mother, who strongly adhered to Bengali tradition, expressed her disapproval of a child sleeping alone, perceiving it as a practice commonly associated with American culture. She held the belief that wearing a skirt was considered impolite. In contrast, Kaushik's mother stands out due to her assimilation of American culture. After their return from Bombay, their lifestyle underwent a notable transformation, characterized by the adoption of smoking, consumption of wine, and a preference for wearing slacks. However, it is worth noting that Kaushik preferred Bombay, whereas Hema favored America. This divergence in opinion can be attributed to their respective upbringings, suggesting that as teenagers, they may still possess a certain level of immaturity. Even though Hema and Kaushik couldn't be more different, they eventually get emotionally connected after learning that Kaushik's mother has cancer. This is the only reason they left Bombay, and Hema feels the pinch of her mother's death more intensely than the idea of death itself. This beautiful image makes one want to escape the everyday sympathy-inducing stress to die calmly. Nobody in America is aware of this. Thus there will not be any nose-poking. In terms of how people live, Indian and American cultures are quite different. Kaushik is alone since news of his mother's passing left him feeling empty, and he can also not express his sorrow to others. His father took great care to ensure she would not be denied everything that was genuinely admirable.

"Years later, in 'Year's End,' the original story's setting has completely changed, and Kaushik's heart and surroundings both feel empty. Kaushik's father has just married another Bengali woman, which demoralizes the son, who still clings to his mother's memories. As she once said, 'I do not want all that beautiful material to become curtains.' Kaushik's mother expressed her love and loyalty to her homeland by returning her belongings to Calcutta before she passed away. Her blouses, saris, and dresses made their way back to India with her. Some of her wealth also went to the poor women who had worked as ayahs, cooks, or maids for my extended family in Calcutta. It is difficult for Kaushik to accept another woman as his mother when Chitra enters his life. Chitra is the biological parent of two offspring, namely Rupa and Piu. Over time, he gradually develops a positive attitude towards both women. Nevertheless, the author concludes that Chitra does not possess the same level of expertise in fashion as his mother. In contrast to Chitra's Bengali perspective, Kaushik is accustomed to his mother's contemporary outlook and the prevailing architectural aesthetic."

He does not like Indian cuisine, stainless steel utensils, or the mango and lime pickles that Chitra provided. He criticizes Chitra because he does not realize that acclimating to a new environment takes time. Rupa and Piu's mother instills fear in their heads, preventing them from exploring their environment on their own, in contrast to Kaushik, who has always been independent and uninhibited. Although he is trying to adapt to his new circumstances, painful memories from his past still haunt him to the point where he loses his temper with Rupa and Piu when they display photos of his mother. He then scolds them and sends them out of the house without his parents. This is a sign of his despair, which has persisted since he cannot confront his history. As someone who has experienced immigration, Kaushik can relate to its agony: "I was born here, but it was still hard, leaving and then coming back."

The concluding narrative in this section and the book is titled *Going Ashore*. It further isolates Hema and Kaushik, who are preoccupied with their lives. Despite having contradictory identities, they nevertheless attack. Hema had an uninteresting life. The individual in question solely exists without truly experiencing a fulfilling life, resulting in a sense of emotional void within her. However, this void is subsequently filled by the fortuitous encounter with Kaushik, restoring purpose and vitality to her existence. The encounter evokes a sense of renewed positivity and a burgeoning sense of anticipation for improved circumstances. However, the forces of destiny significantly contribute to their permanent separation, suggesting an inherent lack of compatibility despite their initial connection. Although Hema is married to Navin, her heart still sings to Kaushik, who is equally drawn to her. Kaushik has visited various locations, including a remote area. He is alone and alone among a sea of people. He subtly alludes to Hema being married to Navin while advising her not to. Following this, Kaushik and Hema part ways as he travels to the coast, where he meets with the tragedy that stops his chapter for good. Contrarily, Hema is ruled by Navin, her husband, who has no idea what's going on emotionally in her life. A new, smaller chasm has opened since Hema married a man she did not love the emotional equivalent of dying.

## 5. Conclusion

The narrative begins with the passing of a maternal figure who exerts significant influence. It concludes with the demise of a filial figure, establishing a seamless cycle that compels readers to contemplate the prevailing notion that Death ultimately prevails over life. Notably, authors who choose paths and embark on journeys serve as spokespersons and control their destinies. They may blend, unite, or absorb alien cultures, but the result is often ineffectual. The diaspora's transformations make the narrative more intriguing. Each story's conclusion keeps the audience spellbound and rapt until the last word, a masterstroke. These characters are, first and foremost, Native Americans, or perhaps they never were. They are divided by the conflict between two civilizations. Lahiri excels in portraying the

overwhelming sense of otherness in a foreign society. They cannot fully adapt to American culture or feel at home with their parents' Indian ideas. The cultural divide seems insurmountable. In Lahiri's world, parents want their children to succeed financially while honoring their heritage and roots. However, their journeys across the American wilderness give them the impression that they are from another planet. In this world, people's identities shift, vanish, and resurface as they all grapple with the quest to be themselves. The diaspora finds itself in cultural limbo as it navigates between two distinct societies unlikely to completely amalgamate due to the geographical positioning of the individuals involved. This predicament arises from the juxtaposition of India's traditional heritage and America's progressive ethos.

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#### **Authors contributions**

B. Lavanya conceptualized and developed the arguments presented in the article and wrote the manuscript. Dr.R.Udhayakumar contributed to the literature review, validation of the arguments presented, provided critical insights and ensured the overall clarity of the paper. Dr. M.Vinoth Kumar contributed to the development of the arguments, provided critical insights, edit and revision of the paper. Dr.M.Ponmuthuramalingam contributed to the edit and revision of the paper. Dr.R. Uthra contributed to the edit and revision of the paper.

We, authors, discussed the research findings, contributed to the interpretation of the results, reviews and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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