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A Postcolonial Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's “*Unaccustomed Earth*” through the Lens of Homi Bhabha

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Dedication

I dedicate my work to my family and many friends.

My loving parents, **Aicha** and **Abdelaziz Benaziza**, for their never-ending love and constant support.

My One and only brother Youssouf, for his continued encouragement and his little son Moutasimbillah.

To my kind and loving Sisters, Rokia, Amina, and Bouchra.

To my Grandparents, Uncles, Aunts and all the family “**Benaziza**”

I also dedicate this work and give special thanks to my besties: Noumidia, Douaa, Hadjer, Amira, Hawaa and Imen for being there for me, every time I needed moral support or help in the Writing process. You were truly my strength.

To my friends, from primary school to University.

Also, to My Teachers from first year to Master Degree who have also supported me. I will always appreciate all what they have done.

Declaration

I, undersigned, do hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “A Postcolonial Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri’s “Unaccustomed Earth” through the Lens of Homi Bhabha” has been carried out by me as a partial fulfillment for the Master’s degree in English literature and civilization under the guidance and supervision of Ms. HAMED Halima, Faculty of Letters and Languages, English Language Division, Mohamed KHIDER University of BISKRA, ALGERIA.

I further declare that the interpretations put forth in this thesis are based on my own readings, understanding and examination of the original texts. The reported findings that I have made use of are duly acknowledged at the respective place. Also, I declare that this work is not published anywhere in any form.

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Who has guided me to this Achievement.

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Abstract

Many postcolonial immigrant writers faced several problems during their experience of immigration. One of them Jhumpa Lahiri in her second collection of short stories “Unaccustomed Earth”, she paints a powerful picture of life in the Indian American Diaspora. The present Research intend to study the problems that faced postcolonial immigrants in Jhumpa Lahiri “Unaccustomed Earth” through the lens of Homi Bhabha. The focus of the research is to discuss postcolonialism and its study of Diaspora literature, and would culturally hybrid immigrants find home and solution to their problems or will be hybrid, unhomed, and liminal forever? Moreover, the research will depend on Postcolonialism approach focusing mainly on Homi Bhabha’s notions: hybridity, unhomeliness, liminality and mimicry.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, Diaspora Literature, Jhumpa Lahiri, Homi Bhabha’ notions of: unhomeliness’, ‘liminality’, ‘hybridity’, and ‘mimicry’.

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General Introduction

“Human nature will not flourish, any more than a potato, if it be planted and replanted, for too long a series of generations, in the same worn-out soil. My children have had other birthplaces, and, so far as their fortunes may be within my control, shall strike their roots into unaccustomed earth”.

Nathaniel Hawthorne “The Custom-House”

Postcolonial writers, especially Indian-born writers have placed issues connected to immigration at the center of their narratives, because of their problems and experiences from these issues. In order to show what the three immigrant’s generation faced at that time. One of these writers is "Jhumpa Lahiri" that drew attention to the immigration experience.

From a postcolonial perspective, treating the issues of colonial history and the current effect of colonial past on native cultures help bridge the gap between the experiences of these writers and their native land’s culture ,in order to stand in opposition to one single dominant version. A theorist like Homi Bhabha examines and analyzes the suppressed voices of the immigrants ‘writers, using the concepts of cultural hybridity, Mimicry, Unhomeliness and liminality.

This dissertation intends to tackle the different problems that face immigrants away from their homeland’s culture, through the lens of Homi Bhabha focusing mainly on his notions: “culture hybrid”, “unhomeliness”, “liminality” and “mimicry”.

The issues discussed in this dissertation seek to prove the problems that faced immigrants which reflect on their writings. Jhumpa Lahiri, as one of the postcolonial writers who dealt in their writings

with such problems that face immigrants, through the analysis of her novel “Unaccustomed Earth». The latter is a collection of short stories entitled as follows: “Unaccustomed Earth,” “Hell-heaven,” “A Choice of Accommodations,” “Only Goodness,” “Nobody’s Business,” and “Hema and Kaushik”’.

Theoretically speaking, the novel is analyzed through the lens of Homi Bhabha, by considering him one of the famous theorists who try to identify and examine immigrants’ problems through his theory Cultural Hybridity, as well as its three main chosen concepts: Liminality; Unhomeliness and Mimicry. In her novel *Unaccustomed Earth*, Lahiri exposes different problems such as gender boundaries in America and some family issues mainly originated from the Bengali heritage of the families. She described her Bengali characters as diasporic souls, divided between the culture of their past or of the *homeland origins* and heir new one acquired in *the host country*. She also exposed the conflicts between generations, but also notes the humor of the many contradictions in living two cultures at the same time.

This dissertation will intend to tackle the different problems that faced immigrants away from their homeland’s culture through the lens of Homi Bhabha’s notions on the light of the following questions:

- How the theorists like “Homi bhabha” examine and identify the immigrant’s problems in Jhumpa Lahiri’s “Unaccustomed Earth”?
- Do the problems of the immigrants’ writers reflect on their writings?
- What would be the fate of postcolonial hybrid immigrants who are immersed in two cultures? Would they find home when they mimic the culture of the host country or keep homeless forever?

In regard to the aims of the dissertation, it focuses on the study of problems that faced Postcolonial immigrants in Jhumpa Lahiri's "Unaccustomed Earth" through the lens of Homi Bhabha. Besides, this study relies on the Postcolonial approach focusing mainly on Homi Bhabha's theory of Cultural Hybridity, particularly, on its notions: Culture hybridity, Unhomeliness, Liminality and Mimicry, for being able to answer the research questions.

Moreover, the data collection of this study is achieved throughout a profound reading and examination of the available relevant primary and secondary sources, including books, articles and dissertations. The citation of these sources relies on the eighth edition of the MLA style.

This study is divided into three chapters. Chapter one presents the theoretical framework; it introduces Postcolonial Literature, Diaspora and the Concepts applied in the novel with a deep emphasis on their background and principles. Whereas, the second chapter focuses on Homi Bhabha's Concepts: Unhomeliness, liminality in Jhumpa Lahiri's "Unaccustomed Earth" specifically on the second part of the novel "Hema and Kaushik" and the fourth story of the first part "Only Goodness". The research started investigating from the second part of the novel because the first two concepts "Unhomeliness" and "Liminality" are mainly included there.

Furthermore, the third chapter focuses on the analysis of Jhumpa Lahiri's "Unaccustomed Earth" on the light of Homi Bhabha's concepts: Hybridity and Mimicry, yet, the focus is primarily on the following three stories: 'Unaccustomed Earth', 'Hell-Heaven' and 'Only Goodness'. This dissertation concludes with the fact that postcolonial immigrants are diasporic souls and will never find solution to their limitless problems, even if they tried to return back home. In short, they will never resolute, they will be considered hybrid, unhomed, and luminal or inbetween forever, as Bhabha states: I am "neither the one,..... nor the other, but something besides"

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework: Postcolonial Literature and Diaspora

1.1. Introduction

This chapter is devoted to tackle the problems related to the term diaspora from the postcolonial theoretical point of view. Diaspora literature is a new area of study that has recently been added to postcolonial studies, and seems to be avoided due to its inherent problems. As an adjective related to this phenomenon, Transnationalism growing in use since it extends to migrant, diasporic and refugee communities not directly emerging from the colonial experience, while the term 'cosmopolitanism' is increasingly used in postcolonial discourse. Postcolonialism and its prominent theorists have contributed to a great extent to migration literature by identifying a framework of features and principles either thematically or stylistically for it. The inherent characteristic of this literature, namely its primary focus on the marginal group of every society here the migrants brings it under the shadow of the postcolonial theory. The two prominent features of postcolonialism are Edward Said and Homi Bhabha who besides others have made a lot of contributions to shape the migration literature principles. The most significant characteristic of this literature is taken from Bhabha's "hybridity" and emphasizes the fact that the migrant individual is appreciated in the present world.

1.2. Postcolonial literature: An Overview

The term Post-colonialism, being an academic new field, is an interdisciplinary movement that attempts to reshape the past, the present and the future of those colonized countries. While its point of departure was analyzing the lost identities, labours, languages.... etc. and making a counter attack from the academic perspective, it moved beyond the point of departure and turned out to be a rich and multilateral interdisciplinary area under which one can probe into many concepts and issues with new approaches and views. For example, the concept of nationalism, race, identity, and language, marginality are all being delved into, each time decode new things through postcolonial academic studies.

If we wish to categorize Post-colonialism in terms of the issues it preoccupies, we shall distinguish that it has an affiliation with many disciplinary branches ranging from philosophy, sociology, psychology (with its sub branches), international affairs, economy, history...etc. It is for this particular reason that it is called as a new 'interdisciplinary' field in the academic surroundings. Some academicians even further the argument and say that Postcolonialism rather than being a separate discipline per se it, by giving reference to many disciplines and dealing with the inherent problems of the disciplines, 'disciplines the disciplines' Given its desire and attempt to reveal the reality, question the unquestionable, we can declare that Postcolonialism is an inevitable movement in accord with Post-modern era. (Türkmen, 188).

In addition to Postcolonial theory which is an area within literary theory that has developed over the space of the last half century. Postcolonial theory was initially developed by certain influential critics, amongst them Franz Fanon and Edward Said. One of the prominent aims of these critics was to challenge a literary canon that was made by and for the literary authorities in England, and to argue in favor of reading and teaching works by authors from the postcolonial world. It means that, postcolonial theory has occasionally urged postcolonial authors to write with an eye on resisting

rather than complying with the established literature of the former colonial power. Fanon and Said also introduced the idea of presenting colonizer and colonized in terms of *Self* and *Other*, or Occidental and Oriental.

Increasingly, postcolonial theory has become centered on questions of identity. Diasporic identities emerge as a product of emigration and resettlement, though this could entail identity as “subaltern” to the former colonial powers. (Oltedal, 14-15).

1.3. What is Diaspora literature?

The concept of Diaspora has been derived from the Greek word meaning “to scatter” (Laxmiprasad, 99). Moreover, the word is associated with the dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel. Hence, the diaspora belongs to a scattered population with a common origin in a smaller geographical area. It means migration of a specific population across cultural domain where the uprooted people feel nostalgic about their homeland. It does not mean that they have no home; but having home on an alien land becomes a means of suffering for them. Therefore, they see and feel the difference of living at home and abroad.

The simple and single definition of the term is not possible, because the concerned field of diaspora is changing its paradigms with respect to the changing modes of technologies in the digital age. Scholars must not think that diaspora has been lost due to the invented means of super technology. On the contrary, the basic assumptions have been changed slightly; yet there is a lot of scope to study it again. Now, the people’s sufferings have some additional tools and means by which they provide much scope in the field of research. This scope strikes with traditional structure of Diaspora changing it into new dimensions and forms. (Laxmiprasad, 99).

Diaspora is a “process of people migrating frequently from one place to another for various reasons. Migrations have resulted in building up a diasporic community which shares a commonsense of rootlessness, pain and agony of homelessness in new land. Cultural interactions paved the way to establish multi-cultural societies. The policy of multi culturist is often contrasted with the concept of assimilation and social integration. All diasporic discourses are shaded by the ideology of postcolonialism”. (Laxmiprasad,99).

Indian writing exists in the form of essays, short stories, novels and poetry. It is definitely in abundance. Most of the writings are originally written in one’s own mother tongue or native language. Indian writing in English is mostly dependent upon the translation of the original works and texts.

The term Indian diasporic writing can be explained by understanding the meaning of the term ‘diaspora’. “Diaspora is defined as a group of people who come from a particular nation or whose ancestors come from that particular nation, but who now live in other parts of the world. Indian Diasporic writings are divided into two forms: writings emerging from forced migration and writings emerging from voluntary migration.” (Johnson, 2019) forced migration takes place, when the writers are forced to move out of the country due to various reasons. Voluntary migration, however, occurs when Indian writers voluntarily choose to move out of India to settle abroad. These divisions, therefore, harbor the Indian writers who then, either criticize the country or praise it.

It basically puts forth the idea of how exile, in the form of migration, has led to emergence of a large number of writers who have contributed to the progress of the English Literature. The major contributors are writers like Salman Rushdie and V.S. Naipaul, who were accepted as world citizens. Indian-English writers like Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Shashi Tharoor, Amita v Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Sunetra Gupta, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Hari Kunzru have

established themselves as fine writers in the tradition of the Indian Diasporic writing.(Johnson, 2019).

The list of Diaspora writers is very lengthy and elaborative. The roots of Diaspora spreading from time to time had been representing their home land culture and their nostalgia through their works. The readers of such literature infrequently experience different and relatively hateful trends of life in alien lands. At times, they even identify themselves with protagonists and other influential characters in the works. The fundamental element and innate soul in ordinary Indian families under no circumstances is hidden by almost all writers. The permanent attachment to one's ground and roots is the common under current in all works. (Lakshmi, 44).

1.4. Homi Bhabha and his contributions to the Postcolonial thought

Homi K. Bhabha was born in Mumbai in a family of Parsi background. Besides having a successful career as a Harvard professor and as a writer of two influential books *The Location of Culture* and *Nation and Narrations*, he has published widely in journals including *New Formations*, *October*, *Oxford Literary Review* and *Screen*. He sits on the editorial board of amongst others, *October*, *Critical Inquiry*, and *New Formations*, and is a regular contributor to *Artforum*. He is currently at work on *A Measure of Dwelling*, a theory of vernacular cosmopolitanism forthcoming from Harvard University Press and *The Right to Narrate*, forthcoming from Columbia University Press.(Rahaman,2010)

Homi K. Bhabha is a well-acknowledged man of learning in cultural studies and theories concerning colonialism and postcolonialism. His study of oppressions, traumatic colonial feelings, and impact of other powerful factors which produce another cultures, creeds, habits and civilizations are deeply influenced by Foucault, Edward W Said, Jacques Derrida, Lacan and Sartre. His

theoretical postulations are based on fundamental but experimental concepts of liminality, hybridity, mimicry and “ambivalence which is a stimulant of cultural productivity”.

On the basis of culture as *liminal*, *hybrid*, *mimicry*, and *ambivalent* subject of society, state and nation, he provides interesting analyses of novelists such as Morrison, Gordimer, Walcott, Rushdie and Conrad, as well as analyses of documents and archives from the Indian Rebellion, discussions of nineteenth-century colonial history, Third World cinema, and post-modern space; all the while demonstrating an uncanny ease with the mobilization of a vast intellectual collection of ideas and theorists such as Jameson, Fanon, Derrida and Lacan, in a sophisticated and continued exploration of nationhood, national identity and social agency. Key concepts of Bhabha are encapsulated in four words: liminal, hybrid, mimicry, and ambivalent. They “describe ways in which colonized peoples have resisted the power of the colonizer, a power that is never as secure as it seems to be... Instead of seeing colonialism as something locked in the past, Bhabha shows how its histories and cultures constantly intrude on the present, demanding that we transform our understanding of cross-cultural relations. The authority of dominant nations and ideas is never as complete as it seems, because it is always marked by anxiety, something that enables the dominated to fight back. To demonstrate this anxiety, Bhabha looks back to the histories of colonialism”. (Hudart, 1).

His work remains an essential reference for anyone interested in the hybrid cultural perspectives associated with colonialism and globalization. Drawing on many demanding theorists and covering a range of histories and cultures, Bhabha’s work elaborates a series of concepts that capture the ways the colonized resisted the authority of the colonizer, an authority that was from the start ambivalent and anxious. However, his discussion of examples from the colonial archive is not only of historical relevance.

The ambivalence he identifies also helps us analyze contemporary developments, which see increasingly complex globalized networks alongside violently declared identities that face off

against each other. Bhabha's work illuminates the ways that colonialism does not remain locked in the past, and is not over and done with, despite the important histories and victories of anti-colonialism. Instead, to use a Freudian idiom found throughout Bhabha's work, colonialism makes a supernatural return in the present. Indeed, we should probably continue to describe our context as the colonial present. Yet, that implies not only ongoing irregular relations, but also the continuation of half a millennium of resistance, negotiation, and cultural translation.

Bhabha's work continues to engage with examples of such complexities, and demands that we translate it still further to engage with examples beyond its scope. Although his work over the last two decades has been occasional and superficially unsystematic, Bhabha's influence has grown far beyond postcolonial literary and cultural studies. (Huddart, 1).

1.4.1. The Concept of Un-homeliness

According to Bhabha 'home' is perceived to be a place of stable identity where one has been and is understood. In nation and cultures that are experiencing oppression, home is linked to positive version of the past. It means a life before oppression. In other words, 'home' is tied to freedom. Bhabha develops the notion of unhomely by referring to some work of postcolonial literature that problematize the idea of the real and stable 'home'.

Bhabha emphasizes on instability of 'home' and of the 'past'. The word 'unhomely' is the translation of 'unheimlich' which is the opposite of 'heimlich'. Bhabha argues that the place between the 'heimlich' (homely) and 'unheimlich' (unhomely) is a postcolonial place, a space in which one can see how a person's identity is a mixture of what is unfamiliar or foreign and what is familiar. This idea echoes the work of Sigmund Freud. To Freud as the subconscious creeps and moves into the conscious, it creates an uncanny moment. It is the same when the world creeps into the home and shakes an identity that was thought to be stable and secure. (Parvaneh, 2016).

This shock of recognition is commonly considered to be negative. Alienation is a very painful experience which one thinks to be familiar, but it is not. Bhabha suggests that the alienation which a person experiences in the 'unhomely' moment, may also present an opportunity to reevaluate one's identity. Bhabha talks about his own origins and does not claim a stable and fixed identity. He suggests that Parsis have transformational experiences, and hybrid identity.

I have lived that moment of scattering of the people that in other times
And other places, in the nations of others, becomes a time of gathering.
Gathering of exiles and émigrés and refugees; gathering on the edge of
Foreign cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or
Or Cafes city centers; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues
Or in the uncanny fluency of another's language, (LC, 139)

1.4.2. The Concept of liminality

Liminality, derived (from the Latin word *līmen*, meaning "a threshold") , is another key to Bhabha's postulations.(Rahaman, 2010) It is, literally, the quality of the second stage of a ritual in the theories of Arnold van Genne, Victor Turner, and others. In these theories, a ritual, especially a rite of passage involves some change to the participants, especially their social status. Turner describes liminality as the transitional state between two phases; individuals were "betwixt and between": they did not belong to the society that they previously were a part of and they were not yet reincorporated into that society. Liminality is a *limbo*, an ambiguous period characterized by humility, seclusion, tests, sexual ambiguity, and *communitas*⁽¹⁾. Bhabha thinks this state of cultural being as productive and cause of forthcoming hybrid generation of culture.

¹Which is defined as an unstructured community where all members are equal.

He has different idea about liminality, though he seemed to be impressed by Turner. Liminality, for him, is one of the factors of amoebic re-productivity of culture itself. As a practitioner of cultural studies one should try to find examples of "liminality" (borders, thresholds, and in-betweenness) in literature in order to assess the limitations and expediences of Bhabha's conceptual model. (Rahaman, 2010).

1.4.3. The Concept of Hybridity

The term 'hybridity' has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K. Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities. Bhabha contends that "all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation'" (37). Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which for Bhabha makes the claim to a hierarchical 'purity' of cultures untenable. For him, the recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity may help us to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favor of the recognition of an authorizing hybridity within which cultural difference may operate: "It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory . . . may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity"(Bhabha, 38).

It is the 'in-between' space that carries the load and meaning of culture, and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important. Hybridity has frequently been used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural 'exchange'. This use of the term has been widely criticized, since it usually implies negating and neglecting the imbalance and inequality of the power relations it references. By stressing the transformative cultural, linguistic and political impacts on both the

colonized and the colonizer, it has been regarded as replicating assimilationist policies by masking or 'whitewashing' cultural differences. (Mambrol, 2016).

Bhabha's view of representation takes hybridity as a starting point. He analyzes different types of hybridizations produced by various postcolonial societies. In a colonial context, cultural hybridity is produced at the moment of the colonial encounter, when self and other are inseparable from mutual contamination by each other. The colonial encounter is therefore embedded a priori in power relations, and requires constant awareness of the limits and possibilities of representation. Bhabha transforms Bakhtin's definition of the hybrid into an active moment of challenge and resistance to the dominant cultural power. He sees hybridity as a "sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities" (Bhabha, 112), and as a moment in which the discourse of colonial authority loses its univocal claim to meaning. In Bhabha's words: "Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other "denied" knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority its rules of recognition" (114). Hybridity is, thus, not simply a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures in a dialectical play of "recognition," and cannot be discussed as an issue of cultural relativism.

Bhabha argues that an important change of perspective occurs when the "effect of colonial power is seen to be the production of hybridization rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions" (Bhabha, 112). Hybridity therefore describes a process in which the single voice of colonial authority undermines the operation of colonial power by inscribing and disclosing the trace of the other so that it reveals itself as double-voiced (Young, 23). Bhabha's concept of hybridity can thus be viewed as radically varied and discontinuous, a dialectical articulation that involves a new perspective of cultural representation. Cultural difference is no longer seen as the source of conflict, but as the effect of discriminatory practices; the

production of cultured differentiation becomes a sign of authority. This changes the value of difference and recognition (Bhabha, 114).

Under Bhabha's concept of hybridity, cultural dimensions, such as space and time, can no longer be understood as being similar or self-contained. Cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic as in the relation "self-other" (1994,36), rather there is a *Third Space*, which can neither be reduced to the self nor the other, neither to the First nor to the Third World, neither to the master nor to the slave. Meaning is produced beyond cultural borders and is principally located in the Third Space, a sort of "in-between space" located between existing referential systems and antagonisms. (Wolf, 127-145).

1.4.4. The concept of mimicry

Mimicry has often been an overt goal of imperial policy. For instance, Lord Macaulay's 1835 Minute to Parliament derided Oriental learning, and advocated the reproduction of English art and learning in India (most strategically through the teaching of English literature). However, the method by which this mimicry was to be achieved indicated the underlying weakness of imperialism. Macaulay suggested that the riches of European learning should be imparted by 'a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in tastes, opinions, in morals, and in intellect' (Macaulay, 18-35). In other words, not only was the mimicry of European learning to be hybridized and therefore ambivalent, but Macaulay seems to suggest that imperial discourse is compelled to make it so in order for it to work.

The term mimicry has been crucial in Homi Bhabha's view of the ambivalence of colonial discourse. For him, the consequence of suggestions like Macaulay's is that mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as 'almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha, 86). The copying of the colonizing culture, behavior, manners and values by the colonized contains both

mockery and a certain 'menace', 'so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace' (86).

Mimicry reveals the limitation in the authority of colonial discourse, almost as though colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction. The line of descent of the 'mimic man' that emerges in Macaulay's writing, claims Bhabha, can be traced through the works of Kipling, Forster, Orwell and Naipaul, and is the effect of 'a flawed colonial mimesis in which to be Anglicized is emphatically not to be English' (87).

1.5. Conclusion

To conclude, postcolonialism, as one of the dominant fields of cultural studies, initially deals with the interactions between colonizers and colonized. Although, as time goes by, colonialization stopped, its negative effects start to appear on the surface creating many problems. These problems pushed many Indian women writers who live in the USA, Canada, Britain and other parts of the globe; some are fresh immigrants, while others are second generation immigrants, such as Jhumpa Lahiri, to tackle such issues in their writings. These expatriate writers pen about their footing in cross cultural contrast. Therefore, some postcolonial theorists start to examine and study immigrants and their cultural products on the light of postcolonialism notions. One of these theorists was Homi K. Bhabha who developed a set of challenging concepts that become central to postcolonial theory: liminality, hybridity, unhomeliness, and mimicry. Therefore, through this study, Lahiri's novel will be interpreted and analyzed from the viewpoint of Homi Bhabha's concepts to solve the research problem.

Chapter Two

“Unhomeliness” and “liminality” in “*Unaccustomed Earth*”

2.1. Introduction

Unaccustomed Earth is Jhumpa Lahiri's first collection of short stories which is primarily concerned with the cultural predicament of the second-generation immigrants in the United States. Drawing on her own experiences as a second generation immigrant, the author has artistically managed to show how transferring a successful identity for this "neo-class immigrants" could be as challenging as that of their predecessors, even though they are born and grow up in foreign soil. Theorists of cultural studies began to study and examine immigrants' common and collective beliefs, social institutions, class, and racial behaviors related to their relevant historical context, including social, political, and economic issues, one of these theorists Homi Bhabha who contributes a lot to postcolonialism and diaspora literature.

2.2. Unhomeliness in “Hema and Kaushik” story

First of all, what already mentioned in the first chapter, as Bhabha himself once pointed out, that “to be unhomed is not to be homeless” (Bhabha ,13). According to him, lack of identity manifests itself in diverse forms, one of which is unhomeliness; to experience such a felling involves both dislocation of a migrant, as a result of diaspora, and the unfamiliarity of recognizing oneself in this moment of dislocation. In Bhabha’s opinion, unhomeliness is felt when “another world becomes visible,” giving the diasporic subject “the shock of recognition” (Bhabha, 141). As

Bhabha defines it, unhomeliness is “the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations” (Bhabha, 13). Thus, Bhabha sees the postcolonial subject as displaced, dislocated, and hybrid. (Omidvar, 2-3).

It seems that the choice of the title of the stories is intentionally concerned with the theme of homeliness and unhomeliness. Postcolonial subjects regularly move from one to the other until they arrive or fail to arrive at a compromise. This movement is materialized in different ways for different characters. unhomeliness is first and foremost evident in the structure of the narrative as it is divided in the three short stories: "Once in a Lifetime", "Year's End" and "Going Ashore". For Hema, it is a movement from home to the unhomely and back to a compromised stability. As for Kaushik, it seems that he could not assimilate hybridity or compromise. He endeavors to assimilate to the Americans, but in vain. Of course, other important elements in the life of these two characters determine the outcome of their behavior, such as family upbringing, their place at home (Calcutta for Hema and Bombay for Kaushik) and the nature of their parents (especially the mother as they are very vital in fostering children's aspirations). More often the particular interest of a character is indicative of his or her tendency, e.g. photography and travel for Kaushik and history and tradition for Hema. (Moosavinia, Sharify, June 2018).

2.2.1. Unhomeliness in Hema and Kaushik's "Once in a Lifetime"

Unlike other second-generation-immigrant characters in Lahiri's works, whose in-betweenness remains psychological and emotional, Kaushik literally oscillates between his American and Indian identities by travelling back and forth between the US and India. The narrator in "Once in a Lifetime" tells us that Kaushik is born in Cambridge; that his parents were among the

seasoned immigrants who left India in 1962, before the laws welcoming foreign Students changed. However, by the time Kaushik turns nine; his father is offered a good position in Bombay so they decide to leave the US. Seven years later, however, Kaushik's father calls his immigrant friends to say that they are returning to Massachusetts for he has a new job there. He asks the narrator's parents if they could stay at their place until he finds a proper house for his family. When Kaushik returns to the United States, the host's daughter, Hema, is bewildered by his identity: "I did not know what to make of you" (Lahiri, 240). Because Kaushik has lived in India, she associates him more with her parents than with herself. But she could not help noticing that he is not like her cousins in Calcutta, "who seemed so innocent and obedient when I visited them, asking questions about my life in America as if it were the moon, astonished by every detail. "You were not curious about me in the least" (240).

She also observes that Kaushik consistently speaks English even when someone addresses him in Indian: "a faint accent present in your English, but not the strong accent our parents shared" (232). Kaushik's father once proudly remarks that "even in Bombay we managed to raise a typical American teenager" (238). As the narrative progresses, Hema notices that Kaushik is in the house as little time as possible, going for a walk in the cold weather through the woods and along the streets where he is the only pedestrian. She spots him once while she is on the school bus, "shocked at how far you'd gone" (Lahiri, 243). Hema accompanies him on one of these excursions where he begins to uncover the tombstones of a family. It is at this death spot that Kaushik eventually tells Hema the reason for their return to the US: that his mother is dying from breast cancer. (Moosavinia and Sharify, 124-125).

2.2.2. Unhomeliness in Hema and Kaushik's "Year's End"

Kaushik is the symbol of what Bhabha calls an unhomely subject, not only because he is cut across two home/homelands, but also because he is stuck in between the past and the present .While displaced in both and belonging in neither. In "Year's End", we learn that his mother is already dead and his father has been to India to marry an Indian widow.

Throughout this story, the reader notices a contrast between Kaushik's and his father's attitudes towards their present, which is shown not only by their adjustment to the host nation but also their reactions to the past. While the father seeks to put his traumatic past behind and negotiate a space for himself in his new homeland, Kaushik is unable to come to terms with either his past or present. Instead, he chooses to run away from both. When we meet Kaushik in "Year's End", he is a college student and is going home to spend the Christmas vacation with his father's new family, including his stepmother and two stepsisters. On his way, he tries to imagine his father's new household because as far as he could remember, after his mother's death, his father decides to get rid of everything that reminds him of her. First, he removes all her photographs from the frames and albums and puts them in a shoebox. He also gives away her clothes, bags, cosmetics and colognes. He even disposes of his old car simply because his wife sat in it many times.

Kaushik also observes that his father has given up lots of his old habits since his mother's death: he no longer drinks his late wife's favorite liquor and has stopped writing poetry. Yet, perhaps his new marriage is the best indicator of Kaushik's father's sign of adjustment. The fact that he chooses to marry an Indian woman and to bring her to the United States signifies this diasporic subject's willingness to negotiate an in-between space for himself: i.e. an Indian home in an American homeland. (Moosavinia and Sharify, 125-126).

Unlike his father, Kaushik is unable to adjust himself to the present. In other words, the situation of in-betweenness seems too confusing for this dislocated subject to bear. That is why, as this study will show, he chooses to remain psycho-physically unhomey. In "Year's End", we learn that Kaushik studies in a college that is very far away from his father's house and when he eventually comes home for a short visit, feels repulsed by the presence of his stepmother: "it had upset me, throughout the day, to watch her handle the cutlery, the tea kettle, at one point to hold the telephone and speak with my father to learn that he was on his way home" (279). He wishes that his father had removed all his mother's signs: "When my father had tried to remove the signs of my mother from the house I blamed him for being excessive, but now I blamed him for not having done enough" (279). He tries to ignore his family as far as possible, excusing himself from every trip and entertainment: for Christmas, his father arranges for a family trip to Disney World, but Kaushik refuses to accompany them, making up something about there being a winter session at his college.

2.2.3. Unhomeliness in Hema and Kaushik's "Going Ashore"

Lahiri mentions in an interview that her works are influenced by Hawthorne's, particularly his *Marble Faun*: "I was doing a lot of rereading when I was working on those stories, and I read and reread all of the Hawthorne I had not read. [...] In fact the [...] last story in the book, "Going Ashore" is partly set in Rome [and] was inspired by my reading the *Marble Faun*" (Bilbro 386). She has already foregrounded Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* in the title and epigraph of her collection: "I felt that these words were so beautifully expressing everything I was trying to write about, everything I was trying to do as a writer from the very beginning from my very first book, and I suspect until the end of my writing life" (Bilbro 386). Nevertheless, the Hawthornian attitude towards the past and tradition is most evident in her last story. As Bilbro points out although the necessity of learning how to belong to conflicting traditions runs throughout Lahiri's works, it is

developed fully in "Going Ashore" (386). Hawthorne believes that "in order to flourish in unaccustomed earth, one must accept the historical limits on one's individual agency and self-reflectively translate between ones adopted and native traditions" (383). Lahiri's female protagonist, Hema, as Bilbro also points out, seems to exemplify this Hawthornian attitude. In "Going Ashore", we learn that she has recently received her Ph.D. in the Latin language and is going on a trip to Rome: "Like Calcutta, which she'd visited throughout childhood, Rome was a city she knew on the one hand intimately and on the other hand not at all a place that fully absorbed her and also kept her at bay" (Lahiri,299). She knows its ancient language, rulers and writers: "Since eighth grade, reading Latin had been an addiction, every line a puzzle to coax into meaning" (299). Hema's inclination towards translating Roman language phrases is indicative of her willingness to make a meaningful connection between her Indian legacies and her present situation as a Western woman. Indeed, Hema, unlike Kaushik, seems to have opted for an in-between space.

As the focal point switches to Hema, we learn more about Kaushik's centrifugal living. The narrator tells us that Kaushik invites Hema to his apartment after he meets her at a party in Italy. There he tells her that he has recently been in Ramallah, covering Arafat's funeral. Hema notices that Kaushik watches an international news channel almost always. That "his work depended wholly on the present and on things yet to come" (315). She asks him once to show her his website. Hema sees lots of terrible images: "Buses blasted apart by bombs, bodies on stretchers, young boys throwing stones" (315). These pictures make Hema appreciate Kaushik's ability, perhaps his need, to connect to strangers in this way, and the willingness of strangers to connect to him" (316). She begins to understand his willingness and need to disappear at any moment. She notices that he lives in "a rented room with rented sheets and towels. in the corner, his camera bags and tripods were always packed, his passport always in his pocket" (316). Hema could also guess that Kaushik has

been with many women, that she is no different: "From the very beginning she had felt clear-eyed, aware that in a matter of weeks it would end" (317).

At the end of their trip, Kaushik asks Hema not to marry Navin but he does not ask her to marry him: "I'm not interested in any sort of arrangement", he tells her in a cold tone (323). Even though Hema is the only person he has met so far in his adult life who has some understanding of his past, "the only woman he wanted to remain connected to", Kaushik cannot bring himself to propose to her; he simply asks her to come with him to Hong Kong, calling her a coward after she refuses his "selfish" and "unfair" request (323).

Unhomeliness is also evident in the use of different narrative personae. In "Once in a Lifetime" Hema is the focalizer, while in "Year's End" it is Kaushik; and in "Going Ashore" the focal point switches between the two protagonists. The unhomeliness is made clear in the changes of the physical settings, as well: "Hema and Kaushik" moves across multiple geographical locations, including India, the US, Italy, Palestine and Thailand. By "depicting an ongoing and inconclusive suspension between several locales", "Hema and Kaushik" shows how unhomeliness sometimes facilitates the negotiation of hybrid identities for some postcolonial subjects, as in the case of Kaushik, whose fluid identity enables him to easily connect to people across the globe (Conrey,170).

2.3. Liminality in Jhumpa Lahiri's "Only Goodness"

Generally, it means occupying a position at both sides of, a boundary or threshold. This term is essential for Postcolonial Study to elaborate on cultural change and identification. Bhabha uses liminality to destabilize binary oppositions such as black/white, self/other, colonizer/colonized, and immigrants/native. According to him, an individual who stands in a liminal space, in here between two cultures, can be under the impact of them and, through the creation of cultural meaning, achieves a new identity. Bhabha, in terms of liminality, elaborates on cultural hybridity, his main

contribution to the postcolonial study. Bhabha used liminality in a way to indicate to an in-between space or territory in which cultures mix and interact to create new hybrid forms. (Knox; Pinch ,330).

In “Only Goodness” liminality seems to find its manifestation in the dilemma of the parents and their children followed their career abroad. The parents, being the first generation immigrants, struggle a lot to build their career, and giving birth to children Sudha and Rahul in two different countries, England and America. Their upbringing and career, particularly of Sudha which spans England and America, are among most testing phases of their diasporic life.

The father who migrated from India to make career in England, and then in the U.S, is representative of the first generation immigrant, is portrayed as a successful diaspora, for his resilience and diligence in liminality as evident in consistency of his career and rearing a family there. He does everything to make his family happy, and particularly in respect of his children does everything to secure a good future there. The children, on the other hand, are portrayed both as successful and unsuccessful depending on their own nature and personality. (Gogoi, 142-143).

The lives of Sudha and Rahul’s parents appear to be liminal given their experience of both “blessing and portent” (Lahiri, 135). Sudha’s father along with her mother, in order to build his career, struggles a lot both in England and the U.S. When they came to England in the 1960s, the most noteworthy challenge that they faced is racial discrimination. The rentals at that time did not open rented house to the non-white people much to the woes of their parents. Moreover, the white house owners did not even let pregnant non-white immigrants to go for labor at home. This situation is a virtual double whammy that troubled them immeasurably at London.

It was only after their meeting with Mr. Pal, a Bengali landlord who provided his parents asylum that they heaved a sigh of relief as it was exactly at that time, a white old lady, the owner of their previous house, had not allowed Sudha’s birth at her home. (P. L.Gogoi, 143). “Her parents

told her that half the rentals in London in the sixties said WHITES ONLY and the combination of being Indian and pregnant limited her parents to the point where her father considered sending her mother back to India to give birth, until they met Mr. Pal. To Sudha this story was like an episode out of a Greek myth or the Bible, rich with blessing and portent, marking her family as survivors in strange intolerant seas". (135)

The liminal subject positions of the parents are also shown through the perspectives of their children Sudha and Rahul. Sudha notices correctly the deep trouble in which their migration to England took place; for, it was a time "when immigration was still an adventure, living with paraffin heaters, and seeing snow for the first time." (138). both of them were first generation immigrants, and certainly they faced innumerable problems in getting well along with the foreign land. The "in-betweenness" of the parents' existence can be seen in their life that is rather insipid. The situatedness of their life in liminality that makes their marriage a "perplexing fact" (137), characterized by insipidity:

"Thanks to Rahul there was also someone else to witness the perplexing fact of her parents' marriage. It was neither happy nor unhappy, and the lack of emotion in either extreme was what upset Sudha most. She would have understood quarrels; she believed she would even have understood divorce. She always hoped some sign of love would manifest itself; the only things that consoled her were a few pictures taken during their London years". (137)

Dependence on the elder child Sudha stems from the fact that she has more command over American English than her parents. Rahul is six years junior to her, and "never considered it his duty to help their parents in this way." (138), hence, the parents talk more frequently to her. Besides her fluency in English, she has better understanding of American way of life which she acquires because of her socialization in America at school: "It was she who had to explain to her father that

he had to gather up the leaves in bags, not just drag them with his rake to the woods opposite the house. “She, with her perfect English, who called the repair department at Lechmere to have their appliances serviced” (138).

This obvious dependence of her parents on Sudha reflects the first generation immigrants’ difficulty in getting well accustomed to the U.S life which bespeaks of their liminality whereas the second generation’s ease with it shows their acculturation into the mainstream culture. Rahul’s unresponsive attitude thereof may be read in two ways. On the one hand, he is too assimilated into the U.S culture to believe his parents’ inability to do so because of his birth and complete upbringing in the U.S, unlike Sudha who was born in London. On the other hand, given his being a second generation diaspora he is completely oblivious and not aware to the in-betweenness of his parents which paralyze them in starting a life in the U.S.

The liminal subject position can be harnessed towards excellence is shown by Sudha. A girl, was born in the U.K, takes education in the U.S; and again, comes to the U.K for education and career. In the U.S she takes major in two subjects’ economics and mathematics, and gets Master’s degree in international politics. Her quest of learning continues with her pursuit of another Master’s degree in economics in London School of Economics. Rahul does not like her plan of having two master’s degrees; but she explains him that developmental economics offered by LSE⁽²⁾ is one of the best programs of the world, and it will ultimately help her pursuing her aim of serving in NGO⁽³⁾. Earlier her parents, too, had an apprehension on her flying to England for education, and had not approved her admission into Oxford to pursue a junior year (Gogoi, 146). But this time around they endorse her decision:

² London School of Economics.

³ non-governmental organization.

“Her parents hadn’t allowed her to do a junior year abroad at Oxford, telling her then that she was too young to live in a foreign country alone. But now they were excited by the prospect of Sudha going to London, where they’d first lived after getting married and where Sudha had been born. Talking about visiting and reconnecting with old friends”. (132-133)

In her profession as well, she seems to be a very successful professional. After coming out of LSE she fulfills her aim of working in an NGO that aims at poor countries for promoting micro loans. She through her diligence and performance has become a matter of pride for her parents “Sudha was among those successful children now, her collection of higher degrees framed and filling up her parents’ upstairs hall.” (151) Even in her personal life too, she wishes to have a person of her own choice that underlines her independence in her liminal subject position in England. She finds Roger to be a man having “the same strain of competence she possessed.” (147). He has a PhD in history, works as an editor of an art magazine. He also comes of a humble background as his father is only an overseas worker of Singer sewing machines. His romantic behavior towards her, his well-understanding of her, his birth in India, his habit of drinking moderately like her, is some of the key factors that bring him closer to her. Besides, she prefers her as a life partner despite her knowledge of his previous marriage with a girl with whom he does not live now. Even Sudha’s parents, in their liminal existence, like Roger because of his birth in India and harboring his life in England. The birth and career of Roger in two different countries serve as similar case of liminality for Sudha’s parents, and hence they readily approve of the marriage:

“They accepted that she and Roger planned to have a registry wedding in London, that they were willing to have only a reception in Massachusetts, that Roger had been previously married, that he and Sudha had a fourteen-year gap. They approved of his academic qualifications, his ability, thanks to his wisely invested inheritance, to buy a house for himself and Sudha in Kilburn. It helped that

he'd been born in India, that he was English and not American, drinking tea instead of coffee, and saying "zed" not "zee," superficial things that allowed her parents to relate to him". (152)

The flexibility in Sudha's character in her liminal subjectivity lies in the fact that she would like to settle in the U.K where she feels "an instinctive connection to London" (144). She does not show any sign of disappointment in being remaining or settling on the other side of the Atlantic without the parents and brother. She is very happy in London, gets her degree from her cherished institute LSE, and finally immerses herself in the work of NGO. This success of Sudha Reveals her comfort and survival instinct in liminality.(Gogoi,147).

Rahul's case is a testimony to the fact that displacement from home; and liminality in other places is not negotiable to all. Even money and good academic institute cannot guarantee one's success in liminal space unless he himself is capable of dealing with his liminal subject position. Simply speaking, success in liminality depends on person's individual capacity or resilience like his father and his sister Sudha who pass through a series of challenges to define their identity in foreign land.Both the cases of Sudha and Rahul show the uncertainty vis a vis children's career experienced by parents in liminal existence in foreign land. The parents, who feel relaxed after having witnessed the initial achievement of Sudha and Rahul, become very upset about Rahul's failure. Earlier when Sudha is in Philadelphia and Rahul is in Cornell, the parents think that they have successfully raised their children in America. They are compared to other successful Bengali students in America, and they proudly exclaim "Our job is done" (129). The concern and obsession with the children's career by the immigrant parents reveal another dimension of their subjectivity as noticed by Ed Minus, "first generation parents are inevitably autocratic in their ambition for offspring." (Minus, 35).But their expectations are shattered with Rahul's failure, alcoholism, deviance, and finally disappearance from home after Sudha's wedding party where he has fiercely fell out with his father.

His disorientation with his parents is evident in the letter he has sent from Columbus, Ohio that is addressed to no one; but makes his stand clear:

“Don’t bother looking for me here,” he’d written, “I’m only spending the night. I don’t want to hear from any of you. Please leave me alone.” (Lahiri, 158)

Through the characters of Sudha and Rahul, Lahiri actually tries to show the success and failures of immigrants’ children in liminality. The children’s performance, to a great extent, determines the family’s psychological affiliation to the model minority, i.e., the same ethnic community like Asian Americans, or Indian Americans. That is why, there is persistent anxiety in parents over the prospective pride in or shame on their children’s career and this anxiety characterizes Sudha’s parents’ subjectivity in America:

The prospect of model minority is a source of anxiety for some of her fictional immigrants who face psychological dilemmas, whilst others, capable of adjusting to the host land, tend to dwell in the interstices of cultures. Lahiri’s tales, therefore, contrast vulnerability and resilience in everyday life, bringing to the fore an aesthetics of neurosis as a way to criticise socio-economic pressures. (Monaco, 161)

Rahul’s arrest for his drinking seems to expose the liminal subject position of his mother as secondary immigrant. According to the U.S law, he is so underage that his driving in drinking state leads to his arrest. His mother, on the other hand, thinks that he has been arrested for being Indian. She tries to give the case of his son’s arrest a racial color much to the anger of Sudha. Being a considerate girl, Sudha is aware of fault caused by Rahul, and feels rather embarrassed with her mother’s ignorance of certain basic facts of the country in which they are living. Even their father is aware of the truth about Rahul’s arrest, and so he observes silence: "Sudha pitied her mother, pitied her refusal to accommodate such an unpleasant and alien fact, her need to blame America and its

laws instead of her son. She sensed that her father understood, but he refused to engage in the conversation" (Lahiri, 143).

All through the story, Sudha is portrayed as symbol of “only goodness” for her parents, Brother, husband, child Neel, and everyone she meets. Her goodness is also found her success in academics, building a cherished career, and thus living up to the expectation of parents. Her celebration of thanksgiving at her college days and annaprasan⁽⁴⁾ after the birth of Neel shows her hybrid character as well. Because of her goodness in character she is fully successful in her liminal subject position setting a glorious precedent for other displaced people. She has been good to her brother Rahul since his childhood. She always stands by him at his hour of crisis, never scolds him for his deviance and failures. It is this goodness of her that he writes a letter to her after he has disappeared from his house and stopped all ties with the parents. In the letter, Rahul talks about his present condition of life, his living with Elena along with her daughter, his being apologetic for everything, his desire to meet her, and his status quo with his parents. Sudha readily writes to him informing him of her attaining motherhood and expresses her desire to meet him. At this point of time, Sudha starts a completely new life with her job, husband and the baby Neel in her liminal subject position in England. When Rahul arrives there, she and Roger do everything to make him happy. Being a considerate girl, she knows the plight of dislocated families, and hence she opens her door to her deviant brother to strike a balance between “natal and alternatal families” (Dennihy,240). But much to her surprise and anger, Rahul has not been changed. He is incorrigible, and a symbol of only badness. This comes to Sudha’s notice when he asks Sudha and Roger to go for movie after having promised to take care of little Neel in their absence. Contrary to their expectation, Rahul drinks a lot, and falls asleep leaving the baby dangerously in the bathtub.

⁴ an Indian culture that marks an infant's first intake of food other than milk.

This incident is a sufficient proof of his innate badness and incorrigibility which ultimately forces Sudha to snap all ties with him permanently. (Gogoi,150).

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter finds that in each character or family in the stories: “Hema and Kaushik” and “Only Goodness” is caught between cultures, and often between generations. The result is an active and ongoing questioning as to who each person is. What is more, a change in one person, or even in one person’s understanding of another, changes the other characters here all the stories trace the lives of Bengalis who have moved to the United States. They experience a disconnection in their new lives. The children, often born in the United States, are more connected to the States. Parents consider India as “home”, while “home” for the children is where they now live, a home with a new set of mores, language, dress, and relationships. They serve as “cultural translators” for their parents in this new land.

Chapter Three

“Unaccustomed Earth”: Hybrid and Mimic Characters

“Neither the One ...nor the Other ... but something else besides”

Homi Bhabha (*Commitment to Theory*, 41)

3.1. Introduction

Currently, it became almost an acknowledged standard that any discussion on Jhumpa Lahiri's work will be only a description of the first and the second generation immigrant Experiences of her characters. Lahiri's characters are suffered from a sense of cultural Alienation, the feeling of not belonging. Hybridity and Mimicry another two concepts that will be analyzed in this chapter which attempt to explore and examine those concepts among the characters mainly through textual analysis. The focus is primarily on three stories: 'Unaccustomed Earth', 'Hell-Heaven' and 'Only Goodness'.

3.2. Hybridity in “Unaccustomed Earth”

What mentioned earlier, According to Bhabha, hybridity is the third space which is symbolic and potential to reconstruct new identity. For Bhabha, Hybridity is a historical necessity. (Bhabha 2004: 41) He goes on and states that immigrants try to adjust themselves to new time and space in a new place. However, since as minorities they are marginalized, this adjustment and forming a hybrid identity takes time. Moreover, hybridity indicates to an unequal mixedness of the immigrant's two

cultures. In other words, it denotes to the dominance of one of the two races that later tended to be combined. (Omidvar, 4-5).

3.2.1. “Ruma” in unaccustomed Earth

“Unaccustomed Earth” is concerned with three generations, and the Relationship between the three, the father, his daughter Ruma, and her son, Akash. The story explores some of the difficult gender roles in America, such as Ruma’s decision to leave her successful legal career to raise children, and her husband’s hard work to support the family. It also explores the family issues associated with Ruma’s Indian heritage, including her sense of obligation to care for her father and have him live with her and her immediate family. Her father is depicted as someone who was rather unhappy with his traditional lifestyle. He is enjoying his newly found independence in his travels and a relationship with a female friend he recently met. What makes the story most compelling is the limited communication between the father and daughter, both afraid in some way to acknowledge that they have moved away from their culture of origin and have embraced aspects of the new culture. Akash, the grandson, who is the third generation of immigrants, and completely immersed in the new culture, develops a strong attraction with his grandfather's habits that are foreign to him, including a foreign language. (Patel, 65).

Even though assimilating, the representatives of the first generation immigrants are nevertheless cultural hybrids. They know their roots, but they also know that to achieve success they need to adapt to new cultural codes, which they inevitably do, because of the contact with another culture. To use Homi K. Bhabha terms they live in the Third Space, characterized by in-betweenness. No purist view of identity applies to them because entering another culture they are “*neither the One ... nor the Other ... but something else besides which contests the terms and territories of both*” (*Commitment to Theory* 41; italics in original). Their entrance into the Third Space is a deliberate

act. Having the direct experience of the two worlds they are aware of what they leave behind in their homeland and what opportunities are offered in the new country. Thus they find it easier to define their new path of life and identify the goals of their American Dream. Although positioned as hybrid identities, their life is an inevitable progression towards assimilation, however their life unstable it may be, because as newcomers they have only this direction of transformation to acquire with new life and the elements of culture with which they come in contact. (Filipczak, 4)

The representative of the second generation depicted in the story is in a different situation. Being born in America, but to Bengali parents Ruma lives in the Third Space all her life. Consequently, her life is marked by a constant tension between the culture of parents and of her homeland, America, which results in confusion and inability to achieve the American Dream. (Filipczak, 3).

Ruma's life between Indian and American culture is a continuous negotiation between them. Her mother's death makes her identify strongly with Indian heritage. Ruma lives immersed in the memories of her dead mother, and even though it contradicts her American upbringing, she starts imitating her example. She does not reject American clothes, taste for American food, nor does she use Bengali, her parents' native language. She rejects something more fundamental: her independence, professional success, and sense of equality with her husband. She accepts her position according to the Indian tradition: serving the husband (her mother always did it), being mainly a mother and a housewife. And still, although her Husband generously accepts all her decisions, "nothing is making her happy" (Lahiri, 7). Ruma is able to identify neither with her homeland India, nor with America. Thus, she suffers from "double displacement". She suffers from her estrangement as a woman and as a second-generation subject (Dutt-Ballerstadt, 54). Her unwillingness to pursue the American Dream is indicative of her problems with identity. It informs of her lack of belonging, which is emphasized in the narrative by her movement, going on "routes" rather than growing "roots" she left her home in Pennsylvania to work in New York and then moved

with her family to Seattle. The position of in-betweenness, living between two cultures, is uncomfortable and confusing for her. (Filipczak, 5).

Lahiri does not propose Americanization as a desired identity which could satisfy her protagonist. Although Ruma's father advocates resuming the career path and he equals that to adopting American values: work, self-reliance, and eventually achieving happiness, he does not push Ruma to complete acculturation. Lahiri suggests that everyone has to accept the position in which they have found themselves. It is impossible to destroy one's place of origin, and immigrants' children need to preserve the consciousness of their original roots and accept their living in the Third Space. This message is conveyed best by the example of Ruma's father's influence on his grandson, Akash. Reasonably, since Akash is the third generation, he is "an American child" even more than Ruma was. The older he grows, the more unwilling he is to learn and practice elements of Indian culture that Ruma wants to pass on to him. Ruma gives up her efforts but her father does not agree to this situation. During his short visit he tries to inform Akash with at least basic elements of Bengali culture, teaching him simple things: colors and numbers in Bengali, while some aspects of Indian tradition, such as eating with fingers or taking off shoes when entering the house, are eagerly picked up by the boy himself. (Filipczak, 6)

Moreover, the story Lahiri encourages a celebration of hybridity but with a view to differences between generations of immigrants. The process of acculturation and growing roots into the Host country, which for next generations becomes a homeland, is undeniably important and called for, nevertheless the awareness of one's origins, is important. The message is reinforced by the image of planting a garden, organizing a fragment of landscape near Ruma's new house. According to Bhabha, the landscape is a recurrent metaphor, which can be considered as "the inscape of national identity" (*Dissemination* 205). Ruma's uncultivated, unaccustomed garden signifies Ruma's dislocation and lack of belonging. It shows the sense of strangeness, lack of roots and the need to

grow them, the need to make the unaccustomed earth America familiar. Ruma's father cultivates the garden by connecting various elements: his Indian wife's favorites, American daughter's needs, and American grandson's toys and garbage collection. Those elements from disparate backgrounds share one space, which can be viewed as an expression of Ruma's national identity consisting of Bengali and American cultural influences. Thus, it can be metaphorically read as a wish for peacefully co-existing multicultural America. The centrality of the landscape metaphor is emphasized by the title of the story "Unaccustomed earth", which is also the title of the whole story collection, and which can be treated as a filter for the stories analyses and interpretation.(Filipczak,6,§10).

3.2.2. "Rahul" in Only Goodness

The first generation immigrants in "Only Goodness", Rahul and Sudha's parents, are again Bengali immigrants, who first immigrate to London in search of successful life. From there, disenchanted, they move to the U.S., which draws them with the principles of equality. They wish to escape racial scorn of London of the 60s, where "half the rentals ... said WHITES ONLY" (Lahiri, 135). Nevertheless, they experience the strangeness of the new land. The town in which they settle down is "the shock. Suddenly they were stuck, her parents aware that they faced a life sentence of being foreign" (Lahiri p138). Even though what they encounter in America is the equality of opportunities, and they are not discriminated against because of their race, culturally they are not prepared to take advantage of this situation. The mother cannot drive, she does not get a job, neither she nor her husband is familiar with American habits, and they both have problems with language. As a result, in many everyday situations they have to depend on their children. Despite these initial problems, achieving economic success in an atmosphere of equality and realizing the dream that the American sought to achieve. However, they remember their hardships, and pass on a successful and prosperous life to their children, with greater expectations for Rahul son than for his daughter

Sudha. The expectation of Rahul's success that is made prominent in the story. However, his story becomes the American Dream reversed a gradual downfall of a young man. Rahul and Sudha's parents create excellent conditions for their good start, and are satisfied with no less than Ivy League schools. Sudha graduates from Penn University, double majoring in economics and math, and later decides to study in Europe, in London School of Economics. Yet it is Rahul's career that interests the parents more and it is his successes that bring them more satisfaction. (Filipczak, 7)

Compliant in the beginning, Rahul suddenly becomes resistant to his parents' dreams. His path is more difficult than his older sister's, the expectations having been raised by Sudha, an obedient student, who dutifully fulfills their parents' wishes. From the start Rahul does not share his family's interest about going to a prestigious university of Cornell and it is not a surprise when he eventually drops out of it, and when alcohol becomes a solution to his problems. He takes up a menial job managing a Laundromat, and with little finances he is forced to live with his parents. All of this embarrasses them, and they prefer to keep the comedy of lies rather than admit Rahul's failure as well as his drinking problem, and seek help for him. His failure becomes their shame:

“Other Bengalis gossiped about him and prayed their own children would not ruin their lives in the same way. And so he became what all parents feared, a blot, a failure, someone who was not contributing to the grand circle of accomplishments Bengali children were making across the country, as surgeons or attorneys or Scientists, or writing articles for the front page of The New York Times” (Only Goodness, 151).

Moreover, Rahul's failure to fulfill the American Dream is the result of the conflicting position he has found himself in. Similarly to Ruma from “Unaccustomed earth” he is a hybrid, and in the same way he finds it distressing to live in-between two cultures, his alcoholism being a symbolic expression of distress. Neither he nor his parents accept his border position; while he wishes to live like an American, they want him to preserve the Indian way of life, yet take advantage of

opportunities that America offers, such as excellent education and job. They still separate the two worlds, India and America, creating paradoxical situations: on the one hand they want to think their children live an peaceful life in the American Paradise, free from the burden of the Indian past as the narrator comments: “In their opinion their children were immune from the hardships and injustices they had left behind in India, as if the inoculations the pediatrician had given Sudha and Rahul when they were babies guaranteed them an existence free from suffering” (Lahiri, 144). On the other hand, they resist the idea that their children come in contact with and therefore might be influenced by American reality: “[d]epression’ was a foreign word to them, an American thing” (Lahiri, 143-4), which is why they do not acknowledge Rahul’s problem. Rahul is suspended between the strains put on by his Indian parents and his already acquired Americanness. The Indian way of life pressed upon him by his parents stifles his American spirit of individualism, desire for freedom and self-fulfillment, expressed by his wish to engage in artistic activity and other attempts of breaking away from the parental control.

Rahul is a dislocated subject. He does not want to identify with his Indian family and Indian way of life. However, when he eventually finds strength in himself to abandon his parents in order to live his own way, the American way with an American girlfriend, he fails. His failure should be read symbolically as a hybrid, he cannot be the One, or the other, and he cannot live as an American or an Indian. He will not succeed until he agrees to his middle position, his in-betweenness. Only from this position he can start building new. (Filipczak, 8,§1-2).

3.3. Mimicry in “Unaccustomed Earth”

Jacques Lacan declares that mimicry is camouflage, Bhabha argues that mimicry is “the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which appropriates the other as it visualizes power”. Bhabha states that the minority members of a society try to imitate the

language, dress, and cultural attitudes of their host country's inhabitants. The purpose behind such an effort is to obtain the same power and the same advantages of those majority inhabitants. However, according to Bhabha, "mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as 'almost the same, but not quite' " (Bhabha 1994:86). Failed mimicry can lead to mockery from both the host country inhabitants as well as the homeland citizens. Nevertheless, Immigrants are expected to share a common culture with the people of the host countries, which require a long turn process. At first, they may find it difficult or be unwilling to adjust to the new circumstances. However, as time goes by immigrants realize that to have same advantages as the host country's inhabitants, they have to become more like them. Thus, on the one hand, they have to disconnect from a country to which they originally belong, and on the other hand they have to adjust themselves to the new circumstances of the host country. (Omidvar, 6)

Sugata Samanta argues that Ruma in "Unaccustomed Earth" is a kind of second generation Indian immigrants caught between the dilemmas of two cultures with double standards. To her, for an old man like her father "wearing a baseball cap that said POMPEII, brown cotton pants and a sky-blue polo shirt, and a pair of white leather sneakers" belongs to a typical Americanized culture and yet after her mother's death, of the two hundred and eighteen saries, the typical model of Bengali culture, "she kept only three, placing them in a quilted zippered bag at the back of her closet, telling her mother's friends to divide up the rest. And she had remembered the many times her mother had predicted this very moment, lamenting the fact that her daughter preferred pants and skirts to the clothing she wore, that there would be no one to whom to pass on her things." (Lahiri,17).

The readers are also informed that Ruma hardly speaks in Bengali, the language of her parents, and is unable even to decode the language in written form. "Bengali had never been a language in which she felt like an adult. Her own Bengali was slipping from her...on the rare occasions Ruma

used Bengali anymore, when an aunt or uncle called him from Calcutta to wish her a Happy Bijoya or Akash a Happy Birthday, she tripped over words, mangled tenses. And yet it was the language she had spoken exclusively in the first years of her life." (Lahiri, 12). She even lacks the discipline to stick to Bengali while speaking to her son. As a consequence Akash, her son, "had forgotten the little Bengali Ruma had taught him when he was little" (Lahiri, 12). Certainly, refusal of one's native language and the acceptance of a foreign language imply the covert acceptance of that foreign culture mentally. Though, Ruma herself is not prepared to accept this fact. (Samanta, 310, §3)

Also Edward Said (2000) in his book *Reflections on Exile* articulates that the migrants voluntarily living in the foreign country suffer from isolation and 'estrangement of exile'. However, some are benefited by their 'ambiguous status' while others, surrounded by the continuous feeling of vagrancy, try to mimic in the foreign land the ideologies that guided their lives in their homeland. Ruma, a combination of American modernism and Indian traditionalism, has succeeded in benefiting out of her ambiguous identities. She married an American against her parents' wish. She prefers wearing pants and skirts but keeps with her a few saris of her mother. In her solitude, she always thinks of the abandoned old associates and the connections she built all those years. She speaks Bengali over the phone to her relatives, cooks Indian food and at times eats with her fingers. Like Ruma, her father, who has already started living the American life, looks more American than Indian in Western clothes. Akash, as he grows by, overcomes all the ambiguous identities of her mother, hates Indian food though initially he ate Indian food prepared by his mother and grandmother. (Vijayakumar; Christopher Rajasekaran, 3661-3662)

Another character in the story, Ruma's mother is presented off screen as she is already dead when the narration begins. Yet we feel her presence in every step in Ruma's life. Contrasting Ruma's father, she is very traditional with a deep respect for her own culture. To Ruma she serves as the role model and her death to Ruma signifies the loss of the bridge between two cultures. She even

censures Ruma for her marrying a white American boy, "You are ashamed of yourself, of being Indian that is the bottom line" (Lahiri, 26). To her, marrying a white boy originates from a sense of disrespect for her own culture. Thus, Ruma wants the "white masks" (to borrow the concept of Frantz Fanon) to appropriate and imitate the American culture. The readers can easily associate it with the notion of 'Colonial Mimicry', i.e., "the desire for a reformed, recognizable other" (Homi.K.Bhabha). In her traditional dressing, in her strictness not to use English at home and in her advice to get Akash used to the taste of the Indian foods, Ruma's mother appears to be a counterfoil of Ruma's father and Ruma shows her inability to counterbalance two dominant forces in her life (mother/tradition and father/change). Thus, it is ultimately Ruma who is crushed between the two opposite forces of her parental cultures and it is for this reason that in spite of her outwardly Americanized manner, she is terribly shocked discovering the appearance of another woman in her father's lonely life after her mother's death. Thus, throughout her life, Ruma has to constantly negotiate between Bengali and American cultures. (Samanta, 311)

The story "Hell-Heaven" is quite different in the sense that it is narrated in first person. A Bengali girl Usha remembers her childhood and adolescence experiences related to her family and a family friend Pranab Chakraborty, her 'Pranab kaku'(Pranab uncle). On the day Pranab meets them, he follows Usha and her mother "for the better part of an afternoon around the streets of Cambridge" (Lahiri,60) in order to find out whether they are Bengalis as being lonely he is badly in search of some Bengali friends. Usha's mother Aparna, whom he calls 'boudi' after Bengali tradition, after learning that he has not had a proper Bengali meal in more than three months, serves him "the leftover curried mackerel and rice that we had eaten for dinner the night before" (Lahiri,61). Thus, he becomes befriended with Usha and her family. At the outset it appears that although Pranab himself is a student there, he is too critical of American educational system:

"These Americans are learning equations I knew at Usha's age,' he would complain. He was stunned that my second-grade teacher didn't assign any homework and that at the age of seven I hadn't yet been taught square roots or the concept of pi" (Lahiri,63)

The use of the words 'these Americans' is suggestive of his sense of alienation with American culture. Outwardly, his appearances and behaviours seem to be of a typical person of Bengali origin. "He appeared without warning, never phoning beforehand but simply knocking on the door the way people did in Calcutta and calling out 'Boudi!' "(Lahiri, 63).

However, the situation reverses when Pranab, to the utter surprise of Usha's parents and his circle of Bengali friends, marries an American girl Deborah without the consent of his family. Usha's mother who now has a secret love for him and who in no way connects herself with American culture, prophesies(Like Ruma's mother in "Unaccustomed Earth") that "she will leave him" and "he is throwing his life away"(Lahiri,73). After their marriage Pranab and Deborah begins to drift away from Bengali community and "their absences were attributed, by my parents and their circle, to Deborah, and it was universally agreed that she had stripped Pranab Kaku not only of his origins but of his independence...their example was invoked as a warning, and as vindication, that mixed marriages were a doomed enterprise" (Lahiri, 75)

As well as a second generation immigrants, Usha in this story is also torn between two cultures- the Indian Bengali culture promoted by her family and the American culture of her outer circle of acquaintances. Ultimately, at the adolescence period, she gets habituated with counterbalancing both cultures and begins to internalize American values and ideology. She evades her mother and keeps other secrets from her:

She finally makes her mother to accept the fact that she is “not only her daughter but a child of America as well” (Lahiri, p81). Thus Usha maintains a judicious view of life and is less threatened by the sense of cultural alienation and anxiety of being a 'stranger'. (Samanta, 313).

In the story "Only Goodness", we again face the the sense of anxiety of the second generation Bengali immigrants, Sudha and her brother Rahul. The first generation immigrants, i.e., Sudha and Rahul's parents have already confronted with the sense of isolation in an alien land when in their early life in London they discovered that "half the rentals in London in the sixties said “WHITES ONLY”(Lahiri,135). They ultimately settle in America and there also "they were stuck... (they) aware that they faced a life sentence of being foreign" (Lahiri, 138). They feel the sense of dislocation in a foreign land and cannot assimilate themselves with the foreign culture. The parents are so much preoccupied with a sense of anxiety and alienation from American culture that even they accept Roger as their son-in-law in spite of his previous marriage and a fourteen years gap with Sudha considering that "he'd been born in India, that he was English and not American, drinking tea, not coffee, and saying 'zed' not 'zee' "(Lahiri, 152)

Sudha, their daughter, on the other hand is more Americanized and logical in her viewpoints towards life without any special fascination for her ancestral homeland. Unlike her parents who "were prudish about alcohol to the point of seeming Puritanical, frowning upon the members of their Bengali circle-the men, that was to say-who liked to sip whiskey at gatherings"(Lahiri,129), on weekends, she learns “to let loose, going to parties and allowing boys into her bed. She began drinking, something her parents did not do” (Lahiri, 129). She maintains a romantic view about immigration and considers her parents early immigratory lives as "an adventure, living with paraffin heaters, seeing snow for the first time."(Lahiri, 130). However, Sudha also pities her mother for her

refusal to acknowledge the unpleasant facts about Rahul and blaming American culture and its law instead. She feels that her parents should accept the life in a more logical way. (Samanta, 0315)

3.4. Conclusion

The Analysis of Hybridity and Mimicry in Jhumpa Lahiri's stories is an investigation of Indian immigrant experience in America. It informs of the goals and reasons that drive immigrants to another continent, and consequently it shows the vision of America that inhabits immigrants' imagination. Furthermore, it shows difficulties and obstacles in building a new life in a new country, whether posed by the country or immigrants themselves. Finally, it gives visions into immigrants' identity, interrogating the issue of continuity or discontinuity of a diasporic subject, the question of his/her assimilation or preservation.

Lahiri's stories discuss a new model of American identity. It is performed on the thresholds of cultures, in border situations and interstitial spaces. The hybridity and Mimicry of the characters from her stories directs attention to the idea of multiculturalism celebration of cultural diversity and preservation of one's ethnic roots. Thus, Lahiri's works become an important voice in the question of rewriting the story of what it means to be American.

General Conclusion

In the stories, the writer discovers how cultural assimilation happens among the characters. Based on the narrative structure of “Unaccustomed Earth” and “Hell-Heaven”, the analysis comes to the conclusion that the first generation of Indian immigrants finally find out the way to make their life happier while living in America. It is by adapting the culture. Ruma’s father has adopted American culture and he convinces Ruma that she does not need to be worry about him anymore. He decides not to live with Ruma, so he and Ruma have their own path for their own sake. Meanwhile, in “Hell-Heaven” Usha’s mother also finds that actually she is wrong about American people. She starts accepting American culture. Then it makes her have a peace with her husband and her daughter who have accepted the assimilation first.

In “A Choice of Accommodations” and “Nobody’s Business”, the analysis finds how Indian and American people have a problem in their life because of their different cultural background. The problems show that actually although Indian immigrants have adapted American culture, but still they have their Indian culture in them. Both stories show that even though the Indians have assimilated with their new culture but still they have their eastern culture deeply rooted in them. They cannot totally change, and that sometimes creates problem for them. The ending of the story tells that the problem is resolved by talking openly with each other and the acceptance of American people about their different culture.

The last one is the problem of cultural assimilation of the second generations of Indian immigrant in “Only Goodness”. In the story, Lahiri shows that though people have similar cultural background, like Sudha and Rahul who are the second generation Indian immigrants with similar

parents, but they are different in assimilating the cultures. Sudha who is able to negotiate with American culture finally succeeds in getting her bright future. Meanwhile Rahul, who cannot control himself in following American drinking habit, ruins his life. He is separated from his family, even his lovely sister same as the second part of Lahiri's collection "Hema and Kaushik".

After analyzing and investigating the narrative structure of the five selected short stories in Jhumpa Lahiri's "Unaccustomed Earth", by using Homi Bhabha's concepts: Culture hybridity, Unhomeliness, Liminality and mimicry, Unhomeliness in "Hema" and "Kaushik" made clear in the changes of the physical settings, as well moving across multiple geographical locations. Moreover, Liminality in "Rahul's" Only Goodness indicates an in-between space in which cultures mix and interact to create new hybrid forms. Culture hybridity in "Ruma" shows a conflict position she has found herself across two cultures, the alien land culture and homeland culture. Concluding by Mimicry in "Ruma" has succeeded in benefiting a combination of American modernism and Indian traditions.

This dissertation shows that although there are many immigrants who prefer to return back to their homeland, they still face problems which mean they are and will be considered "diasporic" forever. Despite all challenges of racism and discriminations, some immigrant preferred to settle in the Alien land for the rest of their life. Their choice was mainly based on living better life conditions that are not excited in their original lands. They sought to improve their children's lives by making them grown in a different cultivated environment. In the end, this dissertation could be significant data for future researchers in Literature to make space for new readings.

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Appendix

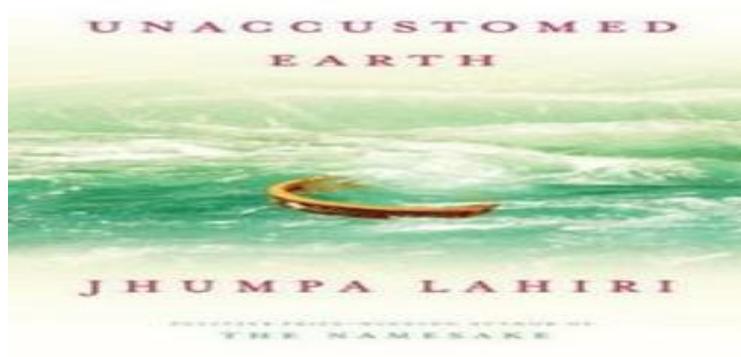
Jumpa Lahiri: Life and Works Overview



While in graduate school and shortly thereafter, Lahiri published a number of short stories in such magazines as *The New Yorker*, *Harvard Review*, and *Story Quarterly*. She collected some of those stories in her debut collection, *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999). The nine stories, some set in Calcutta and others on the U.S. East Coast, examine such subjects as the practice of arranged marriage, alienation, dislocation, and loss of culture and provide insight into the experiences of Indian immigrants as well as the lives of Calcuttans. Among the awards garnered by *Interpreter of Maladies* were the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for fiction and the 2000 PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Fiction.

Lahiri next tried her hand at a novel, producing *The Namesake* (2003; film 2006), a story that examines themes of personal identity and the conflicts produced by immigration by following the

internal dynamics of a Bengali family in the United States. She returned to short fiction in *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008), a collection that likewise takes as its subject the experience of immigration as well as that of assimilation into American culture. Her novel *The Lowland* (2013) chronicles the divergent paths of two Bengali brothers. The tale was nominated for both the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Award and earned Lahiri the 2015 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, a prize established in 2010 by infrastructure developers DSC Limited to honor the achievements of South Asian writers and “to raise awareness of South Asian culture around the world.” Lahiri was presented a 2014 National Humanities Medal by U.S. Pres. Barack Obama in 2015. That same year she published her first book written in Italian, *In altre parole* (*In Other Words*), a meditation on her immersion in another culture and language. Lahiri continued writing in Italian, and in 2018 she released the novel *Dove mi trovo* (*Whereabouts*). (Amy Tikkanen, Last Updated: Apr 27, 2021)



In “Unaccustomed Earth,” Ruma’s father, reeling from the death of his wife, has taken it upon himself to travel the world –something both of Ruma's parents had originally intended to do. Before he is due to visit Prague, Ruma’s father hopes to come and visit Ruma’s family in Seattle. Adam, Ruma’s husband, will be away that week on business. She tells her father he is welcome. However, she is worried about the visit because her father is so traditional. The visit goes relatively well, but Ruma’s father continually encourages Ruma to return to legal work after her next baby is born so that she will not be dependent on Adam. Ruma can’t help but feel judged. She tells Adam over the

phone that she thinks her father wants to move in with them. Adam tells her he'll accept any decision she makes on the subject. In the end, it turns out that Ruma's father has no intention of moving in with his daughter and her family because he has begun a relationship with a younger Indian woman who lives on Long Island, New York.

In "Hell-Heaven," Usha recounts her family's experiences with Pranab, a recent Indian immigrant to Cambridge, Massachusetts, who fast became a family friend. Bright, friendly, and social, Pranab became irresistible to Usha's mother, who fell in love with him. Her feelings were never acted upon, nor were they returned. Usha's mother became heartbroken when Pranab married a white girl named Deborah. Usha disliked Deborah intensely, especially whenever Pranab brought Deborah around. Years later, Pranab cheats on Deborah, and Deborah takes comfort in speaking to Usha's mother. When Usha deals with her own heartbreak, her mother reveals that following Pranab's marriage, she intended to commit suicide by lighting herself on fire in the backyard. She was stopped by a neighbor who happened to come outside at the right time.

In "A Choice of Accommodations," Amit and his wife, Megan, travel to Amit's old boarding school, Langford Academy, for the wedding of his old friend, Pam. Pam's father was headmaster at Langford, and Pam was the only girl on campus. Conveniently, she notices that the dress she brought for the wedding has a burn mark on it. She requests that Amit stay by her side all night to help hide the mark, which he does. Late in the evening, promising Megan he'll return, he goes to the hotel room to call their daughters but passes out drunk. When he awakens, Megan relates her worry at not having been able to find him the previous night. While at the Academy to say goodbye to Pam, Megan and Amit wander into one of the dorm rooms and have sex.

In "Only Goodness," Sudha blames herself for her younger brother Rahul's alcoholism. Sudha had never rebelled against her parents until she attended Penn State, where she began to drink in moderation. While her brother Rahul was visiting her one weekend, Sudha allowed him to drink. He

quickly became an alcoholic, something which she attempted to speak to her parents about, only to be dismissed. Later, while Sudha is studying for a master's degree in London, she meets and marries an older Englishman named Roger Featherstone, and the two have a baby named Neel. Rahul marries an American girl named Elena, and they have a child. Rahul visits Sudha in London, claiming to be sober. Rahul convinces Sudha and Roger to go out on a date. They return to find their baby in cold bath water. Rahul is passed out drunk in the guest room. This causes an argument between Roger and Sudha. Sudha orders Rahul to leave the next day.

In "Nobody's Business," Sang is in an emotionally abusive relationship with an Egyptian man named Farouk, who is seeing more than one woman. Sang's roommate, Paul, has fallen for her. While Sang is away visiting relatives, an intoxicated woman named Deidre calls the apartment looking for Farouk. Paul discovers Farouk's womanizing, which Sang later accuses Paul of making up to get her to dump Farouk. Only when listening in on a conversation with Deidre does Sang learn the truth. She confronts Farouk with Paul, and the two men wrestle until Paul gains the upper hand and Farouk flees to his apartment. Brokenhearted, Sang leaves for London. Some months later, Paul sees Farouk and Deidre on the street. Farouk tells Paul that he is lucky no charges were pressed for the fight.

In the stories "Once in a Lifetime," "Year's End," and "Going Ashore," the lives of a girl named Hema and a boy named Kaushik are intertwined from childhood. In "Once in a Lifetime," Hema and Kaushik are children when Kaushik's family moves back to India from America. Kaushik's family returns when he and Hema are teenagers. His mother dies from breast cancer.

The story continues in "Year's End." Kaushik must deal with his father's decision to remarry a much younger widow for companionship. He also becomes a big brother to two small stepsisters. The situation becomes too much for him to handle. Kaushik drives up the East Coast of the United States. While driving, he reflects on having known Hema.

In “Going Ashore,” Hema and Kaushik meet in Rome in the late autumn and early winter of 2004. Hema is an academic engaged to be married, and Kaushik is preparing to leave for Hong Kong for a new assignment. They become lovers but do not commit to each other. On a layover in Thailand for a week, Kaushik goes swimming, only to be killed by the Indian Ocean tsunami on December 26.(BookRags,accessed in 18june,2021).

المخلص

واجه العديد من الكتاب المهاجرين ما بعد الاستعمار العديد من المشاكل خلال تجربتهم مع الهجرة. واحدة منهم جومبا لاهيري في مجموعتها الثانية من القصص القصيرة "الأرض غير معتادة" ، ترسم صورة قوية للحياة في الشتات الهندي الأمريكي. يهدف البحث الحالي إلى دراسة المشكلات التي واجهت المهاجرين ما بعد الاستعمار في جومبا لاهيري "الأرض غير المعتادة" من خلال عدسة هومي بهابها. وينصب تركيز البحث على مناقشة ما بعد الاستعمار ودراستها لأدب الشتات ، وهل سيجد المهاجرون المهجنون ثقافيًا موطنًا لهم و حل مشاكلهم أم سيكون هجينًا وغير مأهول وسيئًا إلى الأبد؟ علاوة على ذلك ، سيعتمد البحث على نهج ما بعد الاستعمار الذي يركز بشكل أساسي على مفاهيم هومي بهابها: التهجين ، والعفوية ، والحيوية ، والتقليد.

الكلمات الرئيسية: ما بعد الكولونيالية ، أدب الشتات ، جومبا لاهيري ، مفاهيم هومي بهابها عن: عدم الانسجام ،

"اللامحدودة" ، "الهجينة" ، و "التقليد".