



A DIASPORIC STUDY OF ISOLATED IDENTITIES IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S *UNACCUSTOMED EARTH*

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Abstract :

Diaspora is a convergence of diversified culture. There is cultural belongingness to the scattered population. Since time immemorial, people have dislocated themselves in search of better opportunities. They imbibe values from their motherland and assimilate in the periphery of their dwelling. Their mind gets bifurcated which they have to inter fuse. In the beginning, lot of hindrances occur in their path but ultimately they leave an impact on the surrounding.

While shifting from one place to another, not only food habits, clothes, living style, language undergoes a transformation, but a complete behavioral transition takes place. This Hybridity, multiculturalism creates a new path of change. On the other hand, it leads to alienation, rootlessness and homesickness. A nostalgia always exist, as to 'Where do they actually belong?'. Despite the blending of both cultures, they feel aloof. Their Hybridity becomes a part of their existence. They synthesize best of both cultures and thus create linguistic, sociological, psychological, historical evolution. Their affinity clings them to ground reality. While this transfusion takes place, the next generation provides new dimensions and scope widens. The struggle of rootlessness and anxiety keeps shifting its pace. As time passes, there is a balanced perspective of life, a negotiation between tradition and modernity comes into cognizance which seems to be the most favorable option for community.

The term ethnic and ethnicity have their roots in the Greek word eth nos which describes a community of common descent. Ethnic criteria include shared historical experiences and memories, myths of common culture and a link with a historic territory or a homeland. The sociocultural upbringing doesn't allow them to settle completely. Conflicts arise due to differences. There is always a craving to go back but due to lack of opportunities and resources, they have to settle and grasp the ongoing circumstances. Whether you live in any part of the world, childhood, teenage memories keep following in core of heart. At the physical part, you may be anywhere but psyche keeps haunting. Various examples are there in which the immigrants have to face multiple challenges as a result of which they have to follow laws of land.

The proposed paper aims to find how Diaspora is depicted in literature in context of Indian American scenario in the light of *Unaccustomed Earth* by Jhumpa Lahiri. The paper seeks to answer the question: How immigrants faced isolation in terms of identity and conflicts in terms of ethnicity?

It is hoped that this study will inform readers about the cultural gap between Indian and American Culture as well as the Hybridity with passage of time.

Keywords: *Cultural Belongingness, Behavioral Transition, Alienation, Ethnic Criteria, Sociocultural Upbringing, Diasporic Literature.*

Introduction of the term Diaspora

When a tree is uprooted, it can't be replanted

When a plant is sown anywhere, it will nurture depending on its requisite needs.

Such is the comparison between an immigrant and the progeny of an immigrant.

With this notion, I would like to share my views about Diaspora. According to an ancient Greek word, Diaspora means "to scatter about". The people of a diaspora scatter from their homeland to places across the globe, spreading the culture as they shift. Migration across the globe is an inseparable part of human history. The people of Indian origin migrated to Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Malaysia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, UK, USA and Canada. Large-scale migration of Indians to the United States of America started only after the repeal of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965. The Indians who migrated to the USA belonged to the class of educated and professional elite such as engineers, scientists and college teachers as well as accountants and businessmen. The United States of America is a land of immigrants, coming from numerous countries. Indian immigrants have occupied a prominent place in American life due to their talent and hard work.

Human beings leave their place of origin for a variety of reasons, e.g., environmental deterioration, political and religious persecution, economic hardship and a sense of adventure. They abandon their homes to avoid starvation or simply to improve their economic status. (Dubey;2003,156). Enjoying a quality of life, which materially is much better than most of their countrymen in the same social strata lead in India, they are loath to give it up... For many whose children have grown up in the western environment and cannot adjust to an 'alien' way of life in their home country, there is no question coming back, leaving the children behind. (Dubey:2003, 165)

ETHNIC CONFLICT

Americans of Indian origin have emerged as an important ethnic group in the US. There is cultural alienation in which on one hand, immigrants cling to the roots and on the other those migrants, who try to be more Americans than Americans themselves. They carry with them ethnic distinctiveness in a plural society, rather than assimilate into another culture. They are concerned with cultural reproduction by which they try to integrate aspects of home and host culture, which they find convenient for their identity. Another issue of immigrants is lack of homogeneity i.e. even after decades of living in America, they are still Bengalis, Tamils, Biharis, Sikhs and so on. Moreover, craving to go back emerges, giving a feeling of nostalgia, alienation and homesickness. There is a confrontation in accepting the other culture which further intensifies the inner struggle, perplexity and anguish. As a community is displaced spatially, physically, geographically, but can't be displaced culturally, emotionally, psychologically leading to a disintegrated

self, sandwiched between two cultures under the trauma of dislocation. This melancholy leads to withdrawal of identity leading to isolation even among crowd. This transition is echoed in the works of Diasporic Literature which exemplifies how binary culture prevails in modern scenario synchronized by next generation.

As Sudesh Mishra says:

...'home' signifies an end to itinerant wandering, in the putting down of roots, 'home' for masala diaspora is linked to the strategic espousal of rootlessness, to the constant mantling and dismantling of the self in makeshift landscapes.(Mehrotra:2017)

It can be classified into three stages:

- *Phase of Rejection:* When an immigrant dejects the other culture and continues one's norms.
- *Phase of Adaptation:* When there is assertion of the fact that they have to survive here only, so adapting takes place.
- *Phase of Hybridity:* When there is inclusion of some aspects and following of one's traits as well.

In these stages, it can be viewed that culture is either crushed, or emerged, or mingled. According to Mathew Arnold, "Culture is a study of perfection within the individual, a study that should elevate the "best self" through a fresh and free search for beauty and intelligence." On the other hand, Homi K. Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture* (1994), talks about feeling of homesickness, of being caught between two clashing cultures, unhomeliness, a concept referred to as double consciousness, this feeling or perception of abandonment by both cultures causes the colonial subject (the colonized person) to become a psychological refugee. Men share nostalgia but women in their traditional roles are transmitters of culture, who give memories a concrete shape in the form of festivals, ethnic food, dress, and language. Nostalgic feelings are not only in form of what they left behind in the past but also what is inaccessible to them in the present, which is exemplified by ethnic fashions, jewellery, spices and dress. While many Indian immigrant women might wear western dress to work, they continue to wear traditional clothes in their homes and for community gatherings symbolizing themselves as custodians of religious and cultural tradition.

When two cultures clash in a text, there is no superior or inferior. They co-exist simultaneously considering the Other as inferior, and their own Culture as superior. Both the cultures that are prevalent, have their own viewpoints, ethnicity, trying to dismantle the Other one demonstrating the privileged culture's hegemony affecting the other Culture. There is an inferior view of the Self, as they have to cope up with the change in their view leading to shaking of their grassroots level and recollection of past, emanating conflicts. Their identity is ebbed due to the tide of dominating culture evacuating from inside. Language, Gender, Race, Society plays a crucial role in exemplifying the cultural assets of two cultures.

Diasporic Literature

Diasporic Literature incorporates works of the individuals who are expatriate, exiled and migrants, writing their existential narrative in various literary forms. In this Literature, the concern of the writer is to project oneself as an ambassador as well as refugee.

Implicitly it includes the loss of inheritance along with a sense of ability to project one's native culture outside the native context... The geographical shift, migration from the native place to the non-native has been the ground for traveler's sensibility reflecting the loss of home and identity, quest for belonging and the pain of isolation in the state of estrangement..(Anand;2010,30).

Furthermore, the works of diaspora writers relate to multiple dimensions like the loss of inheritance, tradition, hybrid cultures, pain of unbelonging, alienation, estrangement and isolation. They have been mediating between different modes of existence-within and without, negotiating between multiculturalism and giving them the opportunity to relocate their culture outside its periphery. In this regard, V.S.Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Divakaruni, Meena Alexander, Jhumpa Lahiri and many others, explores problems and possibilities engendered by the experience of migrancy and diaspora life. In this perspective , the works of Jhumpa Lahiri are about Diasporic Bengali-migrants settled in USA.

Jhumpa Lahiri as a Diasporic writer

Jhumpa Lahiri, one of the most eminent writers of Indian diaspora is preeminently concerned with the complexities of expatriate experience and the traumas of cross cultural adjustment. She was born in 1967 in London to parents from India, raised in Rhode Island and educated at Barnard and Boston University. Her debut collection of stories, *Interpreter of Maladies* won Pulitzer Prize, the PEN/Hemingway Award and The New Yorker Debut of the year. The novel, *The Namesake*, was a New York Times Notable Book, a Los Angeles Times Book Prize finalist, and was selected as one of the best books of the year by USA Today and Entertainment Weekly, among other publications. She has perceptively portrayed the process of transformation in the subjectivity of her female protagonists, who caught in the flux of tradition and modernity, bearing the burden of the past and future aspirations emerge as new persona in the diasporic space. Uprooted from their hinterland and cluttered into an alien land these diasporic women counter the problematics of belonging by reconfiguring their subjectivities.(Anand ;2010,71). Her existential struggle to establish her identity and assert her individuality in the diasporic space surfaces in various stories. Homi K. Bhabha calls "hybrid " space or "in-between space"- a space in diasporic consciousness created by encounters of the immigrants with new ways of life in a new culture(Bhabha 1994;1).Further this space also empowers the women to assess the credibility and viability of the traditional sociocultural value system and refashion their selves. She herself expresses vacuity in one of her interviews," It bothered me growing up, the feeling that there was no single place to which I fully belonged."(jhumpainterview.htm). Her book *Unaccustomed Earth* incorporates stories pertaining to relations probing their sense of alienation and sense of displacement. The question of forgetting past is impossible which acts as an intruder in lives of diasporic writers. In an interview , she further elaborates by saying," I think that for immigrants, the challenges of exile, the loneliness, the constant sense of alienation, and the knowledge of and longing for a lost world, are more explicit and distressing than for their children. On the other hand, the problem for the children of immigrants-those with strong ties to their country of origin- is that they feel neither one thing nor the other. This has been my experience, in any case "(jhumpainterview.htm). This elucidates that as a diasporic writer, she opens the minds and hearts of the protagonists to look into themselves and examine the isolation in their identity.Along with that, she depicts human enigma on a compass trapping inner psyche acutely to gather matrix of consciousness.Shaping of identities is craftsmanship of Lahiri who has perfectly articulated the secrets of human heart.

Unaccustomed Earth as a Diasporic Study of Isolated Identities

The title *Unaccustomed Earth* is taken from *The Custom-House* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The quotation in the beginning of the book casts a beam of light on Diaspora, penning the thought that human nature will flourish better if it is given different environments. This reflects the thought to turn a new leaf, conveying one needs to shed the baggage of the past to walk the path of future. This Earth is Unaccustomed, implies the thought that one has to grapple the situation as nothing is familiar to you. This grabs the eyeballs, setting a holistic perception of Diaspora, pulling strings at right places to awaken cultural tussle. The book drills into the psyche of characters talking about the seamy side of life and their cultural collision. The identities are isolated and on the verge of collapse as they are thrown out of gear. It seems American Culture is trying to lead Indian Culture by nose which intensifies the situation, creating confusion for characters, who stay lurch in the middle. Some of them bask in glory, others get a new lease of life, others settle score as the camera zooms in their lives. Overall, They are flooded with emotions, which is a hindrance in their cultural mixing. This is a breakthrough in underlining Diaspora and Ethnic Conflict.

The book *Unaccustomed Earth* tells about the story of people who were dislocated and relocated, but felt aloof from the core of heart displaying Diaspora is not just a phenomena rather a whole process of shifting. The book opens with a quote from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Custom-House*, from where the title is taken, which conveys the notion that it is a process that continues forever and is rather beneficial. EARTH belongs to everyone and it is not familiar to anyone like the spices are mixed, so the flavors arise, as the species are mixed, so the generations thrive. So, it can be traced that with the advent of mixed race, mixed cultures flourish. In today's scenario, it is indispensable that people don't shift. In the context of Indian -American context, it is evident too, as the data states that many Indians have shifted in America, England, Australia, etc.

With generations, a lot of difference is immensely visible. All the stories have their origin in America, but flashes back in Indian sub-continent. The topography is American but psychology is Indian. Conflicts are not within different characters but in a character as which way to chose which is visible as chaos in not at geographical level, but at emotional level. Synchronization is being done for the communion but *Unaccustomed Earth* is delving deeply into the hearts, breaking apart poignancy. No character seems happy jovial, contented and search for identity is reinforced through interplay of mixed emotions. By writing short stories, she surrounds every character with self-importance and brilliantly marks the equilibrium within the character of Indian and American. The book *Unaccustomed Earth* is a collection of eight stories divided into two parts in which the first part has five stories and the second part revolves around the story of Hema and Kaushik. These anecdotes are interwoven through Diaspora conjoined by isolated identities. Jhumpa Lahiri beautifully and perfectly narrates how the characters are alienated from their motherland and feel secluded due to their migration.

- The 1st story titled *Unaccustomed Earth* is the story of a girl named Ruma whose parents are Bengali but she is married to Adam, an American and follows American Culture but feels alienated due to her mother's death and father's indifferent attitude. Her mother is an epitome of Bengali culture, who left Homeland physically but in Host land could not settle herself completely. She continued to profess her customs and felt homesick. She says "Growing up, moving to a foreign place for sake of marriage"(11). She didn't befriend any American and had her own circle of Bengali friends in Pennsylvania. It was her mother who would stuck out in this wet Northern landscape, in

her brightly colored saris, her dime-sized marooned , her jewels but Ruma was contrary to her mother as she preferred pants and skirts over saris. Even language underwent transformation as English has taken over Bengali as she says 'Her own Bengali was slipping from her.'(12) Her mother used to lament the fact that there would be no one to whom to pass on her things. Diaspora can be visible in language, dress, food as well as interior of the house. A very divergent attitude is seen in Akash who is totally oblivious to Bengali Culture and dejects it. Ruma and her father ate food with fingers but it was not allowed to Akash who in fact, preferred macaroni and cheese over Indian food. While he was a boy, he was fed the taste of Indian food but now he ate from boxes which implies how the American culture is preferred. Even family values suffer disintegration which is evident from the fact that Ruma's Father left his 80yr old mother for siblings in India when his father died as "There was no question of moving the family back to India". It is easier for men to move ahead in life leaving back the past but isolation is more visible on feminine counterpart which is perceived through the utterance "The isolation of living in an American suburb, something about which his wife complained."(29) Ruma imbibed cultural heritage from her mother but adopts foreign culture and thus has a blend of both. The death of mother symbolizes the leaving of motherland but her presence in story indicates that despite death, she resides in memory. The story ends on a note of surprise when Ruma discovers that her father is not missing her mother, but has an affair which leaves her aghast and shaken from inside due to this betrayal. She gets a blend of both culture and thus despite being hybrid, belongs to nowhere and this strikes at her isolation. Ruma's father hands over the responsibility of cultivating the land to Ruma hinting at the existence of their cultural past and values and her attention to make Akash aware of her roots.

- In the second story titled Hell-Heaven, Bengali Culture is depicted through linguistic level by the words like 'kaku', 'Da', 'Boudi' which are synonymous with uncle, brother and sister-in-law respectively. Along with that, practice of vermilion in the centre parting of hair, and red and white bangles which is unique to Bengali married women marks a nostalgic note. This is a story in which the male moves ahead and the wife retains the old traditions but feels nostalgic when someone from her homeland arrives into their lives. He is Pranab who shares the same feelings of home-sickness like Aparna and thus revives the tradition lost due to new culture . As is seen in the story, music also plays a crucial role in getting mesmerized to one's own culture which is evident in the medley of songs from Hindi films of legends like Raj Kapoor, Nargis ,Dev Anand which depict the return of the native in emotional sense. Everything turned smoothly till Pranab befriended and married Deborah, an American, as this turned to be against the wishes of Pranab's parents who wished to marry their son to a Bengali girl. Pranab tried to teach Deborah Bengali language by saying ' khub bhalo and aacha' and pick up food with fingers instead of fork so that she should mix in their culture. Isolation seems on the part of every character as Pranab deceived everyone i.e.his parents, his wife Deborah and Boudi Aparna, as he left his married life and two daughters and declared that he loved married Bengali woman which proves that he was faithful to none of the relation. Aparna felt so disheartened that as she started loving him but never declared due to which she tried to commit suicide but was saved by neighbour. The next generation rarely seems to follow Bengali culture as they have been born and brought up in American Culture which can be viewed from the fact that twin girls of Deborah and Pranab named Srabani and Sabitri were called Bonny and Sara who barely looked Bengali and spoke only English. Furthermore, Aparna too condemns wearing Salwar Kameez. Life in suburbs is being hated and feeling of loneliness is reiterated in this story.

- In the two stories, Lahiri stresses the binaries of Indian/Western women. In the first story, Ruma and the second story Usha neglect their mother as their role -models and pity them for choosing their life-partners who neglects them. Lahiri has rendered a queer sense of exoticism to all the women of second generation immigrants. They adapt to the American culture superficially but their hearts still show fidelity to their cultural roots. The question of identity is more perplexing in the third story titled A Choice of Accommodations which revolves around Amit who felt aloofness due to mingling of two cultures. Amit neither had touch with his Langford friends nor had nostalgia for the school. Apart from having Indian names Maya and Monika, his daughters appeared truly American .Amit's father wanted to go to India for the perfection of a laser technique but he continued to stay in America as he never felt homesick or sentimental. Amit married Megan, an American girl secretly as his parents wished to marry a Bengali girl but there was dissatisfaction and resentment in marriage. This desertion is within him, due to his parents who left him in America for pursuing another course in medical field. Moreover, his wife also remains engrossed in her work due to which he feels secluded. Amit's mother loved to wear jewels which Megan never wore as they were 'too ornate for her taste'. It is thus seen that American Culture presides over Indian Culture. Shaping of identities due to two cultures leads to the dismantling of self .
- The fourth story titled Only Goodness, is a story of two contrasting siblings Sudha and Rahul whose comparison strikes the chord. Sudha is a promising girl , fulfilling the dreams of her parents while Rahul is a representative of all those misled immigrant children who ruin their lives due to emotional draining and psychological alienation. Both of them have adapted American Culture but they are demarcated by the extent of it as Sudha liked drinking but her parents didn't like it ,so she did it secretly. They have started celebrating Christmas and instead of saying name of their God, Rahul says 'Jesus' which shows he has imbibed American Culture. Sudha 'preferred homes of her American friends crammed and piled with things, soft beds unmade, toothpaste asking their sinks'(). There is a mention of discrimination regarding house-renting in London in the sixties where half the rentals said Whites only. At that point of time, Mr.Pal (A Bengali) allowed them to live. Suddenly, her parents faced a life sentence of being foreign. There was different opinion of Sudha and Rahul on Immigration , as Sudha thought it as an ailment 'that ebbed and flowed like a cancer' while Rahul was of the opinion that his father left India 'to get rich'. Their mother complains of Too many freedom, too much fun in America while her own life wasn't always about fun when she was young. In India, hardships prevail which are not prevalent in America. Both of them married American as Sudha married Roger and Rahul liked Elena, eight years older than him and mother of a girl. Parents approved of Sudha's marriage as Roger was born in India but Rahul's marriage was disapproved as he did it secretly.Even Guests at Sudha's wedding were all Bengalis hinting how Indian Culture is prevalent. Moreover, it is visible in the Anna prashan for Neel, son of Sudha which acts as a ceremonious act. Rahul from the beginning was careless and it is at its peak when he left Neel in bath-tub and went to sleep after drinking. Neel was saved by his parents who reached at the point when he was about to be drowned after which Sudha felt disgusted and asked Rahul to leave, which leaves him isolated.
- The fifth story is about a girl Sangeeta who has been sent various marriage proposals which she declines and is betrayed by her boyfriend. Her isolation marks the end of first part that she neither accepts Culture of host land nor homeland.

In the First Part, it is witnessed that Diaspora is at two levels; In the First Generation, there is rejection of new Culture and continuance of old culture; In the Second Generation, rejection of old culture and assimilation of new culture. It is visible in language, food habits, attire, interior of the house, cultural values and norms in which characters seem to follow new pattern. It is this way of living attitude, which arouses ethnic conflict where one is entangled in web of what to follow and what not. With the passage of time, old culture feels deterioration and thus gradually feels diminished. Moreover, new generation feels annoyed in following that. Familial relationships are also at stake due to this, as the marriage of Bengali with American is criticized by Bengalis while Americans seem to adapt them as their culture allows them to mix freely and marry easily. Indian cuisine is relished for the most part like rice, mishti, pickles. Female are kept in limelight in every story and they are diagnosed from interior to exterior in adapting or rejecting old culture. Men seem to adapt new environment in every sense and their transformation does not occur. Nostalgia, rootlessness, anxiety, homesickness are always witnessed in inner striving of heart which craves to surpass the present and go back in past, but trying to comprehend the present scenario gets intermingled which leads to a hyphenated existence.

II. The Second Part has three stories which are centred around the lives of Hema and Kaushik; 'Once in a Lifetime' is childhood of them; 'Year's end' deals with their youth and 'Going Ashore' is their final submission to fate. The lives of Hema and Kaushik are widely apart but they are conjoined by fate. They are two isolated identities in themselves who are contrary to each other but are attracted towards each other as opposite poles attract each other. In the first story, Once in a Lifetime, the story is nostalgic in the sense that it describes the Indian dress kurta in such a way that reminds of Calcutta 'white pajamas with tapered legs, waist wide enough, a turquoise kurta and a black velvet vest embroidered with plastic pearls', sent by grandmother from Calcutta. The lives lived in Calcutta is left behind and they have moved forward. The social strata of the family of Hema's and Kaushik parents was completely different but in America, they had same standards conveying the fact that in the case of immigration, one has to begin everything new which gives rise to social equality. Moreover, once you shift, you cannot go back as life does not remain the same. Hema's mother is deeply engrossed in Bengali culture and considered the idea of a child sleeping alone 'a cruel American practice' and did not encourage it. She even considered indecency in wearing skirt. On the other hand, is mother of Kaushik who is contrast to her as she has imbibed American Culture. After their return from Bombay, a drastic change had occur in their lifestyle as they have started drinking wine, started smoking, wearing slacks. Even, Kaushik loved Bombay but Hema loved America thus suggesting that they have difference of opinion due to their upbringing and as in their teenage, they are quite immature. There is a line of demarcation between Hema's mediocre life and Kaushik's extravagant life which gives a rise to their varied personality but destiny connects them emotionally as the revelation of a shocking surprise that Kaushik's mother has cancer and the reason for their shift from Bombay is this only as the relatives remind of her death which pinches her more than idea of death itself. This poignant scene is remarkable as one wishes to migrate, as to die peacefully, away from daily sympathizing creating panic. In America, nobody knows this and therefore poking of nose won't be there. Such is the cultural difference in Indian and American perception of living. Isolation is within Kaushik as his learning about his mother's death has hollowed him from inside and he even can't share his grief with anyone. His father took a lot of care keeping in account that she should not be deprived of anything which is truly appreciable.

b. The second story Year's End enters into some years after the first story in which scenario is totally changed where emptiness of surroundings as well as of the heart of Kaushik surfaces. Father of Kaushik has married another Bengali lady which disheartens son who is still clung to his mother's memories.

Before her death, Kaushik's mother had decided that her belongings would go back to Calcutta, which shows her affection and attachment towards her motherland as she uttered 'I don't want all that beautiful material turn into curtains'(). It was thus made sure that her saris, blouses petticoats were sent to India. Even 'her gold went back to Calcutta, distributed to poor women who had worked for my extended family as ayahs or cooks or maids'(). It is disturbing for Kaushik to adopt another lady as his mother and his reluctance is noticed when Chitra, who is the mother of two girls named Rupa and Piu enters into the life of Kaushik. With the passage of time, he befriends the two girls gradually but finds Chitra unmatchable to his mother's style. Chitra's Bengali mindset doesn't suit Kaushik who is accustomed to his mother's modernist approach, modern architectural style. He doesn't prefer Indian food, dislikes stainless steel plate, pickles of mango and lime, brought by Chitra. He doesn't understand that it takes time to adjust to new environments and thus judges Chitra on these grounds. Fear is inculcated in the minds of Rupa and Piu not to wander alone on surroundings by their mother which is contrary to Kaushik who has been self-dependent and free-minded since the beginning. He is trying his best to adjust in the present situation but the reminder of old days penetrates his heart so deeply that seeing the photos of his mother in hands of Rupa and Piu arouses his temper due to which he scolds them and leaves the house in the absence of parents which throws a wrong impression on his personality. This is a marker of his desolation which has kept hovering him as he is unable to face his past. Kaushik too has suffered immigration and thus recalls the pain of it 'I was born here but it was still hard, leaving and then coming back again'.

c. Going Ashore is the last story of this part as well as of the book. It further creates isolation in the lives of Hema and Kaushik who are engrossed in their lives. They are two paradoxical identities yet their ways strike. Hema had a monotonous way of living. She is just passing life not living it thus creating a vacuum in her heart and this void is filled by Kaushik who meets her by chance and her life rejuvenates. It gives a new sense of hope and a new ray of life that their life will be moving towards betterment but destiny plays a crucial role that despite their meeting, they are separated forever as if they are not made for each other. Hema is getting married to Navin but her inner strings play to the tune of Kaushik's love who is also attracted towards her. Kaushik has travelled many places yet a part of nowhere. He is alone in a crowd and surrounded by seclusion. He suggests Hema not to marry Navin indirectly hinting to marry him. After this, Hema and Kaushik separate ways as he visits the shore where a tragedy is awaiting for him which took a toll of his life ending his chapter forever. On the other hand, Hema is married to Navin who takes charge of her life without comprehending what is in her heart thus creating a shallow space again as she married a man whom she didn't love which is a death at emotional level.

Conclusion

As the book opens with death of a mother prevailing, it ends with the death of a boy as well making a complete circle compelling the readers to assume that life is not the truth but Death levels all. It is noteworthy that isolated identities are the mouthpieces of writers who are the makers of their own destiny due to the path they choose and embark on their journey. They might mingle, unify or assimilate the foreign culture but the fruition is nothingness. Diaspora makes the story more enigmatic as their shifting left them of nowhere. All the stories are masterstrokes regarding their ending which leaves the readers spell-bound and eyes wide-open till the last word. They are all Indians first and Americans afterwards or may be never. They are torn between the tussle of two cultures. Lahiri's forte lies in depicting

overpowering feeling of otherness in an alien culture. They neither feel at home with the Indian ideologies of their parents nor can they assimilate themselves in American way of life. The gap between two culture seems unbridgeable. The parents in Lahiri's world want their children to advance materially but remain culturally rooted to their own land but their meanderings into the American wilderness convinces them of their being denizens of some other world. Here, identities emerge, submerge and reemerge and each character has to work its own version of the unique self. The diaspora is trapped betwixt two variant cultures that could never join to form a full circle as the characters are poised between the old world of India and the newness of America.

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