

A STUDY OF CULTURAL ASSIMILATION IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S UNACCUSTOMED EARTH

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Abstract

This paper examines the cultural translation in "Unaccustomed Earth," a collection of short stories by Jhumpa Lahiri. In addition, it examines the complexities of family life and resentment. It also provides room for how the cultural translation affected their life. This study also focuses on immigration issues and how expatriates adapt to living in a foreign country. Some characters are unable to adapt to the new culture. They fail somewhere and get despondent. This paper examines the lives of such characters as well. Longing occupies a unique place in diasporic existence, and this collection of short stories also explores the intricate network of family relationships. In this immigrant lifestyle, the family relationship is considerably different. As a result of the effect of both the host culture and the native culture, human interactions will lose their significance. The immigrants' lives were unpredictable due to their sense of being 'in-between' This collection of short stories focuses on the protagonists' contrasting emotional experiences as a result of migration. Through the assertion of international identity, the storylines grow.

Key Words: Migration, Alienation, Diaspora, cultural assimilation, and Identity Formation are the key terms of this study.

Introduction

In 1967, Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London. They moved to the United States when she was two years old. She was raised in Rhode Island. Her true identity was NilanjanaSudheshna. She completed her undergraduate degree at Bernard College and held a PhD in Renaissance Studies. Her short stories appeared in American periodicals such as the New Yorker. She received the Trans-Atlantic Award, the O'Henry Award, the PEN/Hemingway Award, and the Addison Metcalf Award. Her debut collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, making her the first American of Indian descent to do so. *Unaccustomed Earth*, her second

collection of short stories, was published in 2008.

In *Unaccustomed Earth*, human relationships and cultural integration are explored. *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) is a two-part collection of eight stories. She attempts to convey a spectrum of feelings in each of these tales. The stories are about personal tragedies and contrasting events that shape the direction of a person's life. Lahiri occasionally employed small details with more considerable metaphorical significance. All the stories focus on dislocation and alienation, which cause loss, uprooting, and a disturbed mentality. Because, in their view, a conflict between the country of residency and origin is high. Because, in their opinion, the friction

between the country of residence and the place of origin is a problem. In Lahiri's fiction, "brain Circulation" causes the Diaspora. She is most frequently attacked for oversimplifying Diaspora because she is a second-generation immigrant from wealthy families that enjoy freedom from caste, gender, and religious discrimination. *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008), her second collection of short stories, was awarded the Frank O'Connor Prize. All of the pieces in this book address issues of belonging and alienation. Because she endured the same pressure, she can be included in Rushdie's midnight children group. Her stories center on the themes of various identities, displacement, roots, and rootlessness. Lahiri's notion of Diaspora is comparable to Mishra's.

According to him, diasporas are people who wish to investigate the significance of the hyphen. However, perhaps not press the hyphen out of concern that doing so might result in widespread communal insanity. They inhabit a precarious episteme of real or imagined displacements, a self-imposed sensation of exile, and are haunted. By apparitions, by ghosts from within that incite irredentist or separatist movements. (Mishra 2007)

In every Lahirian storey, the first-generation immigrants are depicted as hanging between two worlds. They are currently undergoing assimilation. They are in the process of translating continuously. According to Lahiri, the essence of diaspora existence and the remedy to an identity issue are culture and translation. For her, translation is not limited to language alone but also includes the translation of culture, as it is necessary to exist in a foreign nation. Because it becomes necessary to endure the psychological stress or anguish brought on by migration, it is a necessary cognitive process for survival in a foreign land. In her narratives, she discusses intranslatability. Occasionally, individuals fail to adapt to the host culture and remain in failure. They have a sensation of alienation or many belongings. These characters have a profound sense of defeat and loss.

Every story in *The Unaccustomed Earth* has a pervasive sense of loss, offset by the

promise that cultural translation provides. In the first story, *Unaccustomed Earth*, Akash, the son of Ruma, becomes deeply rooted in strange soil. Because he is half American, assimilating into their culture is relatively simple for him. At the novel's beginning, Ruma is waiting for her father, who lives alone after her mother's death. She attempted to maintain contact with him via postcards. She cannot accept that her father will be moving in with her family.

However, she does not disclose this to anyone. Through gardening, the narrator describes how he formed a link with his grandfather and eventually with his Indian heritage. He might be able to learn a few Bengali phrases and a rhyme. Despite being a second-generation immigrant, Ruma could not successfully adapt to the host culture. Her loss was due to her mother's passing. Because she initially refused to confess her absence. Her ideas of her father returning and remaining perplexed her.

In "Years End," the relationship between a mother and son parallels that between Ruma and her father. In this narrative, Kaushik rejects his father's second marriage. His second wife had two children and was a widow. Initially, he desired to rebel, but he eventually accepted the reality.

I was instantly revolted by her presence and her sight in the kitchen. I had no recollection of my mother cooking in the kitchen, but the space still evokes her presence more than any other room in the house. (263YE).

In the storey, he attempted to be kind to his stepmother and stepsisters despite his deep-seated hatred for them. Therefore, when the time comes, he pours venom at his two step sisters. He responds, "You have no right to view those; they are not yours" — "Well, you have witnessed for yourselves how lovely my mother was. How much more beautiful and classy is yours? Your mother is little compared to a servant who washes and prepares my father's clothes and food. It is the only explanation. She is the sole reason why both of you are present. (286,287 YE) The sensation of loss and pain alienated Kaushik and his father. His hatred of

Chitra and her two innocent daughters resulted from his wrath toward his father. The storey Hell-Heaven represents the desperate desire to get planted in alien soil. Aparna, the protagonist, was unable to adapt to the lifestyle and culture of her adopted country. Once, she left India and relocated to Berlin. The individual then travelled to Central Squire in the United States. She was obsessed with her previous life in India. It made her life even worse. Because she passionately attempted to recreate her Indian life within her flat, she was forced into a love triangle. When Pranab joined their lives, everything changed for her because her husband threw her life into disarray by bringing her to a distant country.

On the other hand, Pranab filled the hole with Indian music, cuisine, movies, and memories. In this narrative, the loss is recovered, but only momentarily. He might transform her home into India. This article also addresses the collapse of conventional Indian weddings. The daughter of Aparna could be adapted to western culture. Throughout her childhood and adolescence, she struggled with her mother, who was obsessed with her Indian heritage. Aparna was constantly concerned about the influence of American society on her daughter. Aparna's life in the United States was misery. Both were foreign to one another for a considerable amount of time. For a long time, the second generation in almost all stories viewed the first generation with a critical attitude by American standards. The second secret love relationship in "Going Ashore" is between Hema and Kaushik. In this narrative, Hema is engaged to Navin and returns to India for the wedding ceremony.

Nonetheless, she intended to remain in Italy and spend time there. There, she met one of her childhood pals, Kaushik. She remembered her childhood crush on him. Now a photojournalist, Kaushik is an upstanding international citizen who has travelled abroad. Something weird existed between them. They were mistaken for a couple. She formed feelings for him. They went into Kaushik's room and stayed for a

while. His delicate touch and care for her forged a connection between them. The secret love eventually developed into an intense intimacy, and they began making love. Hema does not feel bad because she is engaged to Navin. They forged a deep bond and stayed together for a while, during which they made love, explored new areas, captured new photographs, and discovered new locations. She avoided Navin and enjoyed spending time with Kaushik, despite knowing these relationships would terminate within a week.

In each of these tales, Lahiri depicts a range of delicate connections. Few of them can continue their relationship, while most fail elsewhere. In these stories, a variety of marital and extramarital relationships undergo turbulence. In "Only Goodness," Lahiri depicts the relationship between siblings. Sudha and Rahul are the two New York-based siblings. Their connection was comparable to any other sibling relationship in the world, complete with minor conflicts, jealousy, and jealousy. Both of them developed an illicit drinking habit. Rahul's proclivity grew and became uncontrollable as they grew older. Her sisterly advice no longer affects him and has not harmed his education, profession, or life.

Later, Sudha wed Roger, and she now has a child. This drinking habit was problematic for Sudha's family. Her only child Neel just escaped death. After this encounter, she told Rahul to leave her alone. In "Nobody's Business," Lahiri describes unadulterated love. It is the tale of three prisoners living in an apartment. Sang is of Bengali descent and has just fallen in love with Egyptian Farouk. He had a more refined appearance than Paul. Since he was secretly in love with her, Paul felt envious of her connection with Sang. Paul saw their relationships and breakups. He discovered that Farouk was having an affair with her. One day, he received a phone call from a woman who claimed to be Farouk's lover. Initially, Sang did not believe Paul and yelled at him to stay out of his business. Paul may

later substantiate his comments with facts and save her from Farouk's betrayal.

Conclusion

In these pieces from her 2008 collection "Unaccustomed Earth," Lahiri depicts various human relationships. Each story has a unique scenario but focuses on the same connections and past and present themes. It discusses how migration affects the formation of identities and relationships. The effects of migration, cultural assimilation and Diaspora are described in detail in each of these narratives. These are accounts of identity readjustments and redefinitions. In each of these narratives, first- and second-generation immigrants are separated. Cultural assimilation is the fundamental theme of each of these tales.

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