



The Lowland by Jhumpa Lahiri: A Thematic Study

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M.A. IV Semester student for the partial fulfillment of paper **4.5 Dissertation in English**, represents his original research work and it has not been previously submitted for any degree or diploma in any university.

The work has been carried out by him under my guidance and supervision in the Department of English K.U.P.G. Centre, Haveri.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the entire work embodied in my Dissertation

THE LOWLAND BY JHUMPA LAHIRI: A THEMATIC STUDY has been carried out by me and that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree or diploma of any university previously.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Two brothers bound by the tragedy.

A fiercely brilliant woman haunted by her past.

A country torn by revolution.

A love that lasts long past death.

[Cover page of 'The Lowland'- Random House India, 2013]

“It (The Lowland) sounds epic in sweep, especially when combined with the laden, potent themes, the intertwining of politics and sexuality, cauterizing of emotional wounds and grievances, and the repetition of places and personalities.”

[Siddharth Deb, *Sins of the Brothers*- review in New York Times]

The Lowland, a recently published novel, which was long listed for the Man Booker Prize 2013, has written by Jhumpa Lahiri, a British descent Indian-American writer, is the first literary work came before my sight when I begin to work for the dissertation work for the partial fulfillment of my Master's degree in English. Because of my regular reading of magazine I came to know about this novel. Then I went through one of the author's interviews in the internet and was able to know the research she had done to write the story about the Naxalite movement.

Basically, this novel throws light on the familial matters like home, a couple, children, their education and achievements, their fields of interests like chemistry and physics, personal and political life, indigenous and imported ideologies they follow, pre and post marriage life and finally the two marriages which leads the family to a situation like a barren land, without love. Apart from this, the novel portrays the cultural, social, traditional as well as modern and developmental aspects of life in its journey with the reader.

Moreover, from its middle pages it brings the readers to the view of Rhode Island, an American seashore city. There we can come to know how the academic universities' activities and the process take place. Then onwards we come across several elements of the diasporic writings such as nostalgia, quest for identity, struggle for existence, schizophrenia, nomadic terror, homelessness, double identity, and others. Along with them, there is a deep concern for love and responsibility. These all are the points/themes/factors which mattered me to take *The Lowland* for my dissertation work.

The four lines, which have been mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, can explain the whole story of the novel.

“Two brothers bound by tragedy”

In this first line two brothers, Subhash and Udayan Mitra were born just fifteen months apart to a railway clerk and a homemaking mother, who used to get the neighbors' saris to make them embroidered and help her husband to maintain the homely expenses. Both were inseparable and used to play together in their childhood. Their age difference never mattered so they joined the same standard.

They used to smoke cigarettes together after their parents gone to bed. They walked together in the streets.

But these are the two boys who caught by different types of tragedies at their adulthood. Udayan, a brilliant physician, would adopt Communism, an imported ideology which leads him to his execution by the policemen in front of his house due to his participation in the murder of a policeman and bomb explosion.

At the other hand Subhash, a PhD holder in Oceanography, would marry Gauri, his brother's wife, after Udayan's death in the disapproval of his parents and brought her to America. After Bela's birth, once she left him alone with the girl when they visited Calcutta. He raised the child and Bela lived her life as a nomad. This made him very unhappy, so he told the truth to her that he wasn't her father. After thinking a lot about the facts she rejoined her. But he never became a father of his own child but, at the end, he had four children and seven grandchildren of others. These are the tragedies of the two brothers.

“A fiercely brilliant woman haunted by her past”

Coming to the second sentence which is about Gauri, chief female character of the novel, became the wife both brothers, Udayan and then Subhash. She was a student of Philosophy in the Presidency College. Because of Udayan's friendship with her brother Manash, they meet at her house. So after some days of conversation he proposed her for his love. She married him with her brother's support without informing their parents. Up to the second year of their marriage she adjusted with her in-laws. In that year, a week before the Durga Puja, Udayan was shot dead in their presence. She knew that he would be executed because he had told everything

to her what he had done. In fact she had helped him several times in his plan to murder the policeman. After his death she had conceived and became a widow,

“She sat with her head down, her wrists bare, dressed in a sari of crisp white.”
[p.94]

Subhash, without the patience to see the situation of Gauri in between the Indian customs, he asked her to marry him and promised to give her freedom to continue her studies and became the father of his brother’s daughter. After giving birth to Bela, Subhash brought her to Calcutta in a summer when she was twelve. On their return she left the home permanently and settled in California as a teacher of philosophy. There she got the sexual relation up to her completion of dissertation.

Subhash’s mother had told him that she would be Udayan’s wife ever and she will never love him. That is why, on her return to Rhode Island in her sixties, Bela treated her with anger and said,

“You’re as dead to me as he [Udayan] is. The only difference is that you left me by choice.” [p.313]

She went back to Calcutta and had a view on Tollygunge, their home and became surprised of the two ponds and the lowland’s absence. She came again, for the first time, because she haunted by the things which have done by her. Still no one knew what she had done. She had haunted by her past because she only knew what had happened in their lives clearly.

“She was the sole accuser, the sole guardian of her guilt. Protected by Udayan, overlooked by the investigator, taken away by Subhash. Sentenced in the very act of being forgotten, punished by means of her release.” [p.320]

“A country torn by revolution”

This is the third line which had indicates the Naxalbari movement or revolution in India in the years of 1960s and 70s. Here in this novel this revolution in India, especially Calcutta and its effects on the characters like Udayan, Gauri and his parents has a vital importance. From his college days he got influenced by the communist ideologies which would bring changes in the country, as he thought. But Subhash never supported him because,

“Though he sat beside Udayan [in one of his political meetings], he felt invisible. He wasn’t convinced that an imported ideology could solve India’s problems.” [p.28]

But Udayan had continued to participate in the party’s meetings and some of the training camps. He used to paint the slogans of Kanu Sanyal and Charu Mujumdar, his party’s leaders, at nighttime. When he had written the letters to Subhash to America, he always concluded them with the quotations like,

“War will bring revolution: revolution will stop the war” [p.43]

In the previous pages of the first half of the novel, we can see some other inspirable meaningful quotes by Charu Mujumdar and Kanu Sanyal. Some of them are,

“By the year 2000, that is only thirty-one years from now, the people of the whole world will be liberated from all kinds of exploitation of man by man and will celebrate the worldwide victory of Marxism, Leninism, Mao Tse-tung’s thoughts.” [p.33]

“We will certainly be able to make a new sun and a new moon shine in the sky of our great motherland.” [p.33]

These two are the quotations said by Kanu Sanyal and Charu Mujumdar respectively after the declaration of their party, Communist Party of India, Marxist-Leninist, on Lenin’s birthday April 22, 1969. These are the words which have inspired a lot of young people nationwide including Udayan. So after visiting some places where the common people were suffering and Naxalbari, he had fully involved in that revolution. Then he began to live two lives, one was personal, and the other was political life.

He had given the responsibility to kill the policeman in Jadhavpur and a bomb explosion because he was a brilliant physician. With the over enthusiasm, having the help of Gauri unknowingly to her, he did the assigned work successfully. Because of these misdeeds, he had shot dead by the reserved police force in front of their house and never returned his dead body too to his family. But after a few years only his name had gone out of the minds of the people.

Like him Charu Mujumdar also died without any selfish wishes. Coming to the chairman of the party Kanu Sanyal’s issue, he had killed himself without accepting the treatment in a government hospital for his kidney failure, in 2010. Before that in one of his final interviews he said,

“I was popular once, I have lost my popularity. I am unwell.” [p.281]

As explained above, this country had been torn up by several revolutions like Communist, Maoist, Naxalite and others. These were limited only for several regions like The First Indian Freedom War or The Sepoy Mutiny. So they had to face failure. That is why the country, without a full pledged organization, is torn by revolution.

“A love that lasts long past death”

Having the characters like Subhash, Udayan and Gauri’s triangle love story, a different one, in our mind the fourth sentence is more accurate about their love for each other. Because as Lahiri herself said in an interview, about the main triangular love story, of course, is the one that forms between Subhash; his brother Udayan or the memory of Udayan; and his wife, Gauri, she answered that,

“Triangles are very helpful in building a story because the triangle is a stable thing... there is something about it that creates drama... I think they’re wonderful in terms of creating tension. I think so much of literature, so many novels and stories, have that tension, of two people wanting something and what is the thing they want?, or who is the person they want? It can go in so many different directions.”

As she said she had created that tension of triangular love story between Subhash, Udayan and Gauri and also between Subhash, Gauri and Bela. But the former one is the important one. Gauri and Udayan had met in her house in North Calcutta while he came to meet her brother Manash. As the time ran, he approached without any hesitation and met her in their college corridors and married her in 1970 and informed that to Subhash through a letter.

They had passed a few days in his friend Tarun-da’s home. Then they moved to Tollygunge. She had adjusted, though unable, the environment for Udayan only. Both were decided not to have children until his brother would have. Having no sense of helping, she had been helping him in his Naxalite activities. In that incident he was injured and at the night of his last days both were amalgamated, and this made her pregnant in the future. A week before the Durga Pujo, the police shot him with the three bullets. This made her to become a widow in a very early age.

Then after the return of Subhash, she felt his same as Udayan's. He decided to bring her the Rhode Island to rescue her from the irritable Indian customs for a widow. So he married her. He had the faith that they would have led a happy life of their own after having Udayn's baby delivered. But that was not her wish, she still loving her late husband's memories. That is why she used take the birth-control pills before their union each time. Moreover, she had that guilt for marrying her husband's own brother. So she left Rhode Island to California in her way of thinking and became a teacher of philosophy.

She had earned the academic identity in the field of philosophy. But she still had the nostalgic haunting towards Udayan's love.

“But in the dream Udayan remains a boy in his twenties. Three decades younger than Gauri is now, almost a decade younger than Bela. His wavy hair is swept back..... She tries to resist telling him that he should have nothing to do with her. She tells him that she has married Subhash.” [p.230]

This shows the dilemma she had in her mind now also when she had lost Udayan and left Subhash. Here at the other hand Subhash still not taken any step to be a father remained a (imposter) father up to his sixties. Then he had a good relation and married Elise Silva at the end. But Gauri once attracted by a professor and shared the sexual emotions with Lorna, felt alone and remained alone at the end.

Gauri had loved Udayan very much and tried to love Subhash. Like that Udayan loved both of them. But Subhash loved Holly, married Gauri and remarried Elise Silva. Like this, when we go through the novel, this triangular love story creates tension, suspense and made the novel as a 'page-turner'.

In this dissertation, I have mainly concentrated on the four themes of novel, *The Lowland*, by Jhumpa Lahiri. The important themes which have been discussed here are,

- *The Lowland* as a Family Saga
- *The Lowland* as a Novel of Diaspora
- *The Lowland* as a Novel of Movement
- Suspense in *The Lowland*

First of all, we need to understand the meaning of the word, ‘Lowland’, as far as the novel is concerned. It is a place in Tollygunge where the two brothers used to play. When the rain comes in the area, tributaries in the delta would change their course. Rivers and city streets would flood. The two ponds across the lane would overflow and become one. Behind the ponds, excess rain would collect in the lowland, and remain a part of year. As I think this is the symbolic of the affection between two brothers, the element of Diaspora - the mixture of two cultures and the marriage of the brothers with the same girl.

Taking into view ‘**The Lowland as a Family Saga**’, that is true because it is a prose narrative of familial and social history. I have concentrated only on the familial matters in this theme because there is separate chapter on the social matter or movement. It, *The Lowland*, deals with the happenings of a family which extends to its fourth generation from Subhash and Udayan’s parents to Meghna.

It is about seven decades’ story of a immigrated family in India and America. Since 1940s to 2012, the novel pushes its period in the border of the story line. The matters of a family like love and care of parents towards their children, closeness between the brothers, their difference of opinions, love, marital relations and the women’s position in a family, are mainly discussed.

The second theme which came after the full reading of this novel is '**The Lowland as a novel of Diaspora**'. Considering the plot of this novel from the second half of the first chapter, Subhash leaves Calcutta and his family, especially his brother Udayan, to Rhode Island for a doctoral research in Oceanography. Since then he feels the nostalgia about his childhood, education and the beautiful days with Udayan.

After his brother's death he marries Gauri and brings her to the American city he has been. But she too faces the nostalgic feelings about her days with Udayan in Calcutta. When she has given birth to Bela, she left the both when her daughter was about 12. These are the problems they face in they face in the land others. That's why Subhash and Gauri never changed their nationality of Indians to Americans. This shows their state of confusion about homeland and host land.

Though they had received all the facilities in America, they still don't want to be an American. Then coming to Bela's matter, since her childhood, she follows the American way of life by her mother but because of Subhash's influence she learns the Indian culture in her feelings, love and relation. She becomes a nomad and passes her life without giving any clue of her presence, in her adulthood. She suffers for the language problem in earlier years. At last Gauri visits Kolkata, a city now changed considerably, feels relief and went back.

One can find the next theme, '**The Lowland as a Novel of Movement**', after having a brief look on the cover page of its Random House India edition. It has the image of two boys near bridge and watered land. One of them has the red colored flag of the Communist Party of India, Marxist-Leninist. Then entering into the twentieth page of the novel, we begin with the Naxalbari movement.

Udayan, the younger of the two brothers in the novel, jumps into the movement and joins the newly formed third communist party, CPI-ML. He has been influenced by the words of Kanu Sanyal and Charu Mujumdar. At the age of twenty-four, in 1971, he sacrifices his life for the movement he has believed.

Jhumpa Lahiri had knitted the story brilliantly with using her vast knowledge about the movement after influenced by the real story of a boy in Calcutta. So she had given the full information about the Naxalbari movement from it's beginning to the death of Kanu Sanyal in a form of novel.

Finally, the last theme which I sought from the novel and discussed here in this paper is, '**Suspense in The Lowland**'. As I have been reading this story, I have caught by some suspense. Because from the beginning itself it catches the concentration of the reader until he finishes the novel.

“Udayan killed. Come back if you can.” [p.83]

The above mentioned one sentence holds the reader to turn the pages up to the end because without the reading you can't find what happened to Udayan and how he had killed, clearly until the last pages. You can know how Udayan had killed? What made Subhash to marry Gauri, his own brother's wife? How Gauri became pregnant though they have decided to have child after Subhash, his brother, had? How they lead a life in USA? How Subhash and Bela runs their life after Gauri's quit? So these are the curious questions make the readers to turn all pages one after another to find the answer. Then only we can get a clear cut idea about this suspenseful story like revealing of the curtain of the unseen portrait.

These all are the four main themes I have prepared to give the readers to make them comfort to understand the novel with right way. Apart from these it is a

masterly novel of fate and will, exile and return, and a work of great beauty and complex emotion. Absolutely, it is one of the greatest novels in the genre of Indian Diasporic Writings. And because of its unique themes it stands in the line of great novels by Indian Diasporas like *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry and *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie. Totally, *The Lowland* has several characteristic features of its own to be long listed for the Man Booker Prize, 2013, including the four magnetic themes which have discussed in this dissertation.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE INDIAN DIASPORIC LITERATURE

“To study a banyan tree, you must not only know its main stem in its own soil, but also must trace the growth of its greatness in the further soil, for then you can know the true nature of its vitality. The civilization of India, like a banyan tree has shed its beneficent shade away from its own birthplace...India can live and grow by spreading abroad – not the political India, but the ideal India.” [Rabindranath Tagore, *The Banyan Tree* III]

Quoted by Dr. P. Shailaja in *Indian Diaspora: An Overview*

It is universally accepted that all the literary theories and terms have single sole object that they help in understanding a work of art or serves as tools to fathom the meaning of the text or human expressions. Shakespeare’s heroes died being dominantly governed or (mis)guided by supernatural powers or elements in his fame earned tragedies. In the same way, we see an impression or rather reality that most of Indian writers like Roy’s or Rushdie’s etc. characters growing or surviving in the environment of an element called Diaspora. It peeps out of their characters while reading them.

As Gurbhagat Singh in his critical essay opines, ‘expatriate or diaspora in its theory and practice, is the work of the exile who has experienced unsettlement at the existential, political and metaphysical levels.’ Expatriate writing occupies, Jasbir Jain in his introduction to the edition ‘Writers of the Indian Diaspora’, says that, a significant position between cultures and countries. It generates theory and defines positions as it constructs a new identity which negotiates boundaries and spatial

metaphors. Cultural travel, take root and get dislocated and individuals internalize nostalgia, or experience amnesia.

When we talk of Diaspora, we begin with the Jewish context, where the persecution and expulsion led to the dispersal of Jews away from the homeland carrying with them the fond hope of returning to the homeland/motherland one day. The word ‘Diaspora’ originates from the Greek word, which means a dispersion (scattering). Diaspora may be defined as dispersion of people, language or culture that was formerly concentrated in one place. When an individual or group of people start producing literary production about people or language, they may have disinherited but writing in another language, they may be defined as diasporic literature.

The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) traces the etymology of the word Diaspora back to its Greek root and to its appearance in the Old Testament [Deut. 28:25]. The Dictionary commences with the Judaic History, mentioning only two types of dispersal: The Jews living dispersed among the gentiles after the captivity and the Judaic Christians residing outside the Palestine.

Most recent theorization of *diaspora* have been marked by the ambiguities of the term diaspora itself - a term which literally denotes communities of people dislocated from their native homeland through migration, immigration, or exile as a consequence of colonial expansion. At the initial stage it was considered as apart of postcolonial literature. But now it’s a separate discipline.

The Indians are not a very mobile people. There were strictures against traveling overseas ‘crossing kaalapani’ in the ancient Shastras. Still some traveled abroad from the days of remote antiquity. The Buddhist missionaries were the early

Indian migrants to Ceylon and South–East Asia, and the well-known Hindu kingdoms of South–East Asia in the medieval period continued to attract labour and craftsmen from India.

As Bikhu Parekh observed, in his critical essay ‘Reflections on Indian Diaspora’ [106], “the diasporic Indian is like the banyan tree, the traditional symbol of the Indian way of life, he spreads out his roots in several soils, drawing nourishment from one when the rest dry up. Far from being homeless, he has several homes and that is the only way he has increasingly come to feel at home in the world.”

The Indian diaspora is the third and spread out in the world after the British and the Chinese. The 25 million strong Diaspora spread over 110 countries, has significant economic, political, and cultural presence in a number of them.

There is a distinction to be made between the old and the new Indian diasporas. The semi-voluntary indentured peasants and who migrated to the non-metropolitan plantation colonies such as Fiji, Trinidad, Mauritius, South Africa, Australia, Surinam, and Guyana between 1830 and 1917, come under old diasporas. On the other hand, people from all classes migrated to Australia, United States, Canada, and Britain. We can include the Shamshi traders and Girmityas (contract labourers) who hailed from Indian subcontinent into old diasporas. Some people even went to England as emissaries for nationalist movement and who got sound Oxford and Cambridge education are also considered under diasporic sphere.

The communities who migrated from different Indian provinces either practiced Indian religion or caught between cross cultural dilemmas. We can include

the writers like Subramani to old diasporas, Rohinton Mistry to new diasporas and David Dabydeen to both the types of diasporas.

The old diaspora starts from the Nobel laureate V.S. Naipaul's father Seeprasad Naipaul with his collection of stories 'The Adventures of Gurudeva and the other stories'. It is a pioneering work by Seeprasad because it paved the way for his two sons Vidyadhar and Shivdhar Naipaul to write in this quixotic struggles of the girit or sugar diaspora. He writes in the racy, meshing English, Trinidadian Creole and Hindi tone. His works are like social satires. In his 'Adventures of Gurudeva' he describes the adventures of a rogue, a juvenile husband, wife-beater, ghatka-walah, a jailbird, bogus pundit, and a jilted adulterer. This book is an account of displaced community that mistakes half-knowledges their search for cultural identity.

Then comes Shiv Naipaul [1945-85] who was born in Trinidad (Port of Spain) but chose to live in England. He was educated in Oxford in 1968. He worked as a journalist, columnist, and fiction writer. S. S. Naipaul's fictional works were *Fireflies* [1970] and *The Chip-Chip Gatherers* [1973]. His *Chip-Chip Gatherers* includes autobiographical sketch that include his brother and father. This book tells about inter familial power plays existential hopelessness, cultural stuffiness, the wealth based hypocrisy, the panic-stricken mimicry, jealousies, the poverty, the violence, and the contradictions that arise from Indo-Trinidadian enclave. The protagonist of this story is Ramsaran who struggles to come out and rise above his condition by changing his religion. The story of 'The Fireflies' is also similar. Shiv Naipaul wrote another book called *Beyond the Dragon's Mouth* [1984] which highlights his journalistic experiences.

There is a sense of existential panic, nomadic terror, abstract homesickness, nausea of namelessness. We find panic, nausea, schizophrenia, hysteria, time lag, estrangement, violence, nostalgia, and madness, either as a symbol, malady, or as organizing principle in the works of diasporic writers.

The other writers and their works of the old [sugar or girit] diasporas are, Herald Ladoo's [1945-73] *No Pain Like This Body*, Subramani [1943] *The Fantasy Eaters and Other Stories*, Cyril Dabydeen [1945] *The Wizard Swami and Coastland: New and Selected Poems*, David Dabydeen [1956] *Coolie Odyssey and Slave Song*, K.S. Maniam [1942] *The Return. The Cord, In a Far Country*, Neil Bissoondath [1955] *Digging up the Mountains, On the Eve of Uncertain Tomorrows, A Casual Brutality and The Innocence of Age*, V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*, and Sam Selvon [1923-94] *The Lonely Londoners*.

All the above writers depicted in their writings what is said to be psychological, historical, and geographical backgrounds. There is psycho-cultural assertion and hierarchical provincialism in these girit writers. Most of these writers thereby betrayed the generic restlessness of the uprooted culture.

The Girit and Shamshi writers related their misfortunes of culturally and physically displaced communities by colonial history. The only exceptions are Naipaul brothers. The non-girit diaspora which includes Menon Marath (1906), Shanta Rama Rau (1923), Balachandra Rajan(1920) and Victor Ananth (1927).

All these writers have been intimately engaged in their narratives. They do not consider their displacement into a generation distance. The problem of dislocation of things falling apart, do not appear in their works.

This is evident in the works of Menon Marath in his two novels ‘The Wound of Spring’ and ‘An Island for Sale’. In the former novel the matriarch of the family Kavamma fails to see the attributes of British modernity and Gandhian Iconoclasm. She believes that any system which is based on rigid enclavism is bound to have its own rebels.

If Marath sees India with an insider’s view, Santa Rama Rau sees India with an outsider’s view. Her autobiographical novel ‘Home to India’ is an account of her coming to consciousness, politically and culturally, with the backdrop of nationalistic struggles against the British Raj. Her other books are ‘Remember the House’, ‘The Adventurer’, ‘East of Home’, ‘A View of the Southeast’ and ‘My Russian Journey’.

The traces of expatriation are seen in Balachandra Rajan’s novels ‘The Dark Dancer’ and ‘Too Long in The West’. ‘The Dark Dancer’ represents the Indian god Shiva which deals with individual schizophrenia manifested nationally and national schizophrenia manifested individually. The novel set in the terrible backdrop of India’s partition. This is the story of Krishnan, Kamala and Cynthia. His other novel, ‘Too Long in the West’ is like restoration comedy which is full of beaux and belles, wits and butts.

Then Victor Ananth, a political detainee, railway clerk and a journalist, appears who views homelessness not as the product of a psychological transformation. His ‘Revolving Man’ is a thinly disguised autobiographic novel which tells that psychological transformation doesn’t happen with spatial divide but by the feeling of ‘otherness’. He thinks that mobility brings about a forgetting, temporary, divided self of a man’s Humpty Dumptyness. His novel ‘Revolving Man’ deals with Atma who goes to London and gets married to Queenie, rejecting his

family, friends and country but she rejects him and goes with another Englishman after bearing him the child called Dharma. The child was rejected by his orthodox grandparents. Atma, then, takes the baby to Kerala to the imaginary womb that world perhaps take care of fragmented self. Victor Ananth has published another novel ‘Sacred Cow’ which is partially similar to the first novel.

There was another group which neither belongs to comprador class or girmitt diaspora. It is distinguished by the writers’ preoccupations geographical context. Most of these writers came from professional or trading diaspora. These writers took advantage of the mobility afforded by colonial rule, especially in East and South Africa. The important writers of this group are, G. Vassanji [1950-] and Ahmed Essop [1931].

G. Vassanji, who born in Kenya and brought up in Tanzania, educated in America and presently settled in Canada, has written four books. They are *Uhuru Street*, *The Gunny Sack*, *No New Land*, and *The Book of Streets*. He writes mainly about Shamsi traders of Gujarat in East Africa. His writings are interestingly called as one part of archival historian, two parts family genealogist, three parts amateur sleuth and four parts self-conscious theorist. ‘The Gunny Sack’ is his best novel

Ahmed Essop, who was born in Surat and educated in Johannesburg, has written two collections of short stories. They are *The Hujji and other stories*, *Noorjehan*, *The Visitation and The Emperor*. Most of his works deal with the theme of white majority at the top, black majority at the bottom and the colored minority sandwiched between these two. He mainly focuses on apartheid system.

The New or Masala diaspora can be exemplified by the uneasy interaction between gender, class, ethnicity, nation-states etc. This new diaspora is again classified into two categories, Blinded and Sighted writers.

Only Ved Mehta [1934], who became blind at the age of four, can be identified as blinded writer. He went to California blind school with the help of the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. He then studied both in Oxford and Harvard universities. Mehta is a versatile writer who attempted fiction, biography, history, theology, philosophy, and travel writing.

His works include *Portrait of India, Mahatma Gandhi and his Apostles, The new India, A Family Affair; India Under Three Prime Ministers, Face to Face [Autobiography], The Ledge Between Streams and etc.* Mehta often complains about racial segregation. He says, his estrangement had less to do with the ignorant paternalism of the sighted towards the blind.

Coming to the sighted writers of the new Diasporas, Bharati Mukherjee, Farooq Dhondy, Rohinton Mistry, G.S. Sharat Chandra, Agha Shahid Ali, Saleem Peeradina, Sujata Bhatt, Pico Iyer and Meera Syal are important. All the new or masala diasporic writers are inclined towards the theme of migrancy.

Bharati Mukherjee [1940] wrote novels. She has migrated to India. All of her novels express the feeling of being here and elsewhere [home and abroad]. Her important novels are *The Tiger's Daughter* [1972], *Wife* [1976], *Jasmine* [1989]. She had written a short story collection I 1988 and it won the National Book Critics Circle Award.

Farrukh Dhondy [1944-] has written about trajectories of sexuality, politics, crime, migrancy, nationalism, zealotry, aesthetics, and ethnicity that connect Delhi

and London, Indians and West Indians, Jamaican Creole and masala English, the Ramayana and Holy Qur'an. He is a writer of books for young adults. His works are *East End at Your Feet* [1976], *Come to Mecca and other Stories* [1978], *Poona Company* [1980], and *Trip Trap* [1982]. His novels are first person narratives. He is also the writer of slang and abusive words. At some incident, during the staging of Peter Brooks Ramayana, There was a riot on the issue of Dharma (religion) and an actress called Anjali who played the role of Sita was brutally murdered ultimately causing the play to be banned. The actor who played Rama's role categorically said, 'all the world's a fucking stage'.

Rohinton Mistry [1952] left Bombay for Toronto, Canada for a bank job and studied there. His works are, *Tales from Ferozshah Baag* [1987], *Such A Long Journey* [1991], *A Fine Balance* [1996]. His short stories resemble V.S. Naipaul's '*Miguel Street*'. He mainly focuses on the changing fortunes of the Parsi diaspora in India. He compares the Parsi living in East and West. It is oppressive, escapist, liberating, discriminatory, hyphenating, violent and self-defining.

Such A Long Journey is a novel which relates the story of Gustad Noble, a bank employee, a good husband, a responsible father, finally succumbs to immodest destiny. *A Fine Balance* is a complex, magnificent, hurting story narrated in the best tradition of nineteenth century realism. He writes about how national emergency disturbs the lives of common people. The personal initiative is suppressed by caste imperatives. This novel is about the defeat of Ishwar and Omprakash. Mistry captures the overwhelming forces of history and caste, political and patriarchy, coincidence and destiny that combine to break the human spirit in its search for value for betterment and nobility.

We have the other set of writers who wrote poetry. The major poets are G.S. Sharat Chandra, Saleem Peeradina, Agha Shahid Ali and Sujata Bhatt. Sharat Chandra [1935-2000] had written *Bharatnatyam Dance and other Poems, Reasons for Staying, April in Nanjangud, Once or Twice, Heirloom, and Family of Mirrors*. Saleem Peeradina [1944-] who has written ‘*The First Offence*’ and ‘*Group Portrait*’, his poems transcend the reader through a fine balancing of body and mind. He studied both in Mumbai and U.S. He has increasingly made domestically and its nuances his dominant concern.

Agha Shahid Ali [1949-2001] a Delhi born poet, he mainly focuses on cross-cultures. He had produced eight volumes of poetry. Few of them are, *Bone-sculpture, In Memory of Begum Akhtar, A Walk Through the Yellow Pages, The Country Without A Post Office* and etc. He had translated many poems of Urdu into English.

Sujata Bhatt [1956], a Gujarati poetess, focuses on home as nostalgic sublimity. Her important works are, *Brunizem, Monkey Shadows, The Stinking Rose* and others. She works as a translator and freelance writer. She questions the inherent assumptions of language, gender and culture by mixing Gujarati and English. She writes very interesting terms like stinking rose, humble garlic.

Our writer Jhumpa Lahiri has never lived anywhere but America. Because she was born in England, she had the connection of India as his father’s motherland. But India continues to form part of her fictional landscape. Most of the characters have an Indian background like Udayan, Gauri Subhash and others in *The Lowland*.

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CHAPTER III

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jhumpa Lahiri is praised by M. K. Naik and Shyamala A. Narain in their ‘*Indian English Literature: A Critical Survey 1980-2000*’, for creating “history in becoming the first Indian author to win the prestigious Pulitzer Prize in the USA for her collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*.” The present novel of Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Lowland*, which has published on September 24, 2013, has short listed for the Man Booker Prize 2013. This is her second fictional work after her debut fiction *The Namesake*.

Jhumpa Lahiri was born in 1967 as Nilanjana Sudheshna to Bengali immigrants in London. She moved with her family to the United States of America, when she was just three years old and this was the first immigration of the novelist in her own life. She has grown up in Kingston, Rhode Island and earned a B.A. in English literature from Barnard College, in 1989. She went on to earn an M.A. in English, an M.F.A. in Creative Writing, an M.A in Comparative Literature and a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies from Boston University. From 1997-98, she had a fellowship at Provincetown’s Fine Arts Work Center. Lahiri married Alberto Vourvoulias-Bush, a journalist, in 2001. They have two children: Octavio in 2002 and Noor in 2005. Her family currently resides in Brooklyn, New York.

In 1999, Lahiri has published her first short story collection entitled, *Interpreter of Maladies*. It dealt with the issues related to Indian immigrants, including their generation gaps in understanding level and the values. The protagonist in *The Third and Final Continent*, the last story of that collection, is based on her father, librarian Amar Lahiri. While American critics praised her

collection of short stories Indian critics were hot and cold about the issues raised in the stories. Some of them felt that the collection represented Indians negatively. Overall Interpreter of Maladies has awarded the Pulitzer Prize, in 2000 for fiction and sold out 600,000 copies.

Lahiri has published her debut novel, *The Namesake*, in 2003 which was originally a novella in *The New Yorker*. It is the story of the Ganguly family, comprised of parents who immigrated to the United States from Calcutta and of their children, Gogol and Sonia, raised up in the USA. The story follows the family over the course of thirty years in Calcutta, Boston and New York. This novel adapted into the popular film of the same name, *The Namesake*.

After three years, in 2008, she published another collection of short stories named *Unaccustomed Earth*. With this collection, Lahiri has broken from her previous focus on first generational Indian immigrants to the United States and their family problems. The stories in this collection focus instead on the second and third generations of immigrants and their assimilation into the culture of the United States, for instance, Sudha in 'Only Goodness' and Amit in 'A Choice of Accommodations'.

In 2013, she has published her latest novel, *The Lowland*, her second fiction. It deals with the two brothers, Subhash and Udayan, born just fifteen months apart, bound by tragedy; a fiercely brilliant woman, Gauri, haunted by her past; a country, India, torn by revolution of Naxalbari. This is a powerful novel, plotted both in India and America that explores the price of idealism and a love that can last long past death. She has written about the movement in this novel after her deep study of it and the enquiry of the people of Calcutta.

Lahiri has published many stories in the New Yorker including ‘Cooking Lessons: The Long Way Home’ in 2004, ‘Improvisations: Rice’ in 2009, ‘Reflections: Notes from a Literary Apprenticeship’ in 2011. She bagged many awards including the Trans-Atlantic Award from the Henfield Foundation [1993], the O. Henry award for the short story Interpreter of Maladies [1999], the PEN/Hemingway Award for Best Fiction Debut of the Year for her collection, Interpreter of Maladies. Frank O’Conner International Short Story Award [2008] and Asian American Literary Award [2009] for ‘*Unaccustomed Earth*. She had a Guggenheim Fellowship and she has inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, in 2012 by the President Barack Obama. Her latest novel *The Lowland* has been long listed for the Man Booker Prize 2013.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND THEMES OF *THE LOWLAND*

In the very first chapter of the novel, there is a short description of the lowland and Tollygunge, including Tollyclub, mosque, and its surroundings where Subhash and Udayan Mitra, the protagonists, spent their childhood. And an incident took place in the Tollyclub, where both brothers have entered without the proper permission. Udayan receives the blows from the policeman to protect his brother from the beats of the policeman. This much of affection or love Udayan and Subhash had for each other. By this incident itself we can feel his dare to face the hardships of life or facing difficulties when he entered the Tollyclub.

The two boys since their childhood were dear to their parents. Their mother, Bijoli, had her love to Udayan, the younger one, very much. They watched their mother washing the dishes, cooking at stove, stitching embroidery for the saris of the neighbors because she was helping her husband to manage their household expenses. Their father has been working in the railway office as a clerk. They are dwelling in a sufficient house. Subhash and Udayan are close friends more than they are brothers because they have never separated since their birth. Then they have admitted to the same school and same standard at a time though they have the fifteen months of age difference. When they began to read the history and geography of India and Calcutta, they come to that Tollygunge had been built on reclaimed, which once a swamp dense with mangroves. And they can also know the history of Tollyclub, the golf-club, which was named after Major William Tolly, and belonged to Richard Johnson, a chairman of the General Bank of India.

Then in the next passages of this chapter, we can see the immigration of the inhabitants of the Tollygunge that in the early ninetieth century, on Johnson's estate, the British East India Company, imprisoned the widows and sons of Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore after he was killed in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War. The deposed family of Tipu was transported from Srirangapattana, in the distant Southwest of India. After their release, they were granted plots in Tollygunge to live on.

Both of them have studied optics and forces in their high school studies. Each evening, at opposite sides of a metal table, they sat with their textbooks, copy books, pencils, erasers, and chess game that would be in progress at the same time. Udayan since his childhood was a bold and daring boy, for instance, one day in his classroom he wasn't afraid to contradict their teachers about hydraulics, about plate tectonics.

Among them, the two brothers, Udayan is very brave and dare. When he has studied basic circuitry or wiring related to electricity, he began to repair and operate the electrical items like the fuses, table fan etc. and he would check the resistors and unscrew the fuses, while Subhash holding the flashlight, stood to one side of him. He has also installed a buzzer or a calling bell to their house. These all are the qualities which they have in their childhood.

They were admitted to two of the city's best colleges. While Udayan got admitted to Presidency College to study Physics Subhash had got the admission at Jadhavpur for Chemical engineering. Their father was very proud to be their father and never received the fame of their success because he always used to tell his neighbors that they had achieved whatever they had with their hard work only. That only can explain how much proud he had towards his sons. Udayan also had the mastery over the reassembling of the radio, and he always praise Mr. Marconi for his invention of radio because that was the only media which would broadcast the

news related to USSR, China and especially football because the two brothers were very fond of football.

Then in 1967, the region had been hearing the burning issue of the *Naxalbari* one of a string villages in the Darjeeling district. That March, when a share-cropper in Naxalbari tried to plough land from which he had been illegally evicted, his landlord sent thugs to beat him. They took away his plough and bullock. The police had refused to intervene. After this, groups of sharecroppers began to retaliate. They started burning deeds and records that cheated them and forcibly occupying land. Not of the same as before, this time they armed with primitive weapons, carrying red flags, shouting “*Long Live Mao Tse-tung*”. After few days of curfews and some arrests once a police inspector had killed with bows and arrows. In response or to prevent this type of deeds, the police had fired on the protesters. And this caused the eleven people’s death, eight of them were women.

Subhash and Udayan used to smoke secretly after their parents had gone to bed at night. Udayan had influenced by these leftist movements very much. Subhash and Udayan had encountered banners and processions near their college supporting the Naxalbari movement. He started to bring the periodicals like LIBERATION in English and DESHABHARATI in Bengali, which had the reproduced articles of the Chinese communist magazines. He also collected the pamphlets written by Charu Mujumdar. Once at a midnight, they went out of home by saying their parents that they were going to the late show of a film. But they went near to the bridge of Tollygunge to write the communist slogans, like “*Long Live Naxalbari*”, on the walls of a street. Udayan had the proud, but Subhash was scared of his deeds.

After Udayan and Subhash’s postgraduation in Calcutta University and JadHAVpur respectively, Udayan had decided to begin to teaching science at a high

school. But Subhash being a pessimist, had applied for a few PhD programs in United States. So he asked his brother about that, but Udayan said some negative happenings of the migration to abroad for research like their mind turning never to return to India. After that he tries to motivate him with some words which can touch his heart that, “You are the other side of me, Subhash, It’s without you that I’m nothing. Don’t go.” But before Subhash’s leave, Udayan left his home for a few days and returned with some illness. At the other hand, On Lenin’s birthday April 22, 1969, the third communist party CPI-ML, Communist Party of India, Marxist-Leninist, had launched by the Naxalbari comrades in the leadership of Kanu Sanyal and Charu Mujumdar as the chairman and general secretary of the party respectively.

Here, Subhash got a fellowship from the American university. So he moved towards Rhode Island with the intension of coming back to India. When he reached Rhode Island, he got a room in a white wooden house, close to the main road of the village, with black shutters flanking the windows. He lived at the top of the house, sharing a kitchen and bathroom with Richard Grifalconi, another PhD student from a Quader family in Wisconsin. He met Mr. Narasimhan in garden who was a professor of Economics at the same university from Madras, had married Kate, an American student of Design and had two children. He had a good relationship with Richard, like Udayan he too had the protective mind for the suppressed part of the societies.

Now he had received the first letter from his brother in that November. Through that letter he had informed the developments of the Naxalbari movement, their party and about the rebuilding plan of their house. And he mentioned he had been feeling his absence and he had been facing his return. Udayan had concluded

his letter with a quotation, “*War will bring the revolution; revolution will stop the war*”.

In the year 1970, the second letter from Udayan reached Subhash, in which a photograph of a beautiful girl named Gauri whom Udayan had married. He had explained how that marriage took place and her interest in books. So he had requested by Udayan to buy some books for her when he would come back. Subhash had destroyed this letter like the previous one but he kept the image of Gauri with him.

The next chapter begins with Udayan encountering Gauri for the first time in his friend Manash’s house, which is situated in the North Calcutta. Manash was Gauri’s brother. She is a girl who was brought up by her brother and her relatives. She has been studying philosophy. So he has been bringing some books of philosophy and some others related to the communist ideology to read. In response to that Gauri read all of them and discusses the issues which they have. Then she has approached by Udayan for her love and both have agreed. Then they have begun to meet at the garden and at their college campus. They missed each other whenever they can’t meet.

In the second year of his PhD Subhash lived on his own, now Richard, who had found a teaching job in Chicago, was gone. Subhash feels his family’s absence for last one and a half year. Now he had met Holly and her son Joshua, on the campus beach. He got their friendship and they met regularly in their free time. Moreover, she had informed him that she has separated by her husband and he is living with another woman. This has given him the way to share whatever he felt. So they have become very good friends. Once in a rainy day, on Joshua’s visit to his father’s home, she had invited him for dinner, so they wandered the city till the dusk. On their return

to her home the rain began to fall with thunders and lightning. Though he wishes to go to his residence, she stopped him and told him to stay there. And when they sensed the touch between them, they slept in one bed with their undressed body till the sunrise. This is the first moment for Subhash, of having biological relation with a woman.

With her positive approval, they had continued their relation every Friday on Joshua's visit to his father's house. At that span of time he had decided to lead a life like Narasimhan with Holly, though he knew that their parents are still waiting for his return at least to arrange the marriage however they wish, to forget the disappointment they felt by Udayan's marriage. So he thought to inform Udayan that the relation with Holly and his decision but he never did that with the fear if he think of him badly. This is how that relation remained concealed and inaccessible to the other characters. Once their meeting at her house had cancelled due to her son's stay at the house. On the 15th August of that year he missed the celebration of India's independence.

Holly one evening brought him to the seashore and gifted him a pair of binoculars. Then she told him about her rejoin with her husband and her decision to go with him, so she had to quit him. This had haunted him and brought some relief. In the year 1971, again the Durga Pujo had come to Calcutta. Before two years he had received a pack of gifts containing kurtas, sandalwood soaps, and some Darjeeling tea but he had received a telegram instead of a letter or the pack of gifts from India.

“Udayan killed. Come back if you can”

So he left Rhode Island, in hurry, to Calcutta. Then he had entered his home after two years and become heartily sad before the portrait of Udayan. Then in the urge to know what had happened, he asked his mother and father, but he got nothing from them. He enquired about Gauri, and he came to know that she has expecting a child. After getting lunch, he went out of the home to see the two ponds and the lowland. There he saw the graveyard of Udayan, where a small stone marker or tablet had set on behalf of hi memory. His mother used to go each morning there to rinse the stone clean with water every day and to make it flowered. Subhash had received a little interest by his parents about his return. Whenever he asked them about how Udayan had killed, both of them had neglected him and informed him only thing that he [Udayan] had killed by the police.

That made him to ask Gauri about this to know the fact very clearly. As he thought he offered her the books, which he had asked by his brother to bring, initially he asked her about her education and then blamed his father and mother to make her arrested at home. Gauri had felt the similarity in his voice as Udayan's. After that he convinced her to tell the fact. So she began to tell the incident happened a week before the Durga Pujo at Tollygunge.

When Gauri and her mother-in-law came back from the market after buying new clothes, bed sheets, slippers and other necessary things due to the festival preparation, they encountered their courtyard and street having filled with the policemen and neighbors with a few police vans. Right after entering the house she faced her father-in-law in the police custody. Then the officers brought them out of their house to the street near the lowland, which had filled with water due to the heavy rain in their gun point. The officer had enquired the family, especially Gauri

pointing the pistol to her throat, about Udayan's presence. Though she knew that he had hide in the water amid the water hyacinth, she answered that she didn't know.

Then, when Udayan came out of water to take breath, some police observed his presence in the water. So the officer called out loudly through the megaphone for his surrender, otherwise they would kill the family. So he came out of water coughing and gasping for the air. He had surrendered to them and dusted his head by taking his parents' feet to ask pardon for his misdeeds and saw Gauri with the eyes of a culprit. After that the police took him somewhere out of that area with the dairy and the bundle of papers which they got collected beneath the cot in his bedroom. Then few hours later, they came back in front of the house and untied his hands and said to go as they said. When he was doing as they were told the three bullets shot to his back by an officer and took his body with them again in the van. This is all because of his participation in the bomb explosion at Tollygunge and the murder of a policeman. In that incident he was injured. His right hand was bandaged, and the eardrums were affected by the explosion. That is why he had been in a part of the backyard of the home giving no evidence to anyone. They had been forced by Udayan, to leave the house to market. This had caused him not had awareness of the arrival of the police because of the injuries he had in that explosion where his other two comrades escaped but he couldn't, so he get injured.

After ten days of Udayan's death when they did not get his body and couldn't knew where it had burnt after a lot of visits and enquiries with the police, they followed some rituals. They made her to wear the white sari only and restricted her to wear the color bangles, vermilion. The absence of these common ornaments identified her as a widow, when she was just a twenty-three years old. After the mourning period, her in-laws began to eat fish, but they made her not to eat the fish.

After a month, they came to know that she was conceived. Though they have decided to have a child after the marriage of Subhash, they had united in the last days of his death. This had made her to become a pregnant. This was the only reason which had changed her decision to kill herself.

After speaking with Gauri, the next day Subhash went out to the market area to give the shirt material to a tailor which he had given by his parents. Then he entered a store that sold the embroidered shawls. He bought two shawls, one for his mother and the other for Gauri. After presenting the shawl to her mother, he had asked her about the situation of Gauri at that house. His mother said she is nothing except that child. By observing those words of his mother and the harsh treatments for Gauri in the house he had thought the only way to prevent these was to take Gauri away from the house. That would be possible only if he married her again. The next morning, one investigating officer visit her to interrogate and showed some photographs of the communist party workers, including Chandra and Nirmal Dey, the policeman, whom Udayan and his comrades had killed. But Gauri simply said she did not know any of them. After their exit, Subhash had discussed about their marriage. At first, she rejects the idea but later agreed for that when he told that is only for the sake of the child. Gauri now entered the Rhode Island after getting the passport and visa without any objection by the police. Subhash had received her from the Boston airport to his residence at the university campus. She became very thankful for the freedom and house which was free from that curfews she always felt in Calcutta.

At the beginning, she used to at the home, then after some days he bring her to a store and bought some clothes including boots, coats and etc. whichever she needed. Observing the surrounding area and happenings, she had thought about the

continuation of her studies. So once she had entered the department of philosophy in that university, where no one asked her presence though she was not admitted. At the beginning observing the dresses worn by other students, she had attracted by those dresses because she had never worn this type of modern clothes except the frocks and wished to wear. One day when they were coming back from Dr. Flynn's clinic she saw a woman's hair elastic, a malleable red ring flecked with gold, in the car. And she thought there had been someone before her. Then he took her to the ocean for several times.

The couple after shifting to the apartment, which as reserved for the married one, they had invited by Narasimhan and Kate to their home for the dinner. They went and took the participation among the other people. They have received a well hospitality. Inspired by this he asked her about his wish to arrange a party like that in his house. But she replied with a negative response. One day she went to the city before Subhash's return to the home and come back with the shortened hair and some new modern dress. This was a shock for him because on his return he saw her old clothes being torn out by scissors. Subhash though he disappointed by her this type of destructive behavior, he kept quiet for the sake of the child.

Now Gauri gave birth to her child, who named as Bela later. After getting that child they were just passing their time in their duties. Subhash, who was Bela's uncle as well as an imposter, spent more tie with the baby. Beside that he had the affection to be Gauri's husband with the sexual relation. So once with her acceptance they had spent a night in a single bed for the first time, after having a child of his brother.

The child's name Bela means the name of a flower, the word for a span of time. In fact, the girl was in a great confusion about yesterday though she was four years old. After Subhash's leave from the house at a certain time, Bela's carefully

belonged to Gauri up to his return. She always gets in touch with the news related to India, especially Calcutta, about Charu Mujumdar, Kanu Sanyal and about the Emergency which had declared by the then prime minister, Indira Gandhi.

The year 1976 was the bicentennial year of independence for the Americans. In response to his parents' wish he had sent only the photographs of Bela because nearly five years he hadn't been to India. Now also he used to send them money because his father had retired. He always tried to live apart from them who knew that he was not Bela's father. Subhash used to make her happy whenever he used to be with her. So Bela had very much love towards her Baba than her mother. In between these things he had met Holly and her husband again and felt hard. At the other hand, in spite of their regular union he never received any sign of getting a sibling for Bela because he saw a new packet of birth-control pills on the table. When he asked her about this, she rejects his plea for having a child and postponed that for some other days. He determined to make his mother wrong that she told him that Gauri would never love him. He was a father now. He could no longer imagine a life in which he hadn't taken that step which can make him a father.

Gauri was not interested in Bela. She used to sit with her as if she sat with other's child. She had thought to admit Bela to a babysitting (kindergarten) but Subhash was not agreed to her thought because he had preferred the child than her. But after some days, he agreed without his will. At the beginning she had her (Gauri's) class for evening then she had spent every evening at the university library. She had informed her professor Otto Weiss that she had married her husband's brother for the first time. He had suggested her for a doctoral degree, after observing her talent at her studies. So she began to think about this and applied for several fellowships.

Bela, now a school going girl, had able do her works herself. It gave relief to her mother. In one rainy day, when Bela was refusing to go to school, she forced her to go to school while the other mothers were bringing back their children to their homes. This incident made her to dislike her mother. Gauri had done like this because she had to visit the library or else read at home in a silent mode. Once, fed up of these things, she had decided to tell her (Bela) about Udayan but Subhash made her quite by telling that it would harm the child mentally at this moment. So she had convinced by his words.

Gauri, at the university building, had attracted by a middle aged man, may be a professor, but he never turned towards her. She had continued to follow him at the university building, library building and wherever else he went. As usual she had followed him, forgetting to pick up Bela within half an hour. When she had seen him with a woman kissing him she felt bad about her dream to have a sex play with him instead of Subhash. So without controlling her emotion she entered a women's rest room and erected with the help of her hands and came out.

Gauri always made Bela comfort in a coffee table, about half an hour preparation in her drawing, with drinking water, grapes, sharpened pencils if she needed. Because she needs to went out to the post office to mail her application for the doctoral research and to the library to return the books. So she used to say Bela that she was going downwards to collect the mails from the mailbox.

But once this routine of Gauri leaving Bela alone in a locked room made Subhash shocked when he came a little earlier than the usual time before Gauri. So after knowing this matter, he had stopped speaking with her for a week as his parents did with her. By then he no longer wanted to touch her in the bed, he no longer brought up his dream of the possibility of a second child. In the spring, she got a

program in Boston. So he never objected her for her regular visit to there, twice in a week. Both of them were never discussed about their separation. Because they had married for the sake of Bela and Gauri also depended on him for the finance she needed for her research, like Bela for her education. She knew that she wouldn't survive without Subhash.

Here in Calcutta, Subhash's father had retired in the next year after Udayan's death and Subhash brought Gauri to America. And one day he died at his bed where he was sleeping. So this made Bijoli alone, who had already been alone after her dearest son shot dead by the police. But now her servant Deepa was with her doing each works of her and she used to sleep in that house. Deepa had given her jewelry, colored saris because she was a widow then. And she had told by her husband before his death to quit the house to other or to America. But she had refused to quit because she told that this home was the one where Udayan had born raised up by her. After the three months of her husband's death, she had received a letter by Subhash. Through that he had informed her that he would visit Calcutta this summer accompanied with Bela to offer his duties to his father and to present some seminars in the nearby universities. He had added that they would be there for six weeks. Moreover, he told her that she (Bela) regards him as her father, and she knew nothing else.

After their arrival, they were received in a well manner and love. Then he arranged some rituals to offer his duties to honor his father. On that moment Bela had observed a photo of Udayan beside her grandfather's photo. She had told by her grandmother that was her father's older one. But Subhash told that was his brother Udayan. He had visited the colleges and presented his seminars and took her to the market and the beautiful places of Calcutta. She was cared by both very carefully

and lovely. Bela had celebrated his twelfth birthday at that house. After the celebration they set back their way to Rhode Island.

When they reached the home Gauri was not at the home. They searched the whole and outside of the home. But she had left the home by leaving a letter him. She had apologized him for her decision and she had written that she hadn't any choice. She had moved to California because a college had hired her to teach so she would be able to live on her own. And she told him that it, her absence, wouldn't hurt him and Bela. Then she told him finally through that letter that in exchange of all he had done for her, she left Bela to him. This made him to think what would happen if her absence had affected Bela. Totally none of the three women in Subhash's life- his mother, Gauri, Bela- there remained one, Bela.

In reality, this had affected Bela very much. At the beginning of her schooling she was very intelligent and responsive student in her class. But after her mother's separation she had been living as if she did not need anyone's assistance. So the counselor of her school called him and reported her behavioral difference. She no longer seemed to be connected with the other students. So he brought her to Dr. Emily Grant, a psychologist, but that had not come to use. Then she wished to meet her grandmother and she wanted to celebrate her Baba's birthday but that not take place, so that too had haunted her heart. He did not want to bring her once again to Calcutta. She had joined a small liberal arts school in the Midwest, which had situated far from him.

At the other hand, in Calcutta Bijoli had attacked by the paralysis stroke. For the last three years he used to visit her in every winter. Now she had died with a loose heart at the hospital, instead of her wish to die at the home. Here Bela became a nomad by continuous traveling to help the poor farmers how to sow the seeds and

care them to grow with the fertility as well as quality. She taught low income families to grow vegetables in their backyards. She too had the revolutionist ideals in her attitudes like her biological father Udayan. For instance, she blamed the unequal distribution of wealth.

Once again, we came for the matter of Udayan in the year of 1971. But that too not cleared the fact what had happened to him. Gauri and his amalgamation took place at a night but suddenly she had wake out of a dream she had been feeling when she saw the young Udayan's body too much younger than her and Bela because she was about fifty-four now. Gauri had passed nearly twenty years, but no one came to her to meet within this span of time. She felt alone and had the guilt for her deeds. In her academic field, because of her background, she had given a special responsibility to oversee students, who came from India especially. She had three books in her account.

At that moment a graduate student at UCLA, Lorna came into her life. Lorna came to Gauri to ask to guide her to complete the dissertation. Up to her dissertation had completed Lorna and Gauri made their gay or homosexual activities in her office, in either Gauri's or Lorna's bed and in the room of a hotel where they drove there to one weekend, on the coast. When she completed her research, she had disappeared from the sight of Gauri.

She thought though their marriage had not been a solution, it had taken her away from Tollyguge. He had brought her to America and then, like an animal briefly observed, briefly caged, released her. He had protected her and attempted to love her. Every time, she had to open a new jar of jam, she restored to the trick he'd taught her, of banging the edge of the lid three or four times with a spoon, to break the seal.

He once again met Richard, his apartment mate from decades ago, was married Claire and then a grandfather. But soon after their meeting, he watched the news that he had died. For the first time Subhash entered a funeral home because didn't attend Udayan and his father's funeral. When he saw Richard in the coffin, suddenly remembered his last glimpse of his mother, covered by a shroud. On that ceremony he met Elise Silva, a middle aged woman, who also known to Richard. And one more thing was she was the American history teacher for Bela in her high school. He told she had been a nomad because of that he never came to know where she lives and in which time until she decided to live with him.

Once he had visited Elise's house, where he lived with Richard when he first got in Rhode Island. He had recollected the memories with Richard and the letter by Udayan and Gauri's photo. He was there now to attend the gathering of the historical society. At the end, they shared their address, phone numbers and e-mail each other. Bela, who stayed in Brooklyn, had lived with more than ten members like a family, who had spent their time valuably. She also passed sometime with other families because she used to travel one place to another to help the farmers.

In between that she met Noel, his wife Ursula and their daughter Violet. She used to help them. Instead of these things she never had a strong relationship with anyone. When she came to know about the relationship, after observing, she became confused to deny herself or to deny him. But she thought about the divorce between her mother and father. Because of this she had decided that she wouldn't get married.

Bela, when she was younger, had been anger about her father more than her mother. She blamed him for driving her mother away from them and for not taking any action to take her back. These are the reasons which made her keep the distance, though she lived in New York City, a place three hours journey from him he never

traced out her living. In her thirty-four years of age she had spent eighteen years in Rhode Island, the left on her own.

Now Bela had decided to live with her father. So he called him of her arrival. Then he went to the airport to receive her, as he received her mother for the first time she came from India. He had thought to arrange a marriage for her. In fact, she never brought any of her boyfriends to home. And she had not allowed him to talk about marriage due to the out of bounds. But she had informed him about her pregnancy. When he asked her the name of the man who made her to be a mother, she rejected to tell and she told him her decision to raise her child like him in his home.

After thinking a lot about the fact that he would become a imposter grandfather like imposter father to Bela, he told the concealed truth that he wasn't her father. But she refused to believe him at the beginning by thinking something had happened to him that he had lost his mind, that perhaps he had suffered a stroke. She told him to stop saying like that, but he told her about Udayan, her real father, his death and Gauri's incomplete story about his death.

Bela now came to the realization of why Gauri always refused to talk about her life, why she never came to Calcutta whenever she accompanied only Subhash and why she left Rhode Island when they went to Calcutta in that summer. She could no longer blame her father not telling her until now because her own child would blame her some day for a similar reason. So her father remained her father, even as he had told her he wasn't. Then she went off to Cape Cod to live separately. After her quit from the house, he became very sick that he didn't go to the lab. Moreover, obviously, he thought to get the retirement. Elise Silva used to visit him regularly to check his health.

One fine day he had received a call by thinking that was Elise but that was Bela. She had called him to inform him where she was and addressed him as Baba after a long time even she knew that he wasn't. She asked him to pick up her from the Providence airport. Then, in autumn, she gave birth to a female baby. After becoming a mother she started to love him more thinking what he had done to them.

Gauri, an academician and a professor of philosophy with fame, at her residence in California was a wife without husband with her and a mother without a child. Now she got the knowledge of websites, social media in the internet. Having a laptop and a connection, she had confirmed that Subhash had still working in the same lab in Rhode Island because he had coauthored some articles which were in PDF when she searched for him on the internet. Like that she also searched Udayan and Bela but no information sought because the former was dead long ago and the later never want that identity. She thought that Bela made this intentionally. Unlike both, her brother Manash had been in touch with her through the internet because of that he knew about that Bela.

Once she met Dipankar Biswas, visiting professor of political science and a former student of her who was also born in the year Bela was born, in a restaurant. He came to her to get her interview on the Naxalbari movement because he was writing a book on the students of the Presidency and that movement. He knew that Gauri was also from the same college. So he began to ask about the things what had happened at that moment. But she had refused to tell at the beginning. When he promised her to keep the secrecy of her name in the book, she explained each and everything she knew except Udayan's. At the end of their conversation, she came to know that Kanu Sanyal was dead by killing himself refusing to receive the treatment in a government hospital for his kidney failure.

After returning to the home, she checked news in the internet and confirmed the death of Kanu Sanyal. She watched a television segment of March 23, 2010. In that video she watched how the head of Sanyal bowed, who never bowed his head in the lifetime and his bad situation at that time. She thought about that revolutionist and the hero of the people and his critical situation. For the next few days she didn't able to come out of the image of his death.

So the following week she had lost grip on her footing when she was stepping off the campus staircase and fell down in her thinking the same video of Sanyal. She was shifted to a hospital by a university ambulance. She named Subhash as her next kin in the hospital form. Now there was no one to help her like Subhash at the time of Bela's delivery, except the nurses. She took her colleague Edwin's help to drive her car.

She didn't want to give trouble to anyone, so she went to a hotel in a desert town. There she went to a spring and met a family then had a bit of conversation about their life at that age and for the first time she said that she had a daughter after her separation. After her return one day she had received a short mail from Subhash, which had asked her to meet and sign some of the papers regarding the property at Calcutta and Rhode Island. By reading that small letter for the second time she had realized that he was asking her for the divorce.

Gauri remembered the beginning year of her marriage with Udayan. In the January 1970, they got married in the house of Tarun-da, a senior worker of CPI-ML. After staying together in that house for a few days, they had shifted to his house in Tollygunge. Herein that house she became a subordinate to her in -laws. For a few days he used to get her outside, but she was distracted by the quietness of Tollygunge.

Knowingly or unknowingly she had contributed for the party and the movement by doing the work of exchanging of letters between the party's comrades like Chandra, a lady in the tailor shop as if she went give the measurement for a new blouse. Apart from this he prepared her tutor a brother and a sister to pass their Sanskrit exams. But he had told her to observe a policeman on which time he comes and goes. So as his command she observed the policeman that he used to come with a schoolboy, his little son, with him on his return in a civil dress every Thursday at the same time.

The week before going to America to join Subhash, she went back to Jadhavpur to meet the brother and sister. But she had encountered the house of Nirmal Dey, the policeman whom she had observed, and Udayan had killed to remove him out of his way and also the man whose photograph had showed by the investigating officer. After that she saw the same boy, she used to observe with the policeman with his mother wearing a white fabric, as the symbol of being a widow, like Gauri until he was married by Subhash some weeks ago. So she felt guilt about her deeds which helped Udayan to kill Mr. Nirmal Dey.

Now Bela's daughter Meghna, one of the rivers that flow into the Bay of Bengal, was four years old. She was the fourth generation of this novel. Bela used to visit Mr. Drew and became good friends. He used to visit them continuously and she began to see him on the weekends. He also married a girl he had gone to high school with. They had never had children and divorced long ago. Bela told him, as always that her mother was dead. She imagined her mother had returned to homeland and died.

Both of them used to stay together and shared their bed in the weekends. When expressed his decision to live with them permanently as her [Meghna's] father and

help Bela to raise her child. Then she told the truth that Gauri had left them and never returned. And because of her mother's careless treatment towards her, she wanted her daughter to grow freely. So having that in her mind she never wanted anyone with her. Finally, she had opened her mouth to tell him about Udayan, her real father. She said him that though she had been created by two people who had loved each other, she had been raised by two who never loved. In his reply to her reason Drew promised that he would never go anywhere.

Gauri had decided to come to Rhode Island to meet them and discuss the issues Subhash had informed in his letter. Before that she had tried her best to reply with a letter but dissatisfied with her attempts. She knew a divorce made no difference; their marriage had run its course long ago. And yet his request reasonable, rational, had appalled her. She felt the necessary to see him.

And she had to go to London, to attend a conference and give her lecture so she had arranged a connecting flight to London and planned one night stay at Rhode Island. She stayed at a hotel and that evening she went to the market and wandered the places where she used to come with Subhash. She had received a good hospitality from Nan, a servant, in that hotel. In the next morning she packed her things and settled the bill. Like the previous confusions, on her way to his house, she thought to go back. But after getting convinced and reached the house. She had been prepared to ask him about Bela, her address, and phone number.

On that Sunday morning Subhash and Elise went out for their breakfast and their walk, Bela and Meghna were the remained in that house. When the door knocked, Bela had thought that was Drew, who used to come without informing. But that was Gauri, her long left mother. After a long time she came but that not mattered to Bela. She didn't speak with her. She entered the house and saw a girl,

Meghna. So she asked Bela that if she was her daughter, but Bela kept quiet without any response. She said Meghna, when she asked who she was that Gauri was her grandmother's friend. These words had hurt Gauri's heart. At the other hand, to complete her intention of the visit, she asked her granddaughter about their stay, and she knew that they had been with her grandfather by her answer.

When she began to handover the papers which had signed, Bela sent Meghna to the balcony to pluck some flowers and rushed towards her mother, with unseen angry. And she asked her why she came there after all and the necessary. Without allowing her mother to talk she told her that she had already dead and gone from their life. She blamed her for her opportunistic attitude. Then with a hard heart she left the house. Bela for the first time had reacted like this because she had been suffered a lot by her mother's quit from them at her childhood. Moreover, she had dreamt several times as if her mother came back but that never came into reality. That is why she had behaved like that and forgot her from her memory as previously.

On her way to London, she had decided to go to Kolkata, the way Bengalis pronounced it. She had reached the London, but she got reserved a ticket to Mumbai from Heathrow. She neglected the purpose why she was there, and she did not bother to inform the organizers of the conference. She reached Mumbai and stayed at a hotel then booked a guesthouse in Kolkata and flied towards that in another flight.

There she had received a best service by Abha, her caretaker at the guest house. The very next morning she hired a ambassador car which took him to her brother Manash's home in the north of Kolkata. But he was not there because he went to Shimla, as usual at that time, to spend his time with one of his sons. So his wife had received her and made her well treated. She chatted with the children for a while and spoke with Manash on a phone call. He was mush surprised about her

presence at Calcutta after a long time, so he asked her to stay there or else to join him at Shimla.

Without refusing, she left the house to Tollygunge. There she observed the Tipu's mosque, the house where she lived with Udayan, the two ponds and the lowland, where the two ponds' overflowed water used to collect and remained for a period. The former two things were there except the two ponds and the lowland. The latter were replaced by the buildings and houses.

She was the sole accuser, the sole guardian of her guilt. Protected by Udayan, over-looked by the investigator, taken away by Subahsh. Once again, she remembered the conversation with Udayan, she had in his last days at home. After returning to the guesthouse and having dinner she went to bed. She had dreamed about the action of suicide. She once again had all the images of Udayan, Subhash, Manash, Bela her in-laws, the policeman and his wife and son, and Meghna before her eyes. When she opened her eyes there was nothing except Abha.

Several months later, in California, she had received the second letter from Rhode Island but this had written by Bela. She had informed her mother that Meghna had been asking about her and her interest on Gauri. At the end of that letter she had concluded that if her longing or interest continues, she will tell her the truth and meet Gauri. If not the aforesaid things would never happened.

Subhash and Elise, the newly married couple after getting the divorce by Gauri, went to Ireland for their honeymoon. This was the very first honeymoon of Subhash at this age though he married Gauri long before. They observed the crude pillars, tablets and discussed about their history because she had been a member of the American History Association. Then Subhash had remembered the tablet of his

brother, Udayan and his mother who had been a faithful pilgrim to that shrine, offering flowers to her son, whenever she was able to do that.

At the last chapter of the novel itself, Lahiri revealed the cover of the full story of Udayan's end. He heard the policemen's approach towards his home, though he had the hearing problem due to the explosion. So as he planned, he went to the lowland water, amid the water hyacinth which grown heavily. There he dipped into the water for a long time and controlled to be inside the water. But after the lost of control, as the doctor said about his unhealthy situation, he stood up in the lowland and coughed to get the oxygen. Then he came out of the lowland as the police had instructed. They tied his hands to his back. He had thought of his mother and Gauri's early come back. He leaned down to his parents' feet to pardon him.

He looked Gauri with guilt for cheating her and her misuse in his political work. He had thought how he became fool of following the revolution. He began to live two lives after the declaration of CPI-ML. He was the culprit of the policeman's murder and of the bomb explosion at Tollygunge. So they got him into their custody and shot him with three bullets. At the end his body wasn't given to his parents. The novel ends with the scene of Gauri and Udayan's watching of the first half missed film in theatre in very closeness.

THE LOWLAND AS A SAGA OF FAMILY

Primarily, one thing we need to know at the beginning of this chapter is what is the meaning of Saga? Saga is an Old Norse [Icelandic] prose narrative, especially one dealing with family or social histories and legends. As per the meaning of saga, this novel is also a saga which mainly concentrates on family, the primary organization of a society.

Here in this novel Jhumpa Lahiri narrates the story of a Bengali family. As she told in one of her interviews that, “I often think the novel [The Lowland] is, among other things, very much about what a family is, and what a family means. Though a family can be any number of people, it has to consist of three people [like Subhash, Gauri and Bela] if you think of a family having at least two generations [Parents and their child].”

As per my review on this novel, it is a saga of family because it tells the whole story of Mr. Mitra family’s four generations in and out of India, after the independence of India. As per the Indian traditions, a woman must be married whoever her parents arrange her, though she likes or not, and serve her husband, in all means and his family. Afterwards she should be listened to his words and act according to him. The parents of the children have the freedom to arrange their marriage, so the love marriage has no encouragement. Like that, ‘widow marriage’ or ‘remarriage’ are disregarded and the ‘pre-marriage pregnancy’ has the status of sin. But these all the socially prohibited practices have come in the family of Mitra in *The Lowland*.

But Jhumpa Lahiri makes these, above said, practices of family reverse. She crates love marriage, freedom for woman to select her fiancé, widow marriage, remarriage pre-marriage sexual relations, homosexual relation, and pre-marriage pregnancy in this novel. Through this she has succeeded in creating the awareness and the encouragement to the female community to come out of the bad familial bonds. As she said in the above mentioned lines of her interview, she has created the awareness of the base organization of a society, family and its actual meaning and importance.

The Lowland is about the family of Mitra, who works as a clerk in the Indian Railways. His wife Bijoli, orthodox woman, who makes embroidery work for her neighbors' saris to earn a little amount for the homely expenses of their family. They have given birth to two sons in the 1940s. Subhash is the elder and Udayan the younger one. They were born just fifteen months of difference. They are inseparable, one often mistakes for the other and wander together, even joined the same school and same standard.

“Subhash might have started school a year earlier. But for the sake of convenience - also because Udayan protested at the notion of Subhash going without him – they were put into the same class at the same time.” [p.12]

The above quoted lines from the novel can frame an image before the reader's eyes that the two brothers have that affection between them very much. In the 1960s, when they join the college and course separately, Udayan has influenced by the Communist ideologies and the Naxalbari movement. But this hasn't affected Subhash. When Subhash and Udayan have completed their master's degree in Chemistry and Physics respectively, the former one decides to go to abroad and to take a research in Oceanography. But the latter begins his career as a teacher in a high school and involves in the Naxalbari movement actively.

As his wished, Subhash got a fellowship for his research in Rhode Island. So he decides to move there. But that is not a chewable/digestible thing for Udayan. So he tries to convince him to cancel his migration as below.

“You're the other side of me, Subhash. It's without you that I'm nothing. Don't go.” [p.31]

But that hasn't mattered. He has left India to America. The communication between the two brothers continues through the letters. At the beginning both have decided to marry the women whom their parents would choose for them. But the situation has altered the course while Subhash enjoys the pre-marital sexual relation with Holly and Udayan has loved and married Gauri.

In the second year of their marriage Udayan was executed by the police. Gauri has become a widow. Knowing the fact later through a telegram, Subhash has come back to Calcutta and spent a few days. After observing the hard situation of Gauri as a widow he has decided to rescue her by marrying her though she is pregnant with his brother's baby.

The widow marriage has not had a proper approval by his parents. Bijoli, his mother, has always accused Gauri after her approval for the marriage.

“Her in-laws accused her, as she knew they would, of disgracing their family. Her mother-in-law had lashed out, telling her she'd never been worthy of Udayan. That perhaps he would still be alive if he'd married another sort of girl.” [p.127]

They have accused Subhash too for wrongly taking Udayan's place. But they have not listened to their words. The register marriage, once again, takes place and it allows her to wear colored saris, bangles, vermillion, and other ornaments which show her as a married girl in the Indian culture.

Now both of them, Subhash and Gauri, have left Calcutta to Rhode Island. Here in a different place, out of her in-laws' control, she enjoys the peak of the freedom, in the beginning. Then she gives birth to Bela but after her birth, Gauri has no excitement because Bela is the only thing, he [Udayan] has left to her.

Before the Bela's birth, she has acted with a destructive notion that she cuts off all saris and old dresses and brought new one and shortened her hair. Then she concentrates only on her studies in philosophy but not on Bela. This is because of her negligence on her new family. So when Subhaash and Bela visited Calcutta, she has left them and settled in California as a teacher. At the end she wants to be with her daughter and granddaughter. But Bela rejects her ever seen anger for her opportunist character.

At the other hand, Subhash and Bela, after Gauri's separation have feel uncomforted. So Bela has wandered the American cities and returns to her father, when has conceived. When she has refused to tell the name of the baby's father, Subhash reveals the unsaid truth,

“I'm not your father.” [p.266]

This is the one group of a few words which has made her uncomfortable with him again and leads her to leave him once again for a while. But she returns to him and delivers Meghna. When Gauri comes to hand over the signed papers related to the properties and the divorce to Subhash, she knows that Subhash has a friend named Elise, whom he would marry. And Bela poured her with her words of parentless child.

“You're as dead to me as he [Udayan] is. The only difference is that you left me by choice.” [p.313]

At the end, Subhash becomes a father to four children by marrying Elise Silva, Bela's history teacher, without taking any proper step to be a father.

“The man has gained two sons, a second daughter in addition to his own. There are seven grandchildren.” [p.330]

Gauri, who visits Kolkata again, after a long time and tries to suicide, but she has come back from the idea. And with another letter by Bela, she has received one more hope of being with a family later if Meghna will continue to wish to be with her in future.

Like this, *The Lowland*, goes on with its theme of family saga. In this novel she joins two people who love each other and separates them in a very quick development. The family creates the story, turns the story, and ends the story of the novel. Family is the main subject matter for this novel.

THE LOWLAND AS A DIASPORIC NOVEL

“let me return to my hometown entombed
in grass as in a warm and high sea.”

~ GIORGIO BASSANI, “Saluto a Roma”

These are the two lines of the Italian writer Giorgio Bassani which have imprinted on the beginning page of the novel. The two sentences have the inner sense of diasporic elements like nostalgic sense about the motherland, his need to return to his homeland, his dislocation in the host land and his identity crisis.

Nevertheless, among readers Lahiri is best-known for her novels and short stories about the immigrant experiences. Because she was born in England and raised in America by parents who emigrated from India. Her novel, *The Lowland* –

which has long listed for both the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Award – continues to have those themes of diasporic writing.

W.H. Auden had renamed one of his poems in the *Collected Shorter Poems* in 1950, as ‘Diaspora’. It means ‘dispersion’ or ‘scattering of’. As far as his point of view in that poem is concerned about biblical issues towards Jesus. The term ‘Diaspora’ originally used for the Jewish externment, as previously mentioned, from its homeland, is now applied for expatriates, refugees, exiles, and immigrants. It refers to the work of exile and expatriates and all these who have experienced unsettlement and dislocation at the political, existential or metaphorical levels.

When we read *The Lowland* we can come across the most common elements of diasporic literary work. Those are migration, dislocation at the existential level, nostalgia, schizophrenia, language, doubleness, and other aspects.

Here in this novel by Jhumpa Lahiri migration, the first and foremost element of diasporic literature, takes place in the very first chapter of the novel.

“A few months later Subhash also traveled to a village [Rhode Island]; this was the word the Americans used.” [p.34]

And that migration leads to the advantages and the disadvantages of that deed, to the migrant. When Subhash decides to go to Rhode Island for the study purpose which is the second generation Indian immigrants who have migrated to abroad due to gain the knowledge in foreign universities like Oxbridge education in England but the lifestyle of abroad made them stay there only. As many as Subhash also has the intention to come back to Calcutta after the completion of his studies but he stays there like, Narasimhan who came from Madras and became a professor in Economics in the same university then married Kate, an American and settled there.

As the time passes he has adjusted with his roommate Richard who gave shared his cigarettes and car to learn. Instead of that he shares his meal with him. Subhash in his later days feels nostalgic (a longing for home or familiar surroundings) feeling towards his family, city, and country in several situations. Once he has known about Newport Bridge's construction by one of his professors. The wires of all the suspended cables would span just over eight thousand miles. Then he thinks,

“It [the length of the wire of the suspended cables] was the distance between America and India; the distance that now separated him from his family” [p.65]

He has been thinking about his brother's presence with him though he is far from him. So when he had the sexual relation with Holly in her bed one night, he has thought to inform that to Udayan and confess to his brother for the profound step he had taken. But he can't do that.

And he has the culture of India though he was in America. For every year he has received a gift box for the celebration of Durga Puj. But the year when Udayan died, he did not receive that. So he has been waiting for the box, but he received a telegram informing his brother's death instead of that gift box.

He was shocked after reading that telegram. So he leaves Rhode Island to Tollygunge in the urge to know what has happened. And for the next time he comes with Bela to perform his gratitude to his father after his father's death and one more time to attend his mother's funeral rituals. These all are the conditions which introduce us how the characters suffer with their nostalgia.

Then taking schizophrenia (mental illness affecting behaviour) into consideration this element of diasporic writing mainly surrounded on Gauri in this

novel. She always feels guilty about her all deeds in the others land. She can live freely with Subhash in that country where no one knows what happened in the past. But she had mentally dipped in that feeling of a culprit. Though she married Subhash and shared her body with him, she never wanted to give birth to a baby of his own and never tried to love him.

“... so he continued to hoping though every month, in the medicine cabinet was a new packet of birth-control pills.” [p.160]

Subhash, Gauri and Bela are the characters in the novel who felt the dislocation at the existential level. They had felt the dislocation of their culture when Subhash and Gauri came to USA. Both have suffered of that culture as if the Aeolians’ culture at the beginning because leading the lifestyle of their own they have liked and the relation with whoever they wished are so much different from the culture of India to American society. Gauri once, fed up with all these, at the end of the novel, visits to her homeland for the first time after a long gap of more than forty years.

“She’d gone to the booking office in Heathrow, asking about flights to India. The Indian passport she continued to carry, the citizenship she’d never renounced, enabled her, the following morning, to board another plane.” [p.316]

At the one hand, as above mentioned, Subhah and Gauri throughout the novel never applied to have the American citizenship. By this we may think that both were in the dilemma of adopting that nationality of Aeolians like others. At the other hand they never returned to India permanently. They needed the facilities of ‘American dream’ but not the nationality. This is the main mentally suffered schizophrenia the characters of this novel suffered.

They feel the doubleness in their life because in the American society they lived as if they were Americans but inside they had the feeling of Indians. Throughout this novel, we can see the characters' recollection of their past life in India, especially in Calcutta.

Gauri, though she married her husband's own brother Subhash, she feels instability and the guilt of that marriage up to the end. As her mother-in-law has said she remains Udayan's wife. And tried love Subhash but never did. She has dreamt several times of being with Udayan though he has dead.

“She remembers standing on a balcony in north Calcutta, talking to Udayan. The library at Presidency where he [Udayan] would come to find her sometimes, sitting at a table barricaded with books, a giant fan rustling the papers.” [p.276]

Subhash, like Gauri, also remembers his past in his isolation, the moment of Gauri's escape from the house, Bela's nomadic behaviour and after that Udayan, Bijoli and his father's deaths.

“Instead, in his bed, he found himself traveling into the deeper past, sitting at random through the detritus of his boyhood. He revisited the years before he left his family. His father returning from the market every morning, the fish his mother would slice and salt and fry for breakfast, silver-skinned pieces spilling out of a burlap bag.” [p.250]

Moreover, they, especially Gauri had much awareness about the news about India, which she used to listen through a radio in the earlier days, and later through the websites in internet. And they, Subhash and Gauri, had felt happy when they received a letter in Bengali from Udayan to Subhash and from Subhash to Gauri. At the closure of this novel, *The Lowland*, it ends with the memory of Udayan.

These all are the elements of diasporic writings, which I have explained above, can label *The Lowland* as a diasporic novel. Gauri at the beginning of this novel quoted an immigrant Italian writer's words.

THE LOWLAND AS A NOVEL OF MOVEMENT

The Lowland is a novel of movement because apart from all the themes, the movement of Naxalbari in the novel has the roots of the whole story which creates the migration, death, and familial sufferings. Though that movement attracted one of the two brothers, Udayan all the other characters suffered a lot. The movement takes the life of Udayan and makes his dependents cheated because after the establishment of their party he began to lead two lives, one is personal life and the other is personal life. It affects his parents, brother, wife, never known daughter throughout their lives.

In 1964, The Communist Party of India split into two. The CPI maintained a loyalty to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, whereas the CPM took a different view, more inclined to the views of the Chinese Communist Party. A few years later, in the village of Naxalbari near the Himalayan foothills by Nepal and Bangladesh, land conflicts came to a head. A feudal system was still in place. Darjeeling tea plantations were still run by British companies and were common in the area. Land was scarce.

A middle-class radical named Kanu Sanyal, one who kills himself, allied initially with the rural poor against local landlords. The protests of the poor led to trouble with the police, many of whom were trained by the British, and these conflicts escalated into extreme violence. Landlords were beheaded. The peasants believed that because the CPM was in power, it was acceptable to right the feudal

system of their own and thought the CPM would back their revolt. Instead, the CPM took the government's side, and 1500 policemen were installed in the area. Sanyal after three years in hiding was sent off to jail. Once released in 1977, he rallied a faction of Communist supporters and began organizing again and died by suicide.

What transpired in Naxalbari inspired revolutionaries around the state of Bengal that a few other parts of India. Their fervor impressed the Maoists in China. Naxalite became a word to describe a movement of radicals fighting the Indian Government on behalf of the oppressed peasants and working poor of India. Eventually, Naxalites formed a new party, the Communist Party of India [Marxist-Leninist], shortened to CPI [ML] on Lenin's birthday, April 22, 1969. It was the third communist party launched in Calcutta.

It is into this period of intense conflict between revolutionaries and the government in Bengal that Jhumpa Lahiri guide readers at the start of her novel, *The Lowland*. Two brothers, Subhash and Udayan, grow up in Tollygunge, a neighborhood in what was then South Calcutta, near Technicians' studio, where Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Ray shot his acclaimed film *Pather Panchali*. The geography includes a plain known as the lowland, which would become flooded after the monsoon rains and covered with water hyacinths.

Our first hint if the events to follow happens during the boys' childhoods, when younger brother Udayan convinces Subhash to sneak into the Tollyclub, an exclusive country club established by Major William Tolly, an Englishman, over half a century before. A policeman catches them and beats them with a golf club. Such casual show of brutal force was common throughout India during British rule and for a while after independence was achieved and this excess and corruption has motivated many to reject, in small ways and large, the legitimacy of Indian laws.

Subhash is reserved, thoughtful, introverted, and devoted to his brother. As you might expect, we spend much of the novel firmly planted within his sensitive but conservative perspectives he observes the natural world around him, a landscape teeming with mynas, egrets, jackals. Udayan is charismatic, daring, taken with the Naxalites. At first, his character appears to be directly modeled after Sanyal, who had grown up in the middle class but abandoned his upbringing and his education in order to organize and help peasants in their uprising. When Udayan brings Subhash to a Naxalite meeting, Subhash feels invisible and unpersuaded by the imported ideology of Maoism:

“Though Subhash was also present, though he sat beside Udayan, he felt invisible. He wasn’t convinced by an imported ideology could solve India’s problems.

He remembered the silly signals he and Udayan used to send to one another, pressing the buzzer, making each other laugh. He didn’t know how to respond to the message Sinha was transmitting, which Udayan so reactively received.” [p.28]

Subhash leaves Tollygunge to study marine chemistry in providence, Rhode Island, a world entirely different from the one he has left behind. Capturing with her usual dexterity, an emotion that is common to Indian immigrants, Lahiri writes:

“The difference was so extreme that he could not accommodate the two places together in his mind. In his enormous new country, there seemed to be nowhere for the old to reside. There was nothing to link them; he was the sole link.” [p.34]

In contrast, Udayan’s letters to Subhash indicate he is devoted to his vision of what India could become, leading a secret double lives as a Naxalite, blowing off class to go to the party’s meetings when Naxalbari movement occurs to the society

1967. He was very much influenced by the ideologies of Marxist leaders like Che, Lenin and Mao Tse-tung and gained the friendship of Kanu Sanyal and Charu Mujumdar's companions. He always collected the copies of Deshbharati and Liberation. Subhash observed under his bed against the wall, there was a can of red paint and a brush that had not been there before. Beneath their mattress Subhash found a folded piece of paper containing a lot of slogans copied out in Udayan's hand.

“China's Chairman is our Chairman! Down with elections! Our path is the path of Naxalbari!” [p.28]

This much of risk, he had taken in his political life. But at the other hand in that same house his brother Subhash like his father and mother, thought about the upcoming dangers. That's why he questions him [Udayan],

“What happens if the police catch you?” [p.29]

The answer for that question, Udayan replied,

“If we don't stand up to a problem, we contribute it, Subhash.” [p.29]

Once he went to a few days of outstation in the novel and returned with fruitfulness because of his presence in a camp may be of communist leaders held. Then they launched the new party CPI-ML. After his course completion he married Gauri, sister of his friend Manash. Taking her help unknowingly to her, he used to send the messages to Chandra and other comrades.

As they planned, Udayan and his companions confirmed their preparation for the assassination of the policeman Nirmal Dey and the bomb explosion at Tollygunge. They were succeeded in that but at the moment of the explosion

Udayan couldn't be able to move off quickly. So he got his right hand injured and the eardrums irresponsive for a light sound. So because of the sound of the police van's arriving sound he can be able to quit the house to the lowland. But the policemen having his parents and wife in their custody, had succeeded to arrest him.

Now he pleads them for his guilt of his deeds. But nothing could happen because he had been arrested. And after their return from somewhere to interrogate him, they shot him with three bullets. At that moment he remembered the final words of Che:

“Remember that the revolution is the imported thing and that each one of us alone is worth nothing.” [p.334]

But in Udayan's case that revolution which he had hugged tightly with full of enthusiasm made him saw his death before his family members near his house. So Gauri thought,

“If he was worth nothing, then why was he so desperate to save himself? Why, in the end, did the body not obey the brain [when he hid in the lowland water]?” [p.334]

When they protested closing the shutters of the university, including Udayan, had gone to the countryside to further indoctrinate himself like others. The comrades have given coarse rice, thinned lentils and water that never quenched their thirst. They used to sleep on the beds of string and sacks of grain. There they faced the bite of mosquitoes and slow moving swarms. But some of them who had the rich background left the camps in the beginning days. But Udayan had the vision of changing India. So he sacrificed his bright life for that movement since the party's formation.

“After the party was declared he began living two lives.” [p.337]

They were told by Sinha before he arrested that ‘revolutionary violence opposed oppression. That it was a force of liberation, humane’, And Charu Mujumdar had told ‘they [policemen] are not Indians, they do not belong to India’. These all are the words made them to kill Nirmal Dey and a bomb explosion. That led him to his death very early in his life.

Gauri at once sought Kanu Sanyal’s names on the internet and got a lot of information about them. When she entered the name, Udayan, who pledged his life for the movement, was nowhere in any sites. This is what happens after a common man’s participation in the movements like that. The party made hi tomb in the lowland to remembrance of his sacrifice. That tablet received the respect like a martyr’s spot up to Bijoli’s death. But when Gauri visited Calcutta, after forty years, it was out of scene now like the two ponds and the lowland.

These are the main incidents which made us to think The Lowland as a novel of movement because in every turn of the novel we can see the effect of that movement in the novel. So this novel, The Lowland is a novel of movement.

SUSPENSE IN *THE LOWLAND*

Obviously, The Lowland is a novel of suspense because it, at the beginning itself puts Udayan into death. “Udayan killed. Come back if you can.” [p.83] That telegram creates a lot of curiosity like the other novels about why Udayan had killed? How he had killed? By whom he had killed? Where he had killed? Like this hundreds of questions arise at the beginning of the novel. It is called the suspense a novel should have. That quality is the part and partial of The Lowland.

After receiving that telegram Subhash comes to Tollygunge to visit his parents to know the reality but they never told what happened clearly. They said that he was killed by the police. With those words of his parents he wasn't satisfied so he asked his brother's wife Gauri after their interaction for a while the next day of his arrival.

Gauri told him the moment of Udayan's death in front of their house only. He came to know by her what had had happened really at that moment. She too never told him the Udayan's active participation after their Party's declaration. So the truth remains with Gauri only till the end of the novel. The reader can know that that at the ending pages of this novel. So that suspense, the author has brought up to the end, is very excellent. Apart from Gauri's recollection, the author has narrated the facts in the flashback mode.

When Subhash married her and brought her to Rhode Island the reader can think that they would lead a happy life of their own. But after turning the pages we can see the suspenseful story Jhumpa has made for all of us. Gauri as her mother-in-law told Subhash never loved him and she remained the wife of Udayan. She quit off from the house of Rhode Island to California where she got teaching job after her research got the PhD in philosophy.

Then onwards, here Subhash and Bela, at the other hand lead a life of without the hope. Bela became a nomad who never gave trace to her father of her stay though she resides in New York a very near place to travel from Rhode Island. And Subhash remained alone up to Bela's return.

And the one more, exciting curiosity, when we go through the novel, is what happened if Bela has informed about her father, Udayan? So at her childhood Gauri had tried to inform that her real father was Udayan and Subhash is her imposter as

well as stepfather. But Subhash had succeeded to make her silent without informing Bela about her birth secret at that age and said her that would harm her mind.

So the truth which should be known to Bela went back to the secrete side of their mind. But after her rejoin with him when she had informed her pregnancy and she would raise her child herself he revealed the truth that he is not her father and her father is Udayan, his brother, whom she had seen in the portrait in her grandmother's house, and her mother's first husband.

Once again, she was affected by the truth he had said and left the house. The reader thinks that she would not come this time. The expected thing became wrong when she came back to her father after reviewing his efforts to raise her and his marriage to escape her mother from the difficulties she would face in India.

Like this, *The Lowland* goes on creating the suspense, curious matters and tension and their end by revealing truths to the needed makes the readers suddenly surprised after they read the chapters of this novel with the deep interest. These all the factors may cause the readers to label this as a novel of suspense in the view of long time maintained truths.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Lowland is a novel having the themes of family, diasporic, movement and suspense as the themes in its subject matter is totally a novel of social realism like Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie* and *Untouchable*. It is being a good description of the societies, Indian and American, The lifestyles of the people, value of human relations, social activities the big step to bring the discussion on the evil practices of the society like widowhood. She had tried to witness her novel as anti- social evil practices for instance, widow remarriage.

The revolution in the post-independent Indian society attracts a lot of young people including one of this novel's protagonists Udayan, charismatic but irresponsible. He made everything secretly such as painting slogans of his party leaders like Kanu Sanyal and Charu Mujumdar and the party's pamphlets and his presence at the party's camps, without informing his family except his wife Gauri.

At the other hand Subhash, dull but capable, studied hard and fled to abroad for a doctoral degree and had a relationship with Holly and separated then married his own brother's wife, Gauri, after his death to rescue her from the cruel/hard practices of Indian society for a widow. But he also failed in his commitment of his come back from America after his doctoral degree.

Gauri, an opportunist at the other view, never loved Subhash though she married him and shared her bed with him. This is what the confusion she had in her mind that to forget Udayan or not. But she never forgot him. She used to remember him always. The corridor of her house in North Calcutta, the corridor of their college they used to meet usually, their married life and the last days of his death had haunted

her. This made her to from Subhash and Bela. She had failed to fulfill her duty as a mother of a daughter.

Coming to Bela's issue, she is the most sufferer of this novel than Subhash and Gauri without any of her mistakes. She born after her father's death and raised up under the care of her stepfather without knowing the reality. But in the case of her mother she never received love.

And she has fully neglected by her own mother, but she has received that from her father. These are all the reasons which made her to love her father more than her mother. When her mother left her, it never mattered but affected her mentally and she begin to keep distance from her father because she thinks he never tried to bring her back. When she has talked about the truth by Subhash, she felt free in a corner of her heart.

Gauri has brought to America by Subhash. Though their marriage had not been a solution, it had taken her away from Tollygunge. Then she like an animal briefly observed, briefly caged, released her. He had protected her, he had attempted to love her but she never loved him. At the end she tried to kill herself but left the idea. She was the sole accuser, sole guardian of her guilt. Finally she remembered Bela's words that her reappearance meant nothing that she was as dead as Udayan.

Subhash, who suffers by Udayan, Gauri and Bela, is the representative of the diasporic community in this novel because he had married Gauri in the view to protect her but he never received love by her. Then he became a father without taking that step and reserved his time for both. At the end of the story, he married another woman, after a long time of wifeless life, Elise Silva and became a father for four children and grandfather too. At the age of his sixties he went to Ireland for his

honeymoon for the first time. Like this he leads a selfless life throughout this novel's journey with the reader.

Coming to the tragic hero of the novel Udayan's matter, he is a talented master's degree holder in physics. But his interest in the political life made him to become a revolutionist and that leads him to his cruel death. He had known from the beginning the risk of what he was doing. But only the policeman's blood had prepared him. That blood had not belonged only to the police officer it had become a part of Udayan also. So that he had felt his own life began to ebb, irrevocably, as the policeman lay dying in the alley. Since then he'd waited for his own blood to split.

The incident of his death, as he thought takes place at the beginning pages of the novel. But the author of this novel Jhumpa Lahiri had sewed the stitches to the new cloth to make it a beautiful wearing for the reader by creating the new stories in a story to make that interesting. That technique of writing we can see in this novel, *The Lowland* like her other fictional writings.

Moreover, she had written this novel in the backdrop of the movement which had raised in the region of Calcutta in the 1960s and 70s, diasporic elements like nostalgia, schizophrenia, nomadic terror, cultural displacement, the societies undividable part family and the suspense it had in each sentence of its writing style.

Beautifully written, *The Lowland* [a marshy stretch between two ponds in Calcutta, a wasteland to some but to others, a repository of memories] keeps a reader turning pages, always keeps one wondering what happens next. Like real life, nothing will happen.... though everything does.

Lahiri's great strength as of fiction writer lies in that elegant, effortless to read writing, plus the respect she holds for each of her characters like Gauri, Bijoli, Bela, Drew, Elise and even Deepa, and Abha. She casts no judgement on Gauri's decisions, quit from Subhash and Bela, remarriage and others, offers no condemnations far what might be seen, even lived on its own terms, a ultimately no life at all. She simply poses the questions to the reader to decide and find the answer.

As a reader at the book's end one feels neither triumph for Subhash, surrounded by loved ones and family, nor pity for Gauri and Udayan. One leaves the characters of *The Lowland* with the same level of respect and empathy that their creator gave them understanding that their choices might just as will be ours.

Totally, *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri is a novel suspenseful sweeping and piercingly intimate, it is masterly novel of fate and will, exile and return (diasporic). Shifting among the points of view of a wide range of richly drawn characters, it is at once a page-turner and a work of great beauty and complex emotion; an engrossing family saga with very high stakes; and a story steeped in history that seamlessly spans generations and geography. It is a classic work concerning its themes.

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