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**Diaspora in Lahiri's Lowland**

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Lahiri's novel *The Lowland* conveys the story of people live in India and fight for the freedom where as others migrated to foreign country for better lives. The novel has the diasporic characters such as Gauri, Subhash, and Bela, who live in United States of America. They are isolated and alienated because facing identity struggle and cultural hybridity unable to separate themselves from their relationship with India.

The title *The Lowland* refers to a marshy land between two ponds in a Calcutta neighborhood where close brothers grow up. In monsoon season, the marsh floods and the ponds join; in summer, the water evaporates. The two ponds are example of the two brothers separate at a particular time; at other times inseparable. They look alike that people mistake them as twins, but their personalities totally vary. Udayan is fascinating and adventure type of

person. Subhash is the solid and dependable type. Culture is assured up with the identity. Associating culture with identity Chris Baker writes:

"Because of political struggles and philosophical and linguistic concerns, 'identity' emerged as the central theme of Cultural Studies during the 1990s".

Culture is a basis of identity, and rather argumentative theatre various political and ideological causes involve one another. Culture is observed as a battle ground for identity. About the marriage of Subhash and Gauri, the novel reads:

"Becoming a wife?

She holds the comb still for a moment, glancing at his reflection in the mirror, unable to see his face clearly

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through the mosquito netting.

No.

Becoming my wife?

She gets up and lifts the netting, sitting on the edge of the bed.

She stretches out beside him,

No, she says once more

. They've arrested Sinha."(229)

Subhash and Udayan are married with the Bengali tradition, Subhash asks Gauri if she is happy after marriage with him. She doesn't reply and twists the subject. She explains that how Sinha is arrested. Thinking about her life, Gauri utters :

"At this point she's lived nearly half her life apart from him. Eighteen years in Rhode Island, fifteen on her own.

She'll be thirtyfour on her next birthday. She craves a different pace sometimes, an alternative to what her life has come to be.

But she doesn't know what else she might do."

Gauri changes her life from Udayan she is leaving in Rhode Island for last 15

years. Now she is 34 years old. She does not know about her future life in US, nothing but regular studies and not like India where festivals not fail to join people, thinking of Indian life hits thought of Udayan every time. When Subhash's roommate Richard not with him, he got a seat at bar, drinks and sees American football on television. His separation from native homeland can be noticed. He says

"No procession that he knew of, no public festivity. Apart from a crowd that had gathered for football game on campus, there was nothing to observe." (49)

The relationship between Subhash and Holly explains the same situation as his nativity does not fail in attachment with his native homeland culture of India. He doesn't refute the fact exist is deeply in Indian culture. The novelist says about Subhash he did not belong to that country of America but not matters. He wants to tell her that he waits, all his life to find Rhode Island. It was here, in this minute but majestic corner of the world, that he could breathe. Subhash says the place he was wishing to visit America which is the majestic corner of the world. The passage further reveals:

"And you? She asked. Will you return to Calcutta when you finish? If I can find

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work there. For she was right, it was assumed, by his family, by himself, that his life here was temporary, what do you miss about it? It's where I was made.”

Subhash lives in America, but he cannot withdraw the Indian culture. When Holly asked if he will return to Calcutta, after finishing his PhD course in US, he says that he misses his family much. Udayan killed in the revolution. A letter came from parents saying about Dayan's death compels Subhash to return after brother's death and to take care of parents. His first meeting with Gauri he came to know how his parents had been ill treating her, Subhash is upset, he asks her to come for US with him and at last it is happened. The novelist says of their relationship as: Their marriage is not a solution, it makes her to move from Tollygunge. He brings her to America with him and then, like an animal observed, caged, released her. He protected her, he wants to love her. For all the time she had to open a new jar of jam.

Gauri and Subhash got married after death of Udayan, They are not in the homeland. After the marriage, they live in America. Subhash protected her. Dr. Grant reveals about Gauri: He thinks of Udayan and Gauri, and feeling replaced. He felt now a second time. A door opened, and he stood up to shake a woman's hand. She was younger than expectation, short, with brown

hair. A pale face, black tights, plump calves, flat leather shoes. The teenager in her mother's dress, the jacket a big for her, a little long, through the open door of her office he saw the development of degrees on wall. How a woman with confused appearance help Bela.

Dr. Grant not know whose wife is Gauri in reality. After, he learnt that the place of Udayan replaced by Subhash. Bela also could not recognize. Identity is the difficult issue in the contemporary study of culture. Cultural studies explore how kinds of people we are and how identify with descriptions of ourselves as male and female, black and white. Within the cultural studies, identities are not stable things which exist, have no essential or universal qualities. Identities are build, made than found. Identity crisis is the result of psychological loss when one is out from the motherland and is forced to live in the identity crisis.

The people in diaspora are making attempt to identify themselves with their culture through religious scriptures, memories of the forsaken land as well as through the hope of restoration and united again with the home. The state of loss of identity is bad because of the dislocation from the native land or home. Subhash's state of being dislocated in a foreign land: “In the end this was what had motivated him. And yet the motivation had done nothing to spare him. Each day, in

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spite of its growing routine, felt uncertain, improvisational. Here, in this place surrounded by sea, he was drifting far from his point of origin. Here detached from Udayan, he was ignorant of so many things”.

The problem begins with the confusion of cultural belonging. They find difficulty to adopt other’s culture. Such will ties of their familiar identity. Such consciousness arrives to the state that loss of traditional home of fixity and physical centeredness of absolute values, a unified reality. Bela asks Subhash replies:

“I’m not your father.

Who are you, then?

Your stepfather.

Your uncle.

Both those things”.

She not believe him. She thought that he'd lost his mind, that perhaps he'd suffered a stroke. She kneeled in front of him on the sofa, gripping his shoulders, inches from his face.

The debate between Subhash and Bela as the daughter of Udayan. When Subhash revealed that he was not her father, Bela asked who he was and Subhash said that he was her step father, her Uncle. As a result, she didn’t believed him. About the identity of Gauri, novelist says

Gauri was a citizen of India, she also lived in America with Subhash. She often renewed her Indian passport. She had put her finger prints on airport while entering to America. Gauri, plays the different role is expressed in novel: It was not unlike the way their role changed so many points in the past. From wife to widow, from sister in-law to wife, from mother to childless woman. With exception of losing Udayan, she take these steps. She had married Subhash, she had abandoned Bela. She had alternate versions of herself, she had insisted at brutal cost on these conversions.

Gauri changes her role to the story of the novel. In beginning, she was the wife of Udayan and sister –in- law of Subash and childless woman. After her husband’s death became a widow then she remarried Subash according to the Bengali Custom. She became the mother of Bela. Hybridity appears as a convenient category at 'the edge' or contact point of diaspora, describing cultural mixture where the diaspora meets the host in the seen of migration. Bhabha uses hybridity as an 'in-between' term, referring to a 'third space', and to ambivalence and mimicry in the context of what might, uneasily, be called the colonial cultural interface. In the colonial discourse, Bhabha refers hybridity as "a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the affects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other

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'denied' knowledge enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority, its rule of recognition".

The change of people in large numbers from their homelands and their migration to other world regions has cultural as well as social implications, for the migrants and for the host societies in which they arrived. For migrant populations, there is the transnational experience of displacement, the lived experience of hybridity. Although hybridity straddles both the colonial centre and the colonized space, Bhabha believes that it is a position in which the hybridizes do not belong clearly to the world either the colonizer or the colonized. So hybridity a cultural mix created a new form of identity. After realizing that life without vehicle is impossible in US, Subhash learns to drive and start to go out with other friends to bars and restaurants.

Despite alienation, he starts to adapt as individual and carefree American ways of life. He commit first physical relationship with a married woman. If he was in India, Subhash would have never involved in such relationship society wouldnot accept. It all begins when he meets Holly, a Massachusetts-born French Canadian nurse. At first he hesitates to mingle with her. There is 10 years of age gap and he did not imagine a marriage with her. But after time, he become close to her and makes sexual relationship with her.

Inside the room he forget what his parents would think and the consequences of it. At this point, Subash is free from his traditional norms and values already liberated himself from the culture he was brought from. His assimilation with American culture seems to complete when he dreams of being Narasimhan, to have children like him from an American wife. He thinks of Holly would continue her affair. Holly stops this relationship after she realizes that she will be returning to husband. The thought of their age difference and the reality that she is rearing a child with her husband compels her to break the present relationship with Subash.

During his short relationship with Holly, he does manage his state of alienation with her singlehood. A separated mother, Holly becomes a source of happiness; a bonding both shares and loves without restrictions. The novel reveals: "He remembered the short wave radio that he and Udayan had put together, drawing information from all over the world to another isolated place. He realizes that in some sense Holly was more alone than he was. Her isolation, without a husband, without neighbor around her, seemed severe." After having relationship with Holly in America, Subhash feels himself isolated and alienated but Holly is more alienated than him. About the Isolation of Subhash, the novel reveals "The date of his departure was approachinlg :soon enough

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he would on the plane again. There was no one there for him in Rhode Island.”

Subhash was about to fly for America. He thought about his isolation in America as he would be alone in Rhode Island. The novelist says: The only way to prevent it was to take Gauri away. It was all he could do to help her, the only alternative he could provide. And the only way to take her was to marry her. To take his brother's place, to raise his child, to come to love Gauri as Udayan had. To follow him in a way that felt perverse, that felt ordained. That felt both right and wrong.

In aim to adapt the American society, she transforms herself both physically and mentally. In India, she wore ordinary cloths. She rarely wore ornaments, to the most she prefers wearing wristwatch and a simple chain. After marriage, she gets in the situation as her in-laws introduces to plenty family obligations. Besides cooking food and cleaning the house, she maintains traditional Indian culture.

When she leaves to US, She bends down before her in-laws and takes the dust from their feet. Her decision was opposed by family. When it comes in major decisions, her opinions were never allowed. However, she did not face such condition in US. No one minds other's business and everyone was free to do anything without any disturbance.

Hybridity disputed terms in the postcolonial theory, commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistics, cultural, political, racial, etc. Linguistic examples are pidgin and creole language. Hybridity has something to do with colonial experience; it is the 'ambivalent relationship' of the colonizer and the colonized. Since the colonial settlers were separated from their own point of origin, it is the necessary of creating new identity in other land. A binary practice between the peoples of two cultures, races and languages started in a colonized society creating a hybrid or cross-cultural society.

Recently of cultural studies, term hybridity connected with the analysis of the relationship between colonizers and colonized. So, it claims that the so called hierarchical purity of culture is matter of fact, getting towards this new culture made Gauri to change from top to bottom was the only path that would allow her to follow her dreams of studying philosophy. Having foreign friends, her only companions, and their new lifestyle troubled her a lot. She dressed up in shorts and fancy apparels revealing her body parts. Her speech with Subhash regarding this clearly shows her mind for change. She blatantly says:

“I have nothing of common with them. But watching the girl walk away, Gauri felt



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ungainly. She began to want to look like the other women she noticed on the campus, like a woman Udayan had never seen.”

She is a woman having strong will power, not hesitate to change the way she looked. She cuts her long hair short. She replaces her loose clothing with body tight tops and legging comfortably revealed her breast and deep cut hips that she never exposed before. When Subhash enquires about it:

“Why did you cut off your hair? I was tired of it. And your clothes? I was tired of those, too.”

Process of adjusting to American culture without any effort. Her attempt to leave Subhash, , shows her transformed herself, a woman who had learn to adapt to her desires of its harsh consequences on others. She even does not refrain from committing a sexual relation with her female student. A tale of woman in a diasporic situation to escape her past and in pressure to adapt to new circumstances, the transition in the life of Gauri explains:

“And yet sometimes he felt threatened, convinced that it was Udayan's inspiration that Udayan's influence was greater. Gauri had left them, and by now Subhash trusted

her to stay away. But there were times Subhash believed that Udayan would come back, claiming his place, claiming Bela from the grave as his own”.

After the death of Udayan, it was the social norm that made Subhash and Gauri marry. But Subhash believed that Udayan would come back from his grave and claim his place. Although Bela is the daughter of Gauri and Udayan, Subhash takes the responsibility of her. He does so willingly even though Gauri leaves both of them to follow her career as a lecturer of philosophy. Bela is born in Rhode Island. She has taught up on foreign language, foreign learning and foreign cultural. Her parents never compel her to follow her native cultural. Since her seventh grade, she has been learning Spanish language. She makes her own world. Subhash, hesitates to intrude in her private life. Bela adapts her American dressing code. She has a tattoo like an open cut off right above her ankle. She has bleached her hair and has loose hoop on her nose.

Gauri says that Bela does not have the qualities from her motherland of West Bengal. She isn't like her father any more. As she lives in America, She is leading her life according to western culture. When Bela is 21, she gets a job on a farm as an agricultural apprentice. She visits her father only during special occasions like

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Christmas or in emergencies. When she leaves her father, she never tells him when she would return back again or where she would go. Her chosen path is a 'rootless path.' However, Subhash learns to accept such type of her unconventional, independent life. He never face to face intervenes into her Americanized life.

The second generation in *The Lowland*, Bela lead the western lifestyle of American people. Through these notes of assimilation in *The Lowland*, Lahiri's novel may be a way and guide for those people who are about to assimilate themselves. Diaspora is the study of race and ethnicity to describe a range of cultural affiliations to other groups who have migrated across national boundaries R.Radhakrishnan in this regard says:

“The diaspora has created rich possibilities of understanding different histories. And these histories have taught us that identities, selves, traditions, and natures do change with travel and that we can achieve such changes in identity intentionally.”

In the diasporic ethnicity is forced to take on the discourse of authenticity to protect and maintain space and history. To live in diaspora is to have the trauma of exile, migration, displacement, rootlessness

and the life in a minority group haunted by sense of loss, urge to reclaim, to look back. Diasporas need to be known as imagined communities which conceive, despite their dispersal, as sharing a collective past and common destiny, and also simultaneity. Diaspora is fertile space to occupy than that of diaspora people feel to be apart between own culture and adopted culture

At University campus, he meets Narashimhan, a professor of economics from Madras. Narasimhan married Kate, an American woman. At first he wonders but such culture of marital affair is common in America. Diaspora has become a significant term in the study of postcolonial world. Diaspora is an experience living in different cultures. Diaspora is a Greek term which means to 'disperse', a dispersion of a people from the original homeland and originally homogeneous entity such as a language or culture.

Diaspora is therefore, the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland. The concept is with the ideas of travel, migration, scattering, displacement, homes and borders. Earlier the word 'diaspora' was used to define only the Jews who dispersed due to the unfavorable situations of invasion. The diasporic notion starts with Subhash as he begins to experience the American life and culture in US. It was the moment when he observes a middle aged couple, old enough



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to his grandparent, the thought of his singlehood strikes him hard. The novel reads

"For the first time, he thought of his own marriage. For the first time, perhaps because he felt in Rhode Island that some part of him was missing, he desired a companion."

Wholeheartedly wanting to escape from rebellion in India, he shifted in USA to do PhD in Oceanography. Gauri is another strong character in the novel. A female another diasporic character in the novel, Gauri first live in the conventional norms of Indian culture. Educated yet confined in the norms of social restriction, widow turned Gauri escapes from her traditional burden it marrying Udayan, her brother-in-law. Udayan's temporary returned to India turns out to be a portal of escape for Gauri. Her-in laws wanted her to have a wage and unhappy life after the

death of Udayan. They wanted her to wear white clothes and involved in household chores.

He wants to lead an individual and independent life which Gauri finds with Udayan, Characters who are warped in cultural dilemma or the world of in between acculturation and assimilation, the ultimate process of adaptation on how migrant people survive to new culture and lifestyle. Both Udayan and Gauri, throughout the story the characters have undergone this diasporic nature in which they lived.

Nostalgia is another thematic core of the story as such a real picture of household activities in India is presented in the story. The remembrance of days in their native lands has deeper impact on both the major characters. Subhash already in the modernity of American culture, a society where there are no restriction and boundaries for liberal thoughts and human relations.