



Jhumpa Lahiri's Thematic Analysis and Issues of Diaspora in Lowland

Gulabi Sannappa Nayak & Dr. Arputhem Lourdusamy

1. Research scholar, Institute of Social Science & Humanities, Srinivas University, Mangalore-575001, Karnataka, India.
2. Senior Lecturer, Dept. of English, N.R.A.M Polytechnic, Nitte, Udupi, Karnataka, India,
3. Research Professor, Institute of Social Science & Humanities, Srinivas University, Mangalore, Karnataka, India

Abstract:

Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Lowland*, traces the fate of tender fraternal bonds torn asunder by violent politics. Lahiri's delineation of the narrative events purports to show how the absence of loved ones becomes covertly a portent haunting presence within the subconscious mind of the affected characters directing their overt actions to their own consequential ways of life through which they are goaded on. When their respective paths crisscross, Lahiri proves herself to be adept at depicting the unhappiness at the core of the intricate interpersonal relations that materializes. This write-up attempts to grasp the import of this novel by situating the author's unique presence both in the post millennium Indian English fiction as well as in the fabric of the narrative. Its analytical method moves from an elaborate study of the tortuous plot through a network of characterization, scrutiny of the multiplex narration leading to a medley of themes that have contemporary appeal.

Key Words: plot- characterization - narrative technique - thematic dimension

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jhumpa Lahiri is celebrated for her depiction of immigrant and Indian-American life, yet her poignant stories also capture universal themes of longing, loneliness and barriers of communication. She was born in London in 1967 and raised in Rhode Island. Her Bengali parents, a teacher and a librarian, took their family on regular trips to Calcutta, India to visit extended family. Lahiri completed her B.A. at Barnard College, and from Boston University she earned M.A. degrees in English, Creative Writing, and Comparative Literature and the Arts, as well as a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies.

Lahiri's debut collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, was published in 1999 to critical acclaim. Several of these stories had previously appeared in the *New Yorker*, and she was the recipient of an O. Henry Award for the title story. Lahiri's characters are often immigrants from India or children of immigrants who deal with issues of cultural displacement, marital troubles and issues of identity. While many of these stories are set in the United States, Lahiri's time in Calcutta is evident in her occasional use of Indian locales.

The *Washington Post* Praised *Interpreter of Maladies* as "accomplished, insightful and deeply American," and *The Village Voice* wrote that Lahiri's debut collection "speaks to anyone who has ever felt like a foreigner—at home or abroad." Lahiri has traced her own feelings of cultural displacement to childhood: "When I was growing up...I felt neither Indian nor American. Like many immigrant offspring I felt intense pressure to be two things, loyal to the old world and fluent in the new, approved of on either side of the hyphen." In addition to her own sense of disorientation, Lahiri has also described a palpable sense of loss

inherited from her immigrant parents and their circle of Indian-American friends. She explains that her writing derives from a “desire to force the two worlds I occupied to mingle on the page.”

In their 1999 summer fiction issue, the *New Yorker* reprinted “The Third and Final Continent” and named Jhumpa Lahiri one of “the 20 best young fiction writers today.” In 2000, she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, becoming the first person of South Asian origin to win an individual prize. *Interpreter of Maladies* has since been translated into 29 languages and been a bestseller in both the United States and abroad.

The *New York Times Book Review* has compared Lahiri’s achievement to Twinkle’s, the feisty protagonist of “This Blessed House.” Like Twinkle, Lahiri “breathes unpredictable life into the page, and the reader finishes each story reseduced, wishing he could spend a whole novel with its characters...To use the word Sanjeev eventually applies to Twinkle, Lahiri is wow.”

The Namesake, Lahiri’s first novel, was published in 2003. She was again praised for her deft portrayal of the immigrant experience and her characters again deal with complex issues of cultural and generational gaps. Gogol Ganguli, the novel’s main character, is a young man negotiating the divide between his parents’ traditional Indian roots and his own American identity. *The Namesake* appeared on the *New York Times* bestseller list for several weeks, and a film version directed by Mira Nair was released in March 2007.

Lahiri has taught creative writing at Boston University and the Rhode Island School of Design. Additional honors include a PEN/Hemingway Award for *Interpreter of Maladies*, the American Academy of Arts & Letters Addison M. Metcalf Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2002. She has been a fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown and now lives in New York City with her husband, Guatemalan-American journalist Alberto Vourvoulias, and their two children.

The Low land is the second novel written by Jhumpa Lahiri which was published in 2013, nearly ten years after the publication of the novel ‘The Namesake’. It was short listed for the Man Booker prize 2013, the National Book Award 2013 and the 2014 Baiseyn Women’s prize for fiction. The novel encompasses four decades of the life of two brothers Subhash Mitra and Udayan Mitra, who hails from modest middle-class families. The action of the novel takes place in Tollygunge, Clacutta and Rhode Island; the U.S. Jhumpa Lahiri says that this book is based on a tragic incident she first heard about in India, during one of the many visits while she was growing up. Two young brothers who involved in political movement were shot dead in front of their family members.

The novel has Naxalite movement as its background, which took place in West Bengal during 70’s and has been fused with Rhode Island of America, in which Lahiri lived for a long time. Thus, the novel has a political background. As. Stephaninie Merrit points out on the reviews for the Guardian ‘The Lowland is a sweeping, ambitious story that examines in intimate detail the intersection of the political and personal, encompassing nearly 50 years of Indian and American history through lives one family’.¹

The novel begins symbolically, ‘East of the Tollygunge after Seshapuram, Sashmal Road splits into two, there is a small mosque. A turn leads to a quite enclave. A warren of narrow lanes and modest middle-class homes. Once without the enclave, there were two ponds, oblong, side by side. Behind them was the lowland spanning a few acres.’² (3). The phrase splitting into two refers to the brothers of Mitra family Udayan and Subhash, as we find in the novel take two diametrically opposite paths in their lives. The lowland of the title refers to the space between two ponds, just outside home. During monsoon season, the lowland floods. This place offers Udayan momentary hiding sport, moments before his death. Lahiri repeatedly refers to the lowland throughout the novel. As. Dr.T.K.Pius remarks “two ponds symbolize two brothers at times separate and at times inseparable. But still more meaning lurking in this rich land scape”³

The novel is about the life of two brothers, who choose two different paths in their lives. Subhash is older than Udayan. Subhash feels that without Udayan he cannot think of his existence. Even though they appear to be similar but they differ on many grounds. Udayan wants to be adventurous, whereas Subhash is cautious in his approach. Naxalite movement started in small village called Naxalbari the spread to the different parts of Calcutta. Both of them heard about the peasant uprising in Naxalbari. It is Udayan who is moved by the injustice meted to peasants and condemn the ruling class suppression of the movement. Udayan says that “govt has turned victims into criminals” (22). There is a lot of irony in his statement as he himself

supports his comrades in executing many people according to ideology of Charumajumdar, the Naxalbari leader. On other hand Subhash is more cautious and wonders “What good are bows and arrows against a modern state?”(21). He is not convinced of the Maoist ideology. He moves to Rhode Island to pursue Ph.D in marine chemistry on a scholarship. Cultural duality is common thread in her novels and it is one of the diasporic elements. In the beginning Subhash finds it very difficult to assimilate American culture. As the narrator of the novel says “The difference was an extreme that he could not accommodate the two places together in his mind. In the enormous new country, there seemed to be nowhere for the old to reside. There was nothing to link them; he was sole link. Her life ceased to obstruct or assault him. Here was a place where humanity was not away, pushing, rushing, running as if with a fire at the back.” (34)

However, Subhash doesn't take much time to settle down in Rhode Island and befriends Richard Grifalconi, who opposes Vietnam War and admires Gandhi. Subhash starts dating an American woman Holly, who is already married and has a son, but separated from her husband. Subhash relationship with Holly ends, when she goes back to her husband. Subhash gets in to nostalgia, whenever he receives letters from his brother Udayan, which he wanted to be destroyed. What noteworthy is that Subhash being an immigrant, never feels so difficult in adjusting himself to American culture, as compared to other characters in her earlier writings.

Udayan gets deeply engaged in Naxalite movement. Naxalites go underground as the state repression increases. Udayan falls in love with Gauri, a student of philosophy at Presidency College, marries her without informing his parents, in the presence of his comrades. His parents are not happy about his marrying Gauri. Gauri is the sister of Manash, friend of Udayan. Gauri also helps Udayan unwittingly in his activities. Udayan also informs his brother Subhash about the marriage by sending him a photo of Gauri.

One day Subhash receives a telegram asking him to come back to India as his brother was shot dead. Subhash rushes back to India and meets Gauri. Gauri explains to him how Udayan is shot dead by the police in front of the family members by the paramilitary forces. Readers are made aware of the actual reason for killing Udayan by paramilitary forces. Udayan and his comrades were responsible for killing of a policeman. Subhash comes to know the fact that Gauri is the carrying the child of Udayan. He realizes that his parents are not treating Gauri properly and she is leading an isolated and dejected life. He decides marry Gauri against the wishes of his parents. He tells Gauri “That in America no one knows about the movement, no one would bother her. She could go on with her studies. It would be an opportunity to begin again” (119). Gauri accompanies Subhash to Rhode Island after her marriage not because of any love towards Subhash but because of compulsions. She feels that she may be better positioned in America as far as her decision to pursue her studies.

At the beginning of her life, Gauri feels happy about the privacy and freedom on the peaceful American campus. She doesn't feel nostalgic, nor feels alienated in America. She explores the campus and goes to library, and still wears saris. The character of Gauri is entirely different from other characters of Lahiri's works. She soon tries to become one with the American woman. One day without telling Subhash, she cuts her hair short, tears all her saris, and starts to wear slacks and sweaters. When Subhash wants to know the reason, she says that she is ‘tired of those’ (136). As Stuart Hall conceptualizes “a diasporic individual is not an accomplished fact but a productive (222) an agonizing process and her identity is a motto of ‘becoming’ a well as ‘being’”⁴

Gauri gives birth to a female child and named her as Bela as suggested by Subhash. Subhash name is registered on birth certificate as father, a falsehood no one in America can question. Bela's name reminds Gauri her link with India and suggests the concept of time, and in fact it means a flower. As Bela is growing up, Gauri constantly goes back to past and remembers Udayan. This is again one of traits of diasporic features. She makes an in-depth study of time in different philosophies and mainly in Hinduism. As Ramona Alice Bran observes “people usually look ahead and plan for the future; but Gauri still expects to receive some news from Udayan, for him to travel not only the distance between India and the United States, but the one between death and life. Her sole aspiration is to make time elapse backward, so that she can live in the yesterday, by her first husband's side.”⁵

Gauri dedicates herself to research and neglects Bela and Subhash. She could not develop affection towards Bela. She never expresses her inability to love Bela and Subhash Realizing Gauri's coldness towards Bela, Bela starts moving towards Subhash and loves him more than her mother. Gauri also feels isolated in the absence of Subhash at home, in spite of her daughter being with her. As the narrator says “with Bela she

was aware of time not passing; of the sky nevertheless darkening at the day; she was aware of the perfect silence in the apartment, replete with the isolation she and Bela shared. "(163). She becomes an unattended mother and wife. She enrolls herself for Ph.D under the guidance of Prof. Weiss.

Subhash along with Bela visits Kolkatta after three months of his father's death. When Subhash visits the house, he finds that Udayan memories are still intact in the house and it also appears frequently throughout the novel. But the house is a link between past and present as Ramona Alice Bran comments "With one son dead and the other in America, she and her husband cling to a past when things were still promising a happy future. Strangely, the same can be said about Subhash and Gauri. They have left the (low) land, but have not broken up with the past and Bela in their most powerful reminder."⁶ Subhash stays in India for six weeks and tells a lie to Bela when she enquires about the Udayan's photograph, by telling her that he is the uncle of her and died of an infection.

Subhash and Bela return to America and shocked to find the house empty. They could not find Gauri but they find a letter left by Gauri; stating that she is moving to California to teach at a college. Subhash gets upset; however, Bela comforts Subhash by saying that "I will never go away from you Baba". (212) Bela gets disturbed by Gauri's sudden departure from home and feels lonely. She gets into depression for a while and later recovers and moves ahead in her studies.

Gauri settles in Southern California, in a small cottage meant for undergraduates. She works as a teacher and mentor. She gets into several relationships with the men on the campus. In spite of several relationships, she had with the men, she is careful enough to avoid complications in relationships. She also develops an affair with a woman. As the narrator says, "She had generated alternative versions of herself, she had insisted at brutal cost on these conversions. Layering her life only to strip it bare, only to be alone in the end." (240) As Shirin Aktar popy rightly observes "Among Lahiri's first generation of women, Gauri is the exception, not only for her academic achievement but also her coming to abandon her daughter and husband. Her abandonment of Subhash and Bela is self-willed and she did not suffer from it. Rather by doing so she liberates her soul from being enslaved by the thing she did not love "⁷

Bela majors in environmental science and moves to Western Massachusetts to work on a farm, weeding, harvesting, cleaning animal pens. She gets into community service, following her father's footsteps. She teaches low-income families to grow vegetables in their backyards, so that they need not depend on food banks. She moves from place to place like a nomad. Like her idealistic father she becomes rebellious and scolds Subhash for purchasing fruits and vegetables from super market. By looking at Bela's attitude Subhash feels that "he would come back, claiming his place, claiming Bela from the grave as his own" (225). Bela is in the process of moving to different places discovers herself and dedicates her life to the community service. As Ramona Alice Bran observes "Immigration changed Gauri radically; in Calcutta she had been devoted to collective good, in the United States she leads her-individual life, focusing solely on research. Ironically, her American born daughter takes up organic farming instead of pursuing higher education and supports an anti-capitalist style."⁸

Bela becomes pregnant. In the beginning she doesn't tell the truth to Subhash, but later tells him but doesn't disclose the father of the child. As the narrator says "The coincidence coursed through him, numbing bewildering. A pregnant woman, a fatherless child. Arriving in Rhode Island, needing him. It was reenactment of Bela's origin. Aversion of what had brought Gauri to him, years ago" (264) Subhash feels burdened by the guilt of not telling Gauri of her real father, tells the truth one day to her. Bela becomes angry and leaves the house. After a few months she comes back moved by Subhash love towards her. She gives birth to a female baby and names her Meghana, name of a river that flows into Bay of Bengal. Bela makes an acquaintance with a person called Drew. Drew is looking after a farm. He was married and divorced. After some time, Bela introduces him to her father, and later Drew expresses a wish that he would like to become the father of Meghana, if Bela doesn't have any reservations about it.

When Subhash turns seventy, he plans to sell the house at Tollygunge and sends two letters to Gauri, for signature, one for her approval of the sale and another for seeking divorce. Subhash meets Elsie Silva at the Richard's funeral. She was formerly Bela's American history teacher and now works at the local historical society. Elsie's husband was dead and now living with her three children. Subhash marries Elsie and moves to Ireland for a honeymoon.

Gauri decides to handover divorce papers to Subhash personally and goes to Rhode Island to meet him. When she rings the bell, she was shocked to find Bela at the door. It was an embarrassing moment in the lives of Bela and Gauri. Bela doesn't want to speak to her mother and felt outraged at the sight of her. Bela says to her mother, "How dare you set foot in this house ... Go back to whatever it was that more important ... I cannot stand the sight of you ... Nothing will excuse you what you did ... you are not my mother. You are nothing. You are dead to me as he (Udayan) is. The only difference is that you let me by choice." (312-13). Gauri wanted to speak to Meghana. But, Bela didn't allow this to happen and tells Meghana that her grandmother had died and Gauri is an aunt to her. Bela never became so angry like this in her life. She felt like killing her own mother. As the narrator says that it was the restlessness of birds, rearranging themselves.

Gauri gets upset by the behavior of her daughter and once again goes to Calcutta. She visits the places which she frequented when she was in Calcutta. She wants to meet Manash, her brother and could not meet him because he was away in Shillong. She tries to commit suicide but finally changes her decision. She comes back to California. After getting back to New York, she finds a letter from Bela, where in Bela says "You have already taught me not to need you and don't need to know more about Udayan. But may me when Meghana is older, when she and I are both ready, we can try to meet again." (325) As Joie Bose rightly observes, "Through Gauri, I believe Lahiri is attempting to provide a solution to the long going Diasporic tussle that to lie or not to lie state. They are trying to accept whatever comes by without longing for the past they have left behind or yearning to become one with the new land they have tread upon. With their attempt to make the two meets, somehow things fall apart, in their attempt to assimilate to a new culture they find themselves in a new an exile and they discover that their roots are deep."⁹

The novel ends with narrator revealing the truth about Udayan's death. The truth is that Udayan did not kill the policeman by himself, his comrades killed the policeman and Udayan only dips his hand in the blood of the dead body and write party's initial on the wall. As one can see the narrator often goes back to the past in the novel intermittently. As Dr.T.K.Pius comments "The ever present memory of Udayan has haunted Subhash and Gauri to the extent that it influenced the course of their lives and the chain of events that happened after that, against the backdrop of changing India and America".¹⁰

James Lasdun says "I have great respect for Jhumpa Lahiri Some of her stories, especially, seem to me among the best written by any living author. Her first collection brought emotional power and moral complexity back to a form that had drifted deep into an arid, academic minimalism, and contained pieces that were as formally inventive in their own rich way as any of Raymond Carver's more austere miracles.

The Lowland, included this week on the Man Booker shortlist, certainly starts well. Two Bengali brothers, close but unlike, forge very different paths for themselves as they grow up in Calcutta during the 1950s and 60s. Subhash, the older, is the more passive and conventional. Drawn to nature, he becomes a scientist, moving to America to pursue his oceanographic studies in Rhode Island. Udayan is his fiery opposite: a dynamic idealist whose social conscience propels him into the Naxalite movement, the Maoist insurgency that arose out of the brutal oppression of peasants in the Naxalbari district of Darjeeling. From speeches and leaflets he progresses to knives and bombs, and is forced into hiding after his involvement in the killing of a policeman.

Shifting between Subhash's studious absorption in the estuaries and wildlife of Rhode Island, and Udayan's spiritedly engaged life back in India, the first part of the book seems to be building towards a kind of grand, pincer-movement confrontation with the double tragedy of modern life: political injustice and environmental degradation. The tempo is stately (Lahiri's art has always tended more towards steady accretion than juxta positional speed), but there is enough going on to keep the reader's attention. The history lessons are interesting, and the science plays to Lahiri's great strength as an observer of the physical world. The muted textures of coastal and suburban New England are skillfully captured, with some characteristic flashes of east-meets-west disjuncture by way of contrast, as when Subhash sees "vivid hues of cayenne and turmeric and ginger" in the autumn foliage. Meanwhile the brothers' private lives also seem to promise illuminating entanglements, with Udayan defying his family to marry an independently minded woman committed to his own political causes, and timid Subhash (who fully expects to go home and submit to an arranged marriage) falling for a single mother he meets on the beach.

Eighty pages in, Udayan, the book's liveliest character, is killed, shot in the back by the police (this is a tricky book to discuss without giving away parts of the plot, so be warned). Subhash goes back for the funeral and decides to rescue his brother's widow, Gauri, from a grim future as a begrudged member of his parents' household, by marrying her and bringing her back to the States. Gauri is pregnant with Udayan's child, but Subhash is willing to pretend to be the baby's father when they get to America, and Gauri agrees to go along with the plan. She isn't in love with Subhash, but she appreciates his kindness, and they set off for the new world with modest hopes for the future.

It's at this point that a chill begins to steal over the novel. The big themes that animated the first part give way to the not very compelling matter of the child's secret paternity, and the book's gaze narrows, disappointingly, on to the couple's glaciating marriage. Gauri steadily withdraws from Subhash, and then finds herself unable to love her child, Bela. Straying into a philosophy class on Subhash's campus, she becomes hooked on Plato and Descartes, and begins neglecting the little girl, leaving her alone in the house so as to study the heavy tomes that interest her so much more than her daughter. More decisively callous actions follow, with devastating impacts on all concerned.

As a minor character, or as a full-on study in cruelty, Gauri might have been interesting. If there were an ounce of irony or humour in her portrayal, or of unabashed wickedness in her spirit, she might have been fascinating to follow. But her depiction is relentlessly solemn and insistently – actually infuriatingly – compassionate. While acknowledging the brutality of her deeds, Lahiri also wants to enlist our sympathy for Gauri as a person of tragic emotional integrity. She charts her lonely intellectual progress with a scrupulousness that seems intended to confer a kind of martyred dignity upon her, though to me it just intensifies the unpleasant effect of pious sadism that emanates from the book whenever she appears.

At any rate, having launched Gauri on this course of action, the novel toils on through several more decades of its ramifications, chronicling Bela and Subhash's largely unhappy existences in a glum narrative of withdrawal, rejection, isolation and guilt, all done with Lahiri's usual tasteful restraint, though I have to say that in this instance even this virtue becomes problematic. One yearns for an outburst of raw, vulgar emotion.

In the last act, after subjecting poor Subhash to a few more undeserved misfortunes, the book attempts a cathartic series of disclosures and partial reconciliations. Whether this succeeds will depend on how much strained emotional logic you are willing to ignore in order to be moved and uplifted. Some readers will undoubtedly shed a tear as patient longing and stoic grief are rewarded with judiciously allotted doses of companionship and joy, but speaking personally I felt coerced, and found myself resisting.

There's a superb story called "A Temporary Matter" in one of Lahiri's collections, in which the revealing of painful secrets, following a domestic tragedy, enables a young woman to tell her husband (an ineffectual young academic like Subhash) that she is moving out. It prefigures, in miniature, the domestic plot of *The Lowland*, but it uses trauma and disclosure with an incomparably more subtle, liberating and regenerative power. It's well worth reading if you want to see what Lahiri can do with some of the same materials as those she deploys, to relatively crude effect, in this novel.

The *Lowland* is alike to the other works that Lahiri has written: beautiful, thin accounts of people lost in new worlds. The reader is always struck by how she writes about the particulars of feeling odd: the bated breath of watching one's children grow up in a world so terribly different from one. As one has learnt to be expecting from any Lahiri story, *The Lowland* revolves about a Bengali settler family in the United States and the Indian sections serve up as a backdrop to the story as it develops. Yet, placing the book in the class of "immigrant fiction" does not sit down well with Lahiri as she affirmed in an interview, —It just so happens that many writers originate from different parts of the world than the ones they end up livelihood in, either by choice or by need or by situation, and therefore, write about those experiences.

The missing of family life back at Tollygunge heightens the loneliness of Subhash as the text narrates; 'For a year and a half, he had not seen his family. Not sat down with them, at the end of the day, to share a meal. In Tollygunge, his family did not have a phone line. He'd sent a telegram to let them know he'd arrived. He was learning to live without hearing their voices, to receive news of them only in writing.' (Lahiri, 50)

Subhash's loneliness intensifies on India's Independence Day as he observes and compares it with his present situation as the text informs; The following day was August 15, Indian Independence. A holiday in the country, lights on government buildings, flag hoisting, and parades. An ordinary day here.' (Lahiri, 61)

After the tragic death of his brother, Subhash decides to marry Gauri and bring her in America to save her from the hardships of widowhood. In the passage of time, Subhash's decision to marry Gauri has proved very painful to him as he feels acutely alone in his old age. Though he finds his life partner in Bela's teacher he feels the pangs of loneliness of old age in an alien land as the text reveals; 'But he had lost that confidence, that intrepid sense of direction. He felt only aware now that he was alone, that he was over sixty years old, and that he did not know where he stood.'

It should also be noted that Subhash, Gauri, and Bela are equally dislocated in Calcutta and Tollygunge, where everybody knows of Udayan and his destiny. In America, nobody knows what happened with Mitra family in Calcutta that could give a necessary space to Subhash and Gauri to start a new life. However, their inner disturbance and secret of Bela's parenthood haunted their lives, and they become psychologically displaced in the diasporic environment.

Lahiri divides the book into sections where she writes from dissimilar characters perspectives, keeping the pace of the book interesting and weaving time back and forth, overlapping and giving insights into each character. One of the things I loved most about this book was how real it was. The word authenticity is overused these days, but Lahiri really creates a picture about who her characters are, their faults on display, making them all the more real and relatable. At times the novel is somber, making you root for the characters, wanting everything to turn out all right. The novel focuses on the characters, but Lahiri carefully weaves in historic, cultural and political context that helps shape the time in which the characters lived. Lahiri creates moments where despite having vast differences from the characters (in this case the young woman she's writing about is a young Indian woman, and I Nordic Minnesotan), you can still relate to what they are experiencing. Take this excerpt for example, a young woman is falling in love with an Indian man. She describes that moment where you still see yourself as you were before falling in love, yet still being changed by the new person in your life/

Conclusion:

Lowland area in the center of Palembang is already highly urbanized, the urban problems requiring innovative and more locally adapted solutions. The needs for development in flood prone urban areas are generally justified by the areas needed for living and other social economic development. However, the dynamic land use changed processes that occurred in the area may result in disordered that give some negative influences on the development of the city. In the socio-economic perspective, the spatial structure of the study area is influenced by the sharp population in the city because of urbanization. The relationship of population and its environment have motivated a fast and disordered urban development. The consequences of the uncontrolled urban development in the area are: disorganized and intensive growth of urban inner city, and also with illegality and informality in the occupation of the area. The results of this study indicate that the morphology of urban area in the lowland environment in the heart of Palembang was not held to the norms of water in general. People were still intensively occupying the area which prone to inundation, non-built spaces are smaller and more fragmented, and patterns of pathway and road network development show that in areas prone to inundation has led to the more densely and fragmented urban environment. There are many considerations to develop lowland environment for urban development, therefore ignoring some of them can threat the urban sustainability. Urban development in flood prone areas is need to developed and integrated as many more components. The tool for urban growth control is master plans, in connection with urban development, the improvement regulation of land use and zone management is one of the most comprehensive solutions, and the aim is to reduce the risks involved in the present occupation of flood-prone area.

REFERENCES

1. Merritt, Stephnaine.Rev. of ‘The Lowland’ by Jhumpa Lahiri. “The Guardian,’ September 7 2013
2. Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The Lowland*. Gurgoan: Random House, 2014.
All references to the text are from this edition.
3. Pius, TK Dr. Jhumpa Lahiri’s *the Lowland: A Critical analysis*.” ISCR Journal of Humanities And Social Sciences.”V 19, I.10. Oct, 2014. 101
4. Hart, Stuart. *Cultural Identity and Diaspora. Identity,Community, Culture, differences* Ed. J.Rutherford., London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 222
5. Bran, A.R. Immigration: ‘*A Lifelong Pregnancy.*’? *An analysis of Jhumpa Lahiri’s Fiction* 2014 E-Print 306
6. Ibid. 309.
7. Popy Akter Shirin, *Divergence of Third World Women in Diaspora Reading Lahiri’s Antipodal Female protagonists Ashima and Gauri*. IJELR. Vol. 2.5.1, 2015. 222
8. Bran, A.R. *Immigration: A Lifelong Pregnancy? An analysis of Jhumpa Lahiri’s Fiction* 2014 E-Print. 313.
9. Bose, Joie. A Portrait of a lady: *Analyzing the character of Gauri in Jhumpa Lahiri the Lowland*. “Research Scholar.”Vol. 2. I.2. May, 2014. 403
10. Pius,TK.Dr. *Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Lowland: A Critical analysis*.”ISCR Journal of Humanitis and Social Sciences.” V.19.I 10. Oct, 2014. 110.
11. “Jhumpa Lahiri.” Contemporary Authors Online. Gale, 2005.
12. Patel, Vibhuti. “The Maladies of Belonging.” Newsweek (Atlantic Edition), v. 134, n. 12 (September 20, 1999).
13. Lahiri, Jhumpa. “My Two Lives.” Newsweek, v. 147, n. 10 (March 6, 2006).
14. [1] Neary, Lynn. "Political Violence, Uneasy Silence Echo in Lahiri's Lowland " September 2013