

**Rootedness and Rootlessness
in the Short Stories of
Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Jhumpa Lahiri**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English**



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2022**

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PREFACE

Literature is known as the mirror of the society; whatever goes on in the society is reflected in the literary works of the respective times. To understand the society of a time, one must study the literary works of the said time as they depict the social, cultural, personal, economic and political making of the world.

The idea behind this thesis was to understand how migration and social change bring about the emotions of rootedness and rootlessness in the hearts of the immigrants through the short stories written in contemporary times. In contemporary times, it is important to understand that migration is not only forced, rather, it can be voluntary due to a number of reasons including the quest of a better lifestyle, better financial opportunities, better social status and so on.

I have always been interested in the short stories more than any other literary genre. I find short stories to be delightful, crisp and to the point. They create a lasting impact on the minds of its readers. Through this study, I have tried to rekindle my love for short stories and the detail understanding of a character's psyche. The classification of this dissertation in the form of seven chapters that helps to study and analyze all the aspects of rootedness and rootlessness in the light of authors' perspective and readers' perspective.

The first chapter introduces the concepts of rootedness and rootlessness along with Diaspora, Comparative Literature and Short Story. The chapter also discusses the life and works of the two selected authors along with the literature review of the same. To understand the concept completely, there are five main themes that are chosen as the titles of the core chapters.

The second chapter entitled, Conflicting Emotions, explains the concept and discuss short stories that depict the said theme. The chapter explains the importance of conflicting emotions and their impact on the life of the characters which is at times positive and at times negative.

The third chapter is entitled Familial discord which, after describing the concept, briefly mentions the short stories associated with the said theme. Familial discord is a theme that has been discussed in the stories since the dawn of time and still continues to be a difficult matter to understand. It is difficult as in a familial setting; all kinds of the emotions are included in every single episode. It includes all the emotions like, love, affection, dissatisfaction, anger, hatred, and many more. The chapter tries to fully under the concept as depicted in the stories of the selected authors.

The forth chapter is entitled Associative juncture. The importance of understanding Associative Juncture include the understanding the contemporary ways of life, the human relations, the difference of personal, social and professional relations, and most importantly, the ways these relations affect the characters. The chapter explains the inferences made by the authors regarding their characters and the contemporary society.

The fifth chapter is Loneliness and Alienation. In the contemporary times, usually the first and foremost indicator of any kind of personal struggle of a character is their behavioural traits. Loneliness and alienation are also emotions that dictate the behaviour of the character. The chapter discusses the stories that show the importance of the emotions and emotional intelligence.

The sixth and last core chapter is Commonness of the Common. The theme is important to study as the stories of the common public are just as inspiring as that of

the world level recognised leaders, champions, artists or professionals. They may be people from middle or lower class, without an abundance of money, fame or leisure, but their struggle is nothing less and their small victories are just as important for the peace and development of the world.

The last chapter is entitled Conclusion(s) in which, the original findings of the study are discussed in detail. It also includes an analysis of the aforementioned chapters. It highlights the relevance to the modern literature and analyzes the future scope of the present study.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Title	Abbreviated Form	Year of Publication	Edition cited in the present Research Study
Like Birds, Like Fishes	LBLF	1963	Grafton Books, 1984
A Stronger Climate	ASC	1968	Panther Books, 1984
How I Became a Holy Mother and Other Stories	HIBHM	1976	Capuchin Classics, 2008
East into Upper East	EIUE	1998	Abacus, 2000
Interpreter of Maladies	IM	1999	HarperCollins, 2012
My Nine Lives	MNL	2004	John Murray (Publishers), 2004
Unaccustomed Earth	UE	2008	Random House India, 2009
A Lovesong for India	ALI	2011	Little, Brown, 2011
At the End of The Century	AEC	2017	Abacus, 2018

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rootedness and Rootlessness: Meaning and Definition
 - 1.2 Understanding Short Story
 - 1.3 Life and Works of Selected Authors
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rootedness and Rootlessness: Meaning and Definition

The words “rootedness” and “rootlessness” both are based on the word “root” meaning “established deeply and firmly.” In literature, the word “rootlessness” is used along with the words like yearning for home, identity crises, dislocation, alienation of an immigrant, exile, homelessness, isolation, longing, unhappiness, etc. On the contrary, the words associated with rootedness are established, fixed, stable, ingrained, deep-rooted, firm, grounded, entrenched, etc. This shows that in the literary world, these words are the two sides of the same coin. They represent the above mentioned emotions that mostly stand side by side, especially in the contemporary globalized world.

The word “rootedness” is derived from the word “root” meaning “establish” with two suffixes; first, “-ed” and second, “-ness.” The suffix “-ed” forms the past participle of the verb and practical adjectives, which indicates a condition or quality resulting from the action. Here the suffix is added to a verb ‘root’ to attain its past participle, “rooted,” which is used as an adjective. The second suffix “-ness” describes the state of the adjective to create a noun. Here, the suffix ‘-ness’ is added to the adjective ‘rooted’ to create a noun ‘rootedness.’ Thus, the word ‘rootedness’ depicts the state of being rooted.

On the flipside, the word ‘rootlessness’ also has two suffixes with ‘root’ as the base word; first, ‘-less’ and second ‘-ness.’ The suffix ‘-less’ means ‘without’ which indicates failure or inability to perform or be performed. Here the suffix ‘-less’ added

to the weak verb 'root' creates the adjective 'rootless' meaning 'having no roots' which is the antonym of the word rooted. The other suffix '-ness,' as explained above, creates a noun 'rootlessness.' Thus, the word 'rootlessness' depicts the condition or situation of being unstable or having no settled home or ties.

The study of 'rootedness and rootlessness' requires clarity on the meaning of the word 'root.' Mentioned here are some definitions of root for better understanding:

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines 'root' as, "something that is an origin or source, an underlying support, the essential core and close relationship with an environment." (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*)

Cambridge Dictionary states the meaning of 'root' as, "the cause or origin of something." (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*)

According to the **Oxford Dictionary**, 'root' means, "the main cause of something, such as a problem or difficult situation; the origin or basis of something; the feelings or connections that you have with a place because you have lived there or your family came from there; the part of a word that has the main meaning and that its other forms are based on; a word that other words are formed from." (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*)

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines 'root' as, "the basic part of a word which shows its main meaning, to which other parts can be added." (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*)

Based on the aforementioned definitions, it can be deduced that root is a word with multiple meanings and interpretations. In spite of having a simple and straightforward approach, the meaning of root becomes complex because of its numerous

interpretations. In the context of this study, 'root' can be understood as the base, origin, emotional, and psychological connection and so forth.

To genuinely understand the meaning of the word 'rootedness,' the following definitions can be considered:

Collins Dictionary describes 'rootedness' as, "the state or quality of being rooted or well-grounded." (*Collins Dictionary*)

Your Dictionary states the meaning of 'rootedness' as, "the quality or state of having roots, especially of being firmly established, settled, or entrenched." (*Your Dictionary*)

As a definition of 'rootedness,' the **Cambridge Dictionary** states, "very strong and firmly fixed; and, having developed from something." (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*)

According to **Oxford Dictionary**, 'rooted' means, "developing from or being strongly influenced by something, fixed in one place; not moving or changing." (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*)

As mentioned above, the term 'rootedness' means with the idea of stability, belonging and the state of being settled. The term denotes the feeling of connection to a certain place, community or society. This research is focused on finding out the interpretations of 'rootedness' according to the characters in the short stories of Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Jhumpa Lahiri.

Definitions to consider while understanding the meaning of the word 'rootlessness,' are as follows:

Macmillan Dictionary describes 'rootlessness' as "having no strong connections with any particular community and moving frequently from place to place."
(*Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*)

Dictionary.com defines 'rootlessness' as, "having no roots; having no place or position in society; not in accord with the environment; having no basis of stability; unsteady." (Dictionary.com)

Defining 'rootlessness,' **Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary** states, "the feeling of having nowhere that you really think of as home, or as the place where you belong." (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*)

According to the **Cambridge Dictionary**, 'rootlessness' is, "having no family origins or connections, or having no feeling of belonging to a particular place." (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*)

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English explains 'rootlessness' as, "having nowhere that you feel is really your home." (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*)

Your Dictionary states the meaning of 'rootlessness' as, "having no roots; and, not belonging to a particular place or society." (Your Dictionary)

According to the above mentioned definitions, it is clear the meaning of 'rootlessness' is exactly the opposite of that of 'rootedness.' It deals with the emotions of uncertainty, nomadic tendencies and lost identity. It denotes the confusion and doubts of the people who lack either the continual information or connection with their social or cultural identity.

Rootedness and rootlessness forms the subject of many contemporary literary works. It is the theme that connects the sociological, psychological, and philosophical aspects of a character. It deals with societal norms, psychology, and thought process simultaneously. In the contemporary literature, identity crisis, and alienation are most prominent themes. These themes connect with the psychological state of the millennial. Be it short stories, novels, novellas, poetry, essays, short fiction, or any other literary form, the said themes have an abundance of literature available; since, there are a number of contemporary authors who deal with these themes.

Some famous authors of contemporary Indian English Writing are Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004), R K Narayan (1906-2001), Khushvant Singh (1915–2014), Kamala Markandaya (1924–2004), Ruth Praver Jhabvala (1927–2013), Nayantara Sahgal (Born 1927), Ruskin Bond (Born 1934), Anita Desai (Born 1937), Shashi Deshpande (Born 1938), Bharati Mukharjee (1940–2017), Manju Kapur (Born 1948), Vikram Seth (Born 1952), Amitav Ghosh (Born 1956), Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (Born 1956), Arundhati Roy (Born 1961), Amit Chaudhuri (Born 1962), Jhumpa Lahiri (Born 1967), Kiran Desai (Born 1971), Aravind Adiga (Born 1974), Jeet Thayil (Born 1959) and many more.

Rootedness and rootlessness are the words that coexist with Diaspora literature in general as the Diaspora literature is the literature of exile, loneliness, separation and imagination. The Diaspora writers are the ones that have faced the transition of one place to another that forces them to adapt and adjust in another culture, leaving behind various bits and pieces of their own.

The word ‘Diaspora’ is derived from the Greek word *diaspeirein* which is a combination of ‘dia’ meaning ‘across’ and ‘speirien’ meaning ‘scatter.’ According to

the *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, it means with a 'dispersion from home.' The term implies towards the idea of a center, a locus or a home from where the dispersion occurs. Thus the word creates the image of displacement and journeys. Essentially, the Diaspora journeys usually imply putting down roots in other alternative homes. The term Diaspora was first used for the Jewish exilic dispersion from their homeland of the pre-Christian days and nowadays it is implied as the developed designation for refugees, exiles and/or immigrants.

As a political term, it is used to signify the dispersion of community with strong connotations of exile and prosecution. It is culturally used to refer to a community of expatriate writers, which is barely a recent origin in literary world; it refers to the work of exiles, expatriates and all those who have experienced unsettlement and dislocation at the political, existential for metaphorical levels. Today the exiles have taken over the state and cross national boundaries and to exchange cultural codes.

Some definitions of 'Diaspora' are mentioned here for a better understanding of the concept:

According to the **Merriam-Webster Dictionary**, 'Diaspora' is defined as, "people settled far from their ancestral homelands; and the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland." (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*)

Cambridge Dictionary states that 'Diaspora' is, "a group of people who spread from one original country to other countries, or the act of spreading this way." (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*)

The **Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English** explains 'Diaspora' as, "the spreading of people from a national group or culture to other areas." (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*)

Defining 'Diaspora,' **Oxford Dictionary** states, "the movement of people from any nation or group away from their own country; people who have moved away from their own country." (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

Your Dictionary states the meaning of 'Diaspora' as, "the definition of a Diaspora is the dispersion of people from their homeland or a community formed by people who have exited or been removed from their homeland." (Your Dictionary)

Dictionary.com defines 'Diaspora' as, "any group migration or flight from a country or region; or any group that has been dispersed outside its traditional homeland, especially involuntarily, as Africans during the trans-Atlantic slave trade." (Dictionary.com)

All the definitions explain the concept of 'Diaspora' as scattering of people from their home to some other place. This shift from one place to another not only brings physical changes but also social, cultural, psychological, and philosophical changes. In contemporary times, the people experience not only forced Diaspora but also they treat Diaspora as an option for better life. Thus there are people who move from developing and underdeveloped countries to the developed ones in hope of better quality of life.

Diaspora is not an Indian concept. It affects the whole world. Diaspora is not just a theme to be dealt with in literature; it is a situation that has created many hybrid cultures on a global scale. The literature on Diaspora is written in numerous languages

throughout the world. Many of the contemporary Indian English authors have written beautifully articulate works about the Diaspora, including the depiction of both the forced and chosen migrations.

The Indians, over many of the past years have traveled, moved, and immigrated to different parts of the world. In 1904, Lord Curzon gave an address in the Guild Hall, London, in which he mentioned how the people of India travelled to both the east and south of Mediterranean due to considerable movement in British Power. The following quote summarizes how it happened:

“If you want to save your Colony of Natal from being overrun by foldable enemy, you ask India for help, and she gives it, if you want to rescue the White men’s legislation from massacres at Peking, and need is urgent, you request the Government of India to dispatch and expedition, and they dispatch it; if you are fighting the Mad Mullah in Somaliland, you soon discovered that Indian troops and an Indian general are best qualified for the task, and you ask the Govt. of India to send them; if you desire to defend any of your extreme outposts or coaling stations of the Empire, Adan, Mauritius, Singapore, Hong Kong . . . it is to the Indian Army that you turn; if you want to build a railway to Uganda or in the Sudan, you apply for Indian labor . . . with Indian trained officers that you irrigate and dam the Nile; with Indian forest officers that you tap the resources of Central Africa and Siam; with Indian surveyors that you explore all the hidden places of the Earth.” (Lord Curzon)

It can be said that the Indians migrated for work and stayed all around the world. The descendants of this Diaspora have also inevitably produced works of literature that illustrates their history, heritage, and their own existential dilemmas. There are

Diaspora writers all through the world as globalization and technological advancements have made it easier to move from one place to another. Yet the Indian Diaspora is a force to reckon with.

The authors of Diaspora are also divided into two types; first generation Diaspora authors and second generation Diaspora authors. The first generation Diaspora authors are the ones who themselves traveled to a different place for various reasons and wrote about their home country to create Diaspora literature whereas the second generation Diaspora authors are the ones whose parents migrated—they were born and brought up in the other country. They are ones who face identity crisis as they belong to one place according to birth and to another place according to ancestry.

As Diaspora is studied in the contemporary times, it raises many questions and deals with themes like tension between nationalism and internationalism; the relationship between identity and place; and the ways in which culture and literature intermingle.

The study of meaning and definition of 'rootedness' 'rootlessness' and 'Diaspora' shows that these terms are interlinked. The feelings of rootedness and rootlessness arise with a shift or change in social, cultural, or psychological environment. Such drastic changes in the environment of the individual usually occur when they move from one place to another. Thus, it can be said that part of the Diaspora experience is largely the reason of the feelings of rootedness and rootlessness.

Rootedness in the social reference is when an individual feels at home with the society they live in. Here, Diaspora may have either positive or negative effects. If an individual does not feel rooted with their current society, they may prefer to be Diaspora as a method to gain the feeling of rootedness somewhere other than their home town. This creates a positive Diaspora. Whereas, if a person has to move from

one place to another, where it becomes hard for them to adjust, and the feeling of rootlessness arises, than it is an example of negative effect of social Diaspora.

Hybrid culture is the result of cultural Diaspora. It occurs when an individual moves from a great distance to another place. In this situation, the individual has to adjust with the changes in culture. Be it religious, social or environmental. The changes affect the individual to initialize the feeling of rootlessness.

Religious changes are usually aesthetic and require a change in beliefs and rituals. The society may or may not accept the difference in beliefs and rituals. In either case, the absence of people with similar beliefs creates a gap in rituals as the community activities are hindered. Thus, the individuals learn to adapt and follow the rituals of their new community where they live. The individual thus adapts and learns to live with both the religions. This adaptation of the new and retaining of the old collectively creates a hybrid culture.

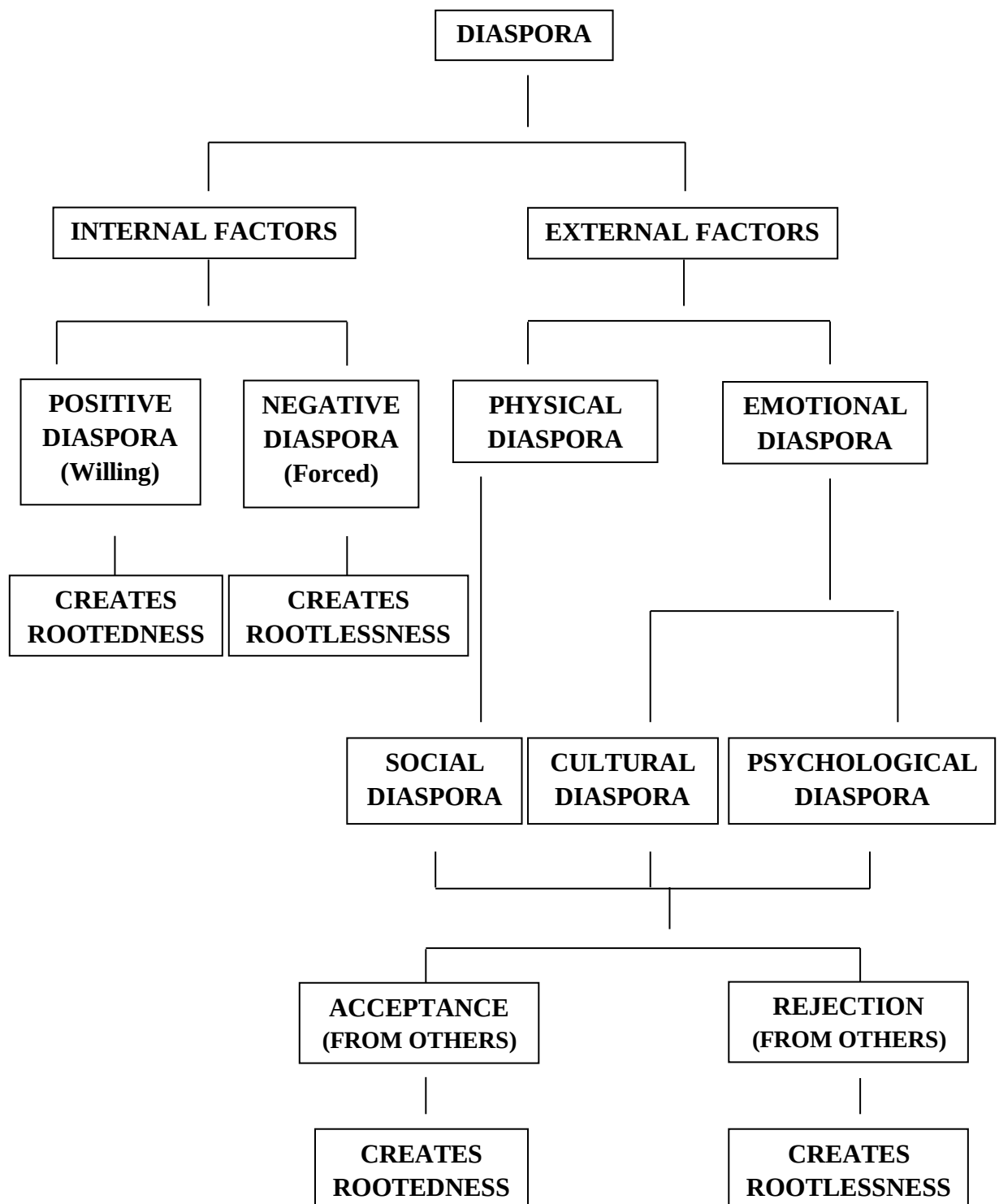
Social changes relate with day-to-day life. While trying to adapt in a different society, an individual needs to unlearn their previous lifestyle and mannerism while learning a new one. This social change creates a hybrid culture where the individual follows the norms of the new society as also yet remembers the old one; which is reflected in some of the mannerisms.

Environmental changes are related to the adaptation with a different climate. A drastic change from cold to hot weather or vice-versa becomes difficult for an individual to tune in to the new climate. With this adaptation, the attire, attitude towards nature, and methods of social greetings change.

Psychological Diaspora does not have anything to do with the social setting as it is psychological condition where an individual does not feel at home with themselves. This is a situation where physical conditions are secondary, where the emotional and philosophical acceptance felt by the individual creates a sense of security from which consequently arises the feeling of rootedness. In absence of the said security, the individual feels rootlessness even if the social and cultural Diaspora does not take place.

The struggles of Diaspora are either struggle due to personal reasons or the struggle with an impact of external factors. On the basis of personal struggle and resulting emotions of rootedness and rootlessness, Diaspora can be understood with the following hierarchical chart:

Figure 1 - Hierarchical Graph of Diaspora to Rootedness and Rootlessness



Source: Based on Literature Review

The above chart shows that Diaspora can be divided on the basis of the factors that affect it. They can be of two types; Internal Factors and External Factors. Internal

Factors creates two types of Diaspora; Positive Diaspora which creates the feeling of rootedness and Negative Diaspora which creates the feeling of rootlessness. External Factors, on the other hand are divided into Physical Diaspora and Emotional Diaspora. Physical Diaspora has only one type, which is Social Diaspora. On the contrary, Emotional Diaspora is further divided into Cultural Diaspora and Psychological Diaspora. These three types of Diaspora, namely, Social Diaspora, Cultural Diaspora and Psychological Diaspora, receive either Acceptance (from others) or Rejection (from others). Acceptance creates the feeling of rootedness and Rejection created results in feeling of rootlessness.

To clearly understand the concept, it is important to study rootedness, rootlessness and Diaspora collectively. Rootedness and rootlessness are feelings whereas Diaspora is a situation—yet their relationship is undeniable. Though, rootedness and rootlessness can occur due to reasons other than Diaspora; Diaspora surely has either rootedness or rootlessness as resulting emotions. This study is aimed at finding out to what extent these can be interdependent.

Comparative Literature

Comparative Literature is known as the study of two or more literatures simultaneously. It can be literature from different times, countries, areas or just different authors. When a research is focused on two or more writers or writings, the study is known to be comparative literary study.

The main focus of comparative literature is to loosen the social, cultural and national boundaries while making it easier to understand the art of literary writing in a comprehensive manner. Comparative literary study emphasizes the interdisciplinary study of the text, which includes political, cultural, and religious dynamics of a

society, historical shifts, international relations, public policies, rural, and urban environment to mention a few.

The term Comparative Literature was first used in English by Mathew Arnold in 1849 but Georg Brandes (1842–1927) of Denmark is known as the father of comparative literature. There are three major types of Comparative Literature namely trans-national, trans-medial, and trans-cultural.

Trans-national Comparative Literature contains the study of literature in such a way that the similarities and differences of various nations are recognized. It also means written literature that is transcendent itself across borders and connects nations in a harmonious and humane manner.

Trans-medial Comparative Literature is the type of literature that is spread through the help of current media technology where the story can reach numerous audiences. It includes the media platforms like television, computer, internet, mobile phones; print media include newspapers, magazines, books, journals, online blogs; and social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, twitter, as well as multiple sites for budding writers that support and spread the works of literature to the masses. Trans-medial literature breaks the physical boundaries to reach the audiences throughout the world.

The third and last one is the Trans-cultural Comparative Literature that is the type of text that does not just discuss the culture it is written with, rather, it relives itself from the cultural bounds through the kinds of themes, stories, topics, plots, vision, scope and impact that relates to all humans throughout the world.

This particular study is one that is both trans-cultural and trans-national. The study is trans-cultural because the authors do not limit themselves to the representation of any

particular culture in their works. They write about both rich and poor, both Indian and non-Indians, both the religious and the atheist.

It is trans-national as the selected authors are both belong to the group of Indian Diaspora writers. With their writings they connect the nations that they associate with. Ruth Praver Jhabvala was born in Germany, moved to England at the young age of twelve, shifted to India with Cyrus Jhabvala at twenty-five years, and finally moved to New York at the ripe age of fifty-one. Thus, she is a product of four nationalities along with variant cultures.

Jhumpa Lahiri is an Indian descendent born in England, moved to America at the toddler stage of three and finally shifted to Italy with her husband where she still stays. Her writings also represent this trans-national identity of hers and her knowledge of various cultures delimits her. The experiences of the selected authors drive them to write the works that communicate to not only Indians and Americans but the whole World.

1.2 Understanding the Short Story

The understanding of a story in general is the key to understand the intricacies of short story. A story is either chronological or jumbled retelling of events for the purpose of entertainment, awareness, and/or information. It is a tale told in the style of its teller. A story is where reality and imagination are balanced to retell a situation where there is a speaker/author and an audience. A story is a narration, either written or spoken, that ignites the interest of its listener/reader. It may be a small one or two minute recollection of a past event, a short imaginative tale or a long descriptive novel. Either way, it aims at grabbing the attention and appreciation of its audience. It may be moral, with a lesson; or without an aim. Either way, it serves the purpose of

an entertainer. A story is mainly told to be heard. Here, the listener is at power. If the listener doesn't want to hear the story, there is no point in either telling it or writing it. This is the key reason for which, the writing style is studied with great interest. It is very important to find the points that make a story interesting to its audience.

The study of short story begins with the study of a story. At many stages, the term 'story' has been defined in different ways. There are various definitions of a story. Dictionaries are a great way to understand a story as popularly accepted. Following are some of the definitions of a story:

Cambridge Dictionary (1995) states, a story is "a description, either true or imagined, of a connected series of events." (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (2001) describes the meaning of a story as,

"story, in the everyday sense, any narrative or tale recounting a series of events. In modern narratology, however, the term refers more specifically to the sequence of imagined events that we reconstruct from the actual arrangement of a narrative (or dramatic) plot. In this modern distinction between story and plot, derived from Russian Formalism and its opposed terms *Fabula* and *Sjuzet*, the story is the full sequence of events as we assume them to have occurred in their likely order, duration, and frequency, while the plot is a particular selection and (re-)ordering of these. Thus, the story is the abstractly conceived 'raw material' of events which we reconstruct from the finished arrangement of the plot: it includes events preceding and otherwise omitted from the perceived action, and its sequence will differ from that of the plot if

the action begins *in medias res* or otherwise involves an anachrony.” (Chris Baldick, 244)

According to **Collins Dictionary (1999)**, a story is “a description of imaginary people and events, which is written or told in order to entertain people.” (*Collins Gem Cobuild English Dictionary*)

A Glossary of Literary Terms (2013) defines a story as, “a mere sequence of events in time—into the organized and meaningful structure of a literary plot.” (Abrams and Harpham, 234)

After studying the above definitions, collectively, we can conclude that a story is a series of events told to an audience for the purpose of entertainment; it may be either true or imagined or a mixture of both. Historically, enhancing knowledge, creating a sense of understanding for the fellow human being and developing morality are some other purposes of a story.

According to length, a story can be told in the form of a Novel, Novella or Short Story. The main basis of difference between the three is their length. Though, a tale can be told in all the three forms, its style changes. For example, *The Ramcharitmanas* is a saga told in eight books whereas *Ramayana* is an epic told in one book comprising of eight hundred couplets. There are many abridged versions available of the same story that cover the text in the form of a novella. The noticeable factor here is that some incidents or events from the story are left out to compress it into a shorter version. Novel and short story are further divided into many classifications. Short stories are divided into story of incidence, story of character and story of plot. The difference between a novel, novella and a short story can be understood with the help of the table below:

Table 1
Differentiation of Novel, Novella and Short Story

S No.	Basis	Novel	Novella	Short Story
1.	Word Count	A novel has a minimum of 40,000 words.	A novella can have a word count of anywhere between 17,500 to 40,000 words.	A short story may have a maximum word count of 7,500 words.
2.	Descriptions	A novel is full of descriptions and explanations.	Novellas entertain the descriptions but never get lost the track of plot and setting for the sake of descriptions.	No descriptions or explanations are usually found in a short story.
3.	Long Passages	It has both space and time to work with the long passages.	Very few extra long passages are found in a novella; the ones that are found are usually very critical to the development of the story.	No long passages are found in a short story.
4.	Time Taken	It takes a very long time to both read and write a novel.	It takes a moderate amount of time to read a novella as it is smaller in size then that of a novel.	The reading of a short story should ideally finish by two hours. It can even take less.
5.	Flourished	In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.	In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.	In the nineteenth century.

Source: Based on Review of Literature

A short story is a work of short fiction, broader than an anecdote. Much shorter than a novel yet comprising of all the elements of a novel like plot, structure, idea, development, characters, and so forth. Short story can have a wide range of plots like

comic, tragic, romantic, satiric, and the like; and just as a novel it can be written in any genre, be it fantasy, realism or mystery.

A short story should be a story, happenings full of incidents, and accidents, swift movements, unexpected developments, leading through suspense, to a climax and a satisfying denouncement. The short story, must spring from an impression of perception pressing and acute enough, for the author to write. A short story should be concrete to a point, with snap and gay life, crisp and crackling—interesting. A story should be a finished product of art with a beginning, middle, and an end. In the whole composition of a short story, there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect is not in the pre-established design.

A short story is a succinct tale excluding much detail whereas a novel is an elaborate and extensive study with great detail and caution. The short story uses all the constituent factors of a novel—plot, character, and setting—but it isn't merely a shortened version of a novel. Though, it is true that all the constituent factors of a novel have to be shortened and fit into a short story. As a short story is written with an aim to create an impression in the mind of its readers, its focus is specific. The details are given only when it is impossible to leave them out and characters are described through their actions rather than explanation, which supports the development of the story as desired by the author. In short, everything takes the short route towards the preconceived outcome. Everything is a means towards the end.

Sometimes one element is given the utmost importance and the other two become subsidiary. As Robert Louis Stevenson once said,

“There are three ways, and three ways only, of writing a story. You may take a plot and fit characters to it, or you may take a character and choose incidents and

situations to develop it or lastly you may take a certain atmosphere, and get actions and persons to realize it.” (Prasad, 124)

In each case the ‘idea’ or ‘impression’ that the author needs to communicate, should engage their attention throughout the text. For instance, three short stories by Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Bottle Imp* is a story of plot, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a story of character, and *The Merry Men* is a story of setting.

Along with plot, character, and setting, the language used in a short story is distinguishable from that of a novel. A novel sometimes has long passages without any concern towards plot or structure but a short story cannot spend even one extra paragraph for explanation or decoration. In a short story, these will only be a hindrance towards the ‘idea’ or ‘impression.’ It requires appropriate use of words with specific focus and no extra space. The descriptive passages are only appreciated if they contribute profusely towards the total effect.

History of the Short Story

The study of the Short Story should start with tracing its origin and development, both in the world’s literary context and Indian context. The world tradition of short stories include the *Aesop’s Fables*, *Metamorphosis*, *Decameron*, *Canterbury Tales*, as the first ever works in history that can be studied as collection of short stories. These collections are discussed here in detail.

Aesopica, or commonly known as *Aesop’s Fables*, is a collection of fables, created by a slave named Aesop who lived between 620 BCE and 564 BCE. Fables are usually short stories written for the purpose of instilling morals and ethics in its readers. As the purpose suggests, these tales have a message in them as might be found in a

parable. Even though the fables interest the people of all age groups, it is focused on educating the young ones.

Written in around eighth century AD, Ovid's long narrative poem named *Metamorphosis*, is another fine example of tales written in a poetry format. It can be studied as an example of an initial form of the short story. The long narrative text of *Metamorphosis* is often called a mock-epic, as it is written in form of dactylic hexameter following the great ancient tradition of epic poetry like *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey* and *The Aenied*. Such is not the case with Ovid's other works. Even the *Metamorphosis* does not completely follow the classics. Instead of telling the greatness of one hero in one long poem, as in the classics, Ovid leaps from one story to another; many-a-time without proper transition. Though the stories are separate, they are all linked with the thread of time. No one event in history is individual. Each historical event has an impact on the next. Thus, the tales in *Metamorphosis* are all linked yet can stand individually.

Another text to be considered here that affected the nature of short stories in world literature is Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Written in fourteenth century, it is considered a classic of early Italian prose. It is a collection of hundred tales told by seven women and three men sheltering in a secluded villa near Florence. The tales have varied themes that include love tales; both erotic and tragic, tales of wit, practical jokes, etc. It is regarded as a document of life. Its influence on the world literature is so powerful that Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales* with *Decameron* as its ideal.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, many Italian romances were translated into English prose, but none of them can be classified as a short story as accepted in

the contemporary times. The eighteenth century was marked by great literary developments, along with novel, drama and poetry, short story gained a lot in this century. The pair of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, commonly referred as Addison and Steele, wrote essays in form of a tale-with-a-purpose. They improvised the essay to make an impact in the mind of its readers to create moral understanding with the help of characters, setting, plot etc and paved the way to the modern day short story.

In 1824, Walter Scott's *Wandering Willie's Tales*, was probably the first approach to the modern day short story. However, the decisive steps in this direction were taken by Edgar Allen Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1830, when they formulated the modern theory of short story writing. They hold the thought that the lot alone was not enough and laid stress on the 'final impression' of the story. The principle is defined by Edgar Allen Poe as,

“A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidence; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents such incidence,—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tends not to the out bringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction.”
(Prasad, 127–138)

In prevailing times, the short story is one of the favorite forms of writing. Many authors among others like Arnold Bennett, Hugh Walpole, Elizabeth Bowen, treat it as a sideline. On the other hand, there are authors like Rudyard Kipling, Anton Chekhov, Ernest Hemingway, William Saroyan, H G Wells, Oscar Wilde, Arthur Canon Doyle, John Galsworthy, Joseph Conrad, D H Laurence, James Joyce and so forth are famous on the account of their representative skills in short story writing. From Stevenson's time, the short story has had an international influence. It is highly appreciated all through England, France, Russia and America. It seems that the short story will continue to amuse both authors and readers to remain ever popular in this constantly changing contemporary world.

The length of a story is immaterial as long as it satisfies both the reader and the author. The definition of story suggested that it is told for the purpose of entertainment. The entertainment value of a story is as good as its power to surprise its audience. That can be done with any number of words. The connection that the reader feels for characters and its situations are similar, immaterial of the explanations given to them, time spent on the story or decorative passages in the story. If the character touched the reader's heart, it leaves a mark.

The Short Story in Indian Writing in English

The short story tradition of India is not very different than the world. To study the Indian tradition of short stories we must consider the world tradition of short stories as discussed earlier. They are the keys to understanding its origin. Similarly, in Indian context, the works to be studied are *Jataka Tales*, *Panchatantra*, *Hitopadesh*, *Kathasaritsagara*, *Betal Pachhisi*, *Simhasana Battisi*, and so forth. They embark the basic tradition of short stories in the Indian context.

Jataka Tales are stories of all the resurgences of Gautama Buddha in the mortal world. As all the stories are the memories of the previous lives of Buddha that he recalled during one stage of his long meditative process. The said stories are 547 in number (though some historian believe it to be 550) that are further classified in ten categories according to the *Paramita* that each story is connected. In Buddhism, it is believed that a conscience can reach up to the level of Buddha only when one accomplishes the ten *Paramitas*, easily translated into virtues or qualities. The ten *Paramitas* are *Daan* (generosity), *Sheel* (morality), *Shanti* (patience), *Veerya* (energy), *Dhyan* (concentration), *Prajna* (wisdom), *Upaaya* (skillful means), *Pranidhan* (determination), *Bal* (spiritual power) and *Gyan* (knowledge). During the period when the Buddha had attained all the ten *Paramitas*, before becoming the Buddha, He used to be known as *Bodhisattva*.

Panchtantra was written in 300 BCE by Sage Vishnu Sharma. Literary meaning ‘five treatises,’ *Panchtantra* is divided into five subheadings according to the kinds of morals and teachings they provide; namely, *Mitralabha*, *Mitrasamprapti*, *Kakololyam*, *Laabhpranasham* and *Aparikshitkaranam*. *Mitralabha* a set of thirty stories and comprises almost half of the *Panchtantra*.

Mitrasamprati, unlike *Mitralabha*, is all about keeping friendships intact. It includes the adventures of four characters: a crow, a mouse, a turtle and a deer. There are ten stories in this part and all of them show the value and importance of good friends and ways to keep them close. *Kakolokyam* is the third treatise in *Panchtantra*; it discusses war and peace. Unlike other treatises, *Kakolokyam* not only talks about war and peace, but also about the battle of wits, being strategic, being wise, listening to good council, and the respective truth of different characters. *Labdhapranāśam* is the fourth book of *Panchtantra*. It contains thirteen fables that talk about a person’s behavior.

Unlike the first three parts that talk about what should be done, this one gives all the examples of what should NOT be done. The tales are all filled with instances that should be avoided. Last is the set of four twelve tales, titled *Aparīkṣitakāraṇam*. It is quite similar with the *Labdhapraṇāśam* in its essence. It also talks about what should not be done. This last book, unlike any of the initial four books, comprises more human characters, rather than animal characters.

Written in between 800 to 950 CE, *Hitopadesh*, literary meaning, ‘good council,’ is a widely read and appreciated piece of work written by Narayana. It is somewhat similar to the *Panchantantra* as it also aims to teach the children with a sense of enjoyment. It too consists of short stories with both animals and humans as characters. It uses simple and elegant language to explain the complex worldly wisdom and political affairs. Originally written in Sanskrit, the text consists of many interesting and inspiring *shlokas* including:

*Udyamena hi sidhyanti, karyani na manoratheh,
Na hi suptasya singhasya, pravishyanti mukhe mragah.*

Hitopadesh (Verse 36)

It is only through hard-work that projects reach completion. Nothing can be accomplished through thought alone. Just like a deer never enters the lion’s mouth, the lion has to get up and work to earn his food.

The text of *Hitopadesh* is divided in four books comprising different stories that suggest different types of morals. The names of these four books are *Mitralabha*, *Suhrdbheda*, *Vigraha*, and *Sandhi*.

Both *Panchtantra* and *Hitopadesh*, have stories that are still equally influential yet extremely simple. The stories are so beautifully told that they hold a special place in the school curriculum for the young ones. They are also translated in about 250 languages like Russian, German, Italian and English; including many Indian languages like Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada. Even in contemporary times, these stories are read and appreciated throughout the world. Many adaptations of the same are made, both in print and in visual media, including animated movies and television series. The kids still read the *Hitopadesh* to enjoy the stories all the while gaining moral and ethical knowledge.

Another commonly known collection of short stories in Indian tradition is the *Kathasaritsagar*. It is a famous eleventh century collection of Indian legends, fairy tales and folk tales originally written in Sanskrit by a *Shaiva* named Somadeva. Its English translation is published under the name *Ocean of the Streams of Stories*.

Kathasaritsagar has been translated into many languages including Hindi, English, Kannada, etc. The first English translation of *Kathasaritsagar* was done by C H Tawney in 1880–1884 and published it under the name *The Kathá Sarit Ságara*; or, *Ocean of the Streams of Story*. This is the only complete translation of *Kathasaritsagar* in English. In 1977 a book was published by Arshia Sattar titled *Tales from the Kathasaritsagara*, which is a collection of selected short stories from the *Kathasaritsagara*. A Hindi translation was attempted by Radhavallabh Tripathi entitled *Katha Sarit Sagar*.

Betal Pachhisi (written around 2500 years ago) is a collection of short stories threaded through the story of King Vikramaditya and Betal. The text is named *Betal Pachhisi* (*Vetal Panchavimshantis*) as it is a collection of twenty-four tales told by

Betal and the twenty-fifth is the story of King Vikramaditya and Betal himself. The story begins with a king being told about the blessing of the goddess Kali if he catches the Betal, the Pishacha, who was a celestial spirit who hangs upside-down on a tree and inhabits and animates dead bodies.

The twenty-four stories told by Betal, end with a question to King Vikramaditya. Every time the King responded with right answer, Betal spared the King's life and went back to his tree. As the two had made a pact; every time the King took Betal on his shoulder, he must be quiet, and should not utter a word unless asked. If the King spoke unless asked, he would be killed; if answered incorrectly, he would be killed; the only condition where the King could survive was when he answered correctly to the riddles in the story. In such a case, Betal spared the King's life but went back to his tree. Thus the King had another chance at catching Betal. Thus the King made 24 rounds. Only on the 25th round, Betal, impressed by the King's intelligence and persistence, agreed to go with the King and told him his own story.

The text ends with King Vikramaditya killing the evil Tantric and as a boon from Devi Kali. Yet being righteous and pious, asks the Devi to revive the tantric and free him from his evil intention. Due to the King's goodness, kindness and righteousness, the text ends on a happy note; where the needs of the King, Betal and Tantric were fulfilled. The stories told by Betal along with the questions he asked, are full of wit and intelligence. They provide the reader with a new insight into human mind and a better understanding of human behavior. The text has been in existence for a long time yet is interesting, appealing and appropriate even to this day.

Simhasana Battissi, literally denotes 'thirty-two (tales) of the throne' and has connection to King Vikramaditya, as the said throne is supposed to belong to him.

The story revolves around the King Bhoja, who discovered the throne. The throne had thirty-two statues of cursed *Apsaras* (celestial beings). Every statue told the King Bhoja story of King Vikramaditya's life to see if he is worthy to sit on the throne.

Every story is a depiction of the qualities a king should have and after every story, the King Bhoja had to answer the *apsara* whether he is good enough to match King Vikramaditya. Every story is an eye opener for King Bhoja who becomes aware of the decorum he should follow. The story ended with the thirty-second *apsara*, who after getting a dissatisfactory answer from King Bhoja, took the throne with her. The legend says that the throne was never seen again.

The dates of this work are unknown and so is the author. Nevertheless it is expected to have been written in or after the eleventh century as the King Bhoja died in 1055 CE. The stories told by the *Apasaras* are all intriguing and informative. They give us an example of the excellent intellect of King Vikramaditya to inspire us to become better.

The text was first translated into Persian in 1591 for the Mughal Emperor Akbar as *Namakhirad afza* (Wisdom-enhancing book). Some other names given to the Persian translations were *Gul Afshan* and *Senguehassen Battisi*. The famous Hindi translation was made by Lallu Lal and Kazim Ali Javan. A Marathi translation was published by William Carey in 1814–1815, entitled *Simhasana Battisi* along with translation of *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesha*. These stories were also adapted by the poet Shamal Bhatt to be retold as narrative poetry.

As discussed earlier, the history of the short story in India is rich and powerful, its impact on Indian Literature can still be observed. But when it comes to short stories in Indian Writing in English, the genre was properly developed only after independence.

The pre-independence period is filled with literary works in English but they are mostly novels or plays. The short stories were only a small add-on to the large Indian English literary world.

It is only in the post-independence period that the short story was given importance in Indian Writing in English. With an increase in English speaking population and decrease in availability of time, people moved to the short story for literary pleasure. Instead of spending days on reading a novel, the fascination of getting the whole story in less than an hour seemed an appreciable option. Though, with the number of novels being written, it is evident that the love of novels and detailed story telling is still alive, though short stories have also made their mark.

Authors like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838–1894), Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), Saratchandra Chatterjee (1876–1938), Romesh Chandra Dutt (1884–1909), Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004), R K Narayan (1906–2001), and their contemporaries wrote short stories in English and ignited the torch of good and appreciable short stories which was later carried forward by the post-independence authors who filled the world of short stories in Indian Writing in English with a wide variety of themes, characters, plots, structure and lengths of their writings. These authors are Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906–1988), Khushwant Singh (1915–2014), Kamala Markandaya (1924–2004), Nissim Ezekiel (1924–2004), Badal Sirkar (1925–2011), Mahashweta Devi (1926–2018), Nayantara Sahgal (Born 1927), Ruth Praver Jhabwala (1927–2013), Jayant Mahapatra (Born 1928), Vijay Tendulkar (1928–2008), A K Ramanujan (1929–1993), Purushottam Lal (1929–2010), V S Naipaul (1932–2018), Arun Koltekar (1932–2004), Anita Desai (Born 1937), Dilip Chitre (1938–2009), Girish Karnad (1938–2019), Shashi Deshpande (Born 1938), Bharati Mukharjee (1940–2017), Manju Kapur (Born 1948), Salman Rushdie (Born 1947), Indra Sinha (Born 1950),

Vikram Seth (Born 1952), Amitav Ghosh (Born 1956), Mahesh Dattani (Born 1958), Arundhati Roy (Born 1961), Vikram Chandra (Born 1961), Neel Mukharjee (Born 1970), Kiran Desai (Born 1971), Aravind Adiga (Born 1974), and their contemporaries.

1.3 Life and Works of Selected Authors

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala

“We need to listen to her: in her 1979 Neil Gunn Fellowship lecture she said that as a Jewish refugee from Europe, the loss of her inheritance made her “a cuckoo forever insinuating myself into other’s nests’, ‘a chameleon hiding myself in false or borrowed colors’. Also that ‘you take over other people’s backgrounds and characters . . . Caryl Phillips remarked that, ‘she was postcolonial before the term had been invented’. Ruth’s own explanation was typically understated and wry, ‘once a refugee, always a refugee’, which is why John Updike called her an initiated outsider’.” (AEC, Desai, x)

She was an author of India; she was not Indian by birth, but she adapted the Indian attributes to her core. Born on 7th May 1927 in Cologne, Germany, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is an eminent Short Story writer, Script writer and Novelist. Her parents, Marcus and Elenora Prawer, were Jewish. Marcus was a lawyer who moved from Poland to Germany. In 1939, her family fled to Britain and was one of the last of the refugee groups to flee the Nazi regime. Siegbert Salomon Prawer (1925–2012) was her elder brother who was an expert on horror films and Heinrich Heine.

Before becoming a British citizen in 1948, Ruth Prawer had to struggle through the Blitz, World War II, Luftwaffe’s bombing and many more critical events. During her

initial years in Britain, she began to speak English rather than German. Through the war years, she kept company with books of Charles Dickens and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*. After becoming a British citizen, her father committed suicide due to the sadness he felt for losing about forty of his family members in Holocaust.

Living in Hendon, London, Ruth Praver attended the Hendon County School, which is nowadays known as the Hendon School. She completed her education from Queen Mary College in 1951, when she received her MA in English Literature.

Ruth Praver came to India in 1951 after marrying Cyrus Jhabvala and continued to live here for about 25 years, till 1975. Her early works reflect her life experiences in independent India with themes that made an impression on her; romantic love, arranged marriage, social morals, idealism, chaos, and so on.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala had to struggle to maintain ease through the years in India. She never felt comfortable with the morals, idealism, society and chaos in India. In her autobiographical essay *Myself in India*, "To live in India and be at peace one must to a very considerable extent become Indian and adopt Indian attitudes, habits, beliefs, assume if possible an Indian personality. But how is this possible? And even if it were possible—without cheating oneself—would it be desirable?" (HIBHM, Jhabvala, 21)

In the year 1975, Jhabvala moved to New York and continued to live there till her death in 2013. Throughout her life, she continued to write for different reasons. She wrote novels, short stories collections, screenplays, movie scripts, articles, etc.

A list of her literary works is mentioned here:

Table 2
List of Literary Works by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala

S No.	Title	Year of Publication	Type of Work
1.	<i>To Whom She Will</i>	1955	Novel
2.	<i>The Nature of Passion</i>	1956	Novel
3.	<i>Esmond in India</i>	1958	Novel
4.	<i>The Householder</i>	1960	Novel
5.	<i>Get Ready for Battle</i>	1962	Novel
6.	<i>Like Birds, Like Fishes</i>	1963	Short Story Collection
7.	<i>Backward Place</i>	1965	Novel
8.	<i>A Stronger Climate</i>	1968	Short Story Collection
9.	<i>An Experience of India</i>	1971	Short Story Collection
10.	<i>A New Dominion</i>	1972	Novel
11.	<i>Travellers</i>	1973	Novel
12.	<i>Heat and Dust</i>	1975	Novel
13.	<i>How I Became a Holy Mother and Other Stories</i>	1976	Short Story Collection
14.	<i>In Search of Love and Beauty</i>	1983	Novel
15.	<i>Out of India</i>	1986	Short Story Collection
16.	<i>Three Continents</i>	1987	Novel
17.	<i>Poet and Dancer</i>	1994	Novel
18.	<i>Shards of Memory</i>	1995	Novel
19.	<i>East into Upper East</i>	1998	Short Story Collection
20.	<i>My Nine Lives</i>	2001	Short Story Collection
21.	<i>A Lovesong for India</i>	2011	Short Story Collection
22.	<i>At the End of the Century</i>	2017	Short Story Collection

Source: Based of Review of Literature

Jhumpa Lahiri

Born on 11th July 1967, Jhumpa Lahiri's given name is Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri. She is an American author of Indian decent. She is known for her short stories, novels, essays in English and recently she has started writing in Italian as well. She was born in London to an Indian immigrant couple from West Bengal. Her family moved to America when she was only three years old. Just like the protagonist of the story, "Third and Final Continent," her father, Amar Lahiri also worked as a librarian at the University of Rhode Island. The character is inspired by her father. She, with her family often visited Calcutta as her mother wanted the children to grow up with a Bengali Heritage.

She made her debut in 1999 with *Interpreter of Maladies* and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. In 2003, her next literary work, a novel, *The Namesake*, was highly appreciated and even was made into a movie with the same name. Her second short story collection came out in 2008, entitled, *Unaccustomed Earth* which again was a great success and won multiple literary awards. Her next critically acclaimed novel *The Lowland* came out in 2013 and after that, in 2021, *The Whereabouts*. In between, she wrote and translated works in Italian. In 2019 her first Italian novel came out entitled *Dove mi Trovo*.

Her works in English language deal with the experiences of Indian immigrants in America. She looks at the immigrant situation with emotional sensitivity and understanding of an insider. Her experiences in America were not all happy. She based Gogol's negative experience with his name in *The Namesake* upon her own experience with her name Nilanjana.

Lahiri joined Kindergarten in Kingston, Rhode Island. She always felt pressured to connect the traditional values of the old world all the while being fluent in the contemporary world. With time and age, she grew out of this struggle and became a person of her own. She graduated from South Kingstown High School and later, from Barnard College of Columbia University from where she received her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature in 1989.

Later, from Boston University, she completed a number of degrees; including, Masters of Arts in English, Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, Masters of Arts in Comparative Literature, and a Doctorate in Renaissance Studies.

Though she had taught Creative Writing before in Boston University (1997–1998); she joined Princeton University as a professor of Creative Writing in 2015. In her personal life, she married Alberto Vourvoulias-Bush in 2001 and soon after, moved to live with him in Rome. She has two children; Octavio (Born 2002) and Noor (Born 2005).

A list of her English literary works is mentioned here:

Table 3
List of Literary Works by Jhumpa Lahiri

S No.	Title	Year of Publication	Type of Work
1.	<i>Interpreter of Maladies</i>	1999	Short Story Collection
2.	<i>The Namesake</i>	2003	Novel
3.	<i>Unaccustomed Earth</i>	2008	Short Story Collection
4.	<i>The Lowland</i>	2013	Novel
5.	<i>Whereabouts</i>	2021	Novel

Source: Based of Review of Literature

1.4 Literature Review

The Indian Diaspora is a common research topic in the contemporary literary world. There are a number of budding first, second and even third generation Indian Diaspora authors who have made a mark in the literary field. Along with the Diaspora authors, there are a considerable number of budding researchers in the same field. There have been a number of research works regarding the literary writings of both Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Jhumpa Lahiri; the selected authors for this research study. Following are a brief discussion on a few of these literary researches that are relevant to this study:

Ellis C. (2000) surveyed a number of short stories and studies their narrative ethnography. In the study, the author tries to provide helpful feedback all the while protecting the writer's sense of self.

Heinrich, Liesl M and Eleonora Gullone (2006) examined the importance of both physical and mental health for an individual while focusing on the impact of loneliness on the mental health of the individual. The paper explains multiple psychological theories related to loneliness and studied their impact on human life.

Harris, Wilson (2007) investigated the element of imagination as used in the writings of the short story. The study explains different aspects of imagination and their adaptation as used by different authors through the years.

Shea, Taylor (2008) examined how culture affects the communication process and studies the text *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri in the light of its cultural impact with special reference to the characters that are immigrants and have experiences of two or more cultures.

Sharma, Priyanka (2012) in this study talks about the problems of the immigrants as mentioned in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*. The paper concludes with the idea that the stories all possess a strong sense of identity and connection to the author and their Diaspora experiences.

Singh, Hemlata (2012) analyzed various themes in the works of Ruth Praver Jhabvala and finds an extensive knowledge that she had about the India's political, social, religious, moral, economic and cultural life.

Anjaneyulu, P (2013) analyzed the similarities and dissimilarities in female characters of Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Jhumpa Lahiri. The study notes that no matter where the female characters come from, be it east or west, they share common character traits like courage, strength, tolerance, compassion and show strength in the face of life's difficulties.

Gediya, Ketan K (2013) studied the story *Unaccustomed Earth* published in the short story collection *Unaccustomed Earth* in the light of generation divide as the story connects three generations of the same family. The paper focuses on Lahiri's ability to deal with issues that are both personal and universal; issues of immigrants, hybrid culture, globalization, family relationships, gender roles, and so on. The paper concludes that Lahiri treats the subject with conscious understanding, presents them without cynicism and make us love them.

Hemlata (2013) focused on the problems on the Diaspora people as depicted by Jhumpa Lahiri in her short story collection *Unaccustomed Earth*. The study analyzes the themes of marginalisation, discrimination, alienation, frustration, displacement, rootlessness and discontinuity in the light of father-daughter relationships.

Sharma, Ashish and Swarnita Sharma (2013) focused on the writings of Ruth Praver Jhabvala in the light of her writing style and female characters. The paper concludes with the understanding that Jhabvala presents a realistic image of post-independence urban India—their familial situations in her works.

Devi, Nandhini and Sumathy K Swami (2014) discussed the relationships as presented by Ruth Praver Jhabvala in her novel *The Householder*; specially the relationship between husband and wife in the long run where the two learn to mature and grow together. The paper concludes with the idea that the couple in the novel grow out of the perpetual question; whether to win the battle or relationship; and end up winning in life as they were able to save their relationship and lead a happy life.

Ling, Yun (2014) studied the immigrant characters in the stories published in the text *Unaccustomed Earth* and analyzes their struggle as the Diaspora community. The paper also notices the east-west encounter and the cultural changes that the characters go through. The pull from the past and hopes of the future are critically analyzed in the study.

Patel, Dipti (2014) studied the theme of nostalgia in the short story collection *Unaccustomed Earth* by Jhumpa Lahiri. The study finds that the memories, emotions, relationships and self are psychologically explained through the study of nostalgia in the text.

Samanta, Sugata (2014) studied the first and second generation Bengali immigrants living abroad as described in the short story collection *Unaccustomed Earth* with the focus on three stories entitled, “Unaccustomed Earth,” “Hell-Heaven” and “Only Goodness.” The paper concludes that Jhumpa Lahiri portrays social conflict,

alienation, melancholy and cultural dilemmas with refined excellence and deep understanding.

Kumar, Ashok and Jyoti Gulati (2015) studied the writing style of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala in the light of her novel *A New Dominion* as a satirical author. The paper concludes that in the said novel Jhabvala portrays a picture of her interpretation of India in a satirical manner.

Parmar, Nareshkumar J (2015) focused on the female characters in the novels of R P Jhabvala and Kamala Markandaya, and finds that the characters all display strength in the face of adversities. The study finds the contradiction that the characters face are based on East–West encounter, tradition v/s modernism, marital discord, moral degradation, liberalization, identity crises, anonymity, rootlessness, etcetera.

Sarabhai, Deepa (2015) analyzed the stories by Jhumpa Lahiri about Indian immigrants who are caught between their inherited culture and the adaptive one. The study is focused on understanding the language part of Lahiri's stories and studies them in the light of their lexical and syntactical excellence.

Sarabhai, Deepa (2015) studied the narratological aspects as found in the short story collections by Jhumpa Lahiri entitled *Interpreter of Maladies* and *Unaccustomed Earth*. The paper states that narratology analyzes the narration or any literary work through literary terms.

Bhatt, Surbhi and Mahipal Singh Rao (2016) discussed the stories of Jhumpa Lahiri in the light of immigration and Diaspora. The study attempts to analyze the problems faced by the characters of the select stories and how they are related to their immigrant status.

Chandran, M R and T Senthamarai (2016) focused on the sensitivities of the female characters in the Diaspora writings of Jhumpa Lahiri specially the short stories published in *Unaccustomed Earth*. The paper concludes with the understanding that despite the adversities, the female characters in the stories develop and strike a balance between their native and adaptive culture.

Erten, Meltem Uzunoglu (2016) examined the select six stories published in the text *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri in the light of the theme of alienation and loneliness as experienced by the female characters in the selected stories; especially the women who live outside their culture, be it an American living in India or the other way around.

Gulati, Varun (2016) examines the theme of liberation, displacement and migration as presented in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri, especially in the short story collection *Unaccustomed Earth*. The character's search for identity is deeply analyzed in the light of their experiences as transnational people.

Huidrom, Sumitra (2016) attempted a comparative study between Anita Desai's *Journey to Ithaca* and Ruth Praver Jhabvala's *A New Dominion* with a focus on the spiritual India visible through the western men and women as shown in the selected texts.

Sharma, Meenu (2016) tried to scientifically analyze the text of *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri through a formalist approach. The formalist approach is known for its objective and literal examination of the text. The paper concludes that the author successfully uses all structural tools while writing these stories.

Singh, Geeta (2016) examined the text of the novel *A New Dominion* by Ruth Praver Jhabvala in the light of cultural clashes and cultural assimilation. The migrants that came to India from different countries for different reasons are critically evaluated in the paper.

Uma, D (2016) discussed the Diaspora and tries to give it new interpretations with time. The experiences and emotions of second and third generation Diaspora people are way different then the first one. The study concludes that *Unaccustomed Earth* reveals the human desire for change along with the need for acknowledgment of the past.

Gopal, Nand (2017) discussed Ruth Praver Jhabvala's patriarchal view of Indian society along with the female characters that are both liberated and strong. The study shows Jhabvala's ability to discuss the vulnerability of Indian women in face of patriarchy along with the strength of the feminist movement in India.

Haldar, Mrinal Kanti (2017) discussed the difficulties and smoothness of marital relationships as depicted in the short stories written by Jhumpa Lahiri as published in the texts "Unaccustomed Earth" and "Hell-Heaven." The paper attempts to understand the institution of marriage and its significance as viewed by the characters in the select stories.

Jahangeer, Peer Saleem (2017) depicted the stories published in the text *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri in the light of its character's cultural dilemma and deeply analyzes the older v/s new traditions; where the characters try their best to preserve their cultural identity but are bound by the development and changes of their environment.

Kumar, Manoj (2017) minutely examined the cultural and social themes as found in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri. The characters by Lahiri are from different walks of life and usually are a representative of two or more cultures. The cross cultural conflict present in the selected works is critically dealt with.

Rao, Kavali Ramana and P V Ravi Kumar (2017) studied the portrayal of Indian women in the short stories of Ruth Praver Jhabvala. The study finds that Jhabvala categorizes the her female characters as social climbers, westernized Indian women, committee women and empty women who talk highly about India but are unaware of the depth of Indian tradition.

Singh, M Edward. (2017) discussed the theme of East–West encounter in the works of Ruth Praver Jhabvala. The study focuses on the cultural changes that she had to go through in her own life along with her works that represent this in detail.

Stevenson, Sumitha (2017) focused on the stories published in the short story collection entitled *Unaccustomed Earth* with a keen view on the sensitivity in the relationships presented in the said stories. The paper concludes that all the stories discuss different themes and yet their most integral part is the breaking and developing of the relationships.

Kumari, Tripti (2018) discussed different novels in the light of the themes of love and marriage. The study tries to find different themes, reasons, perspectives, and ideas behind the actions of the characters of the novels. The paper concludes that Jhabvala beautifully describes various human relationships and their emotional patterns in her novels.

Moosavinia, Sayyed Rahim and Somaye Sharify (2018) focused on Kaushik's character as a representative of homeless immigrant who kept trying to free himself from his past but cannot. The study concludes with the understanding that Kaushik fails to build new connection due to his past experiences.

Pareek, Swati and D P Mishra (2018) studied the close eye that Ruth Praver Jhabvala has while writing her Indian characters; be it their social or personal lives. The paper concludes that she often highlights the different facets of post-colonial India and its socio-economic conditions.

Vijaykumar, M and W Christopher Rajshekaran (2018) focused on the Diaspora individuals as mentioned in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri with special reference to the text *Unaccustomed Earth*. The study highlights the hybrid culture, the adaptation of the immigrants, the cultural assimilation, multiculturalism and many other aspects in the selected text.

Beniwal, Gunia (2019) studied the Indian society as depicted in the novel *Travellers* by Ruth Praver Jhabvala. It is a satiric take on the behavioral traits of Indian society that Jhabvala witnessed while her time in India. The paper analyzes the comic opinion as expressed in the novel.

Bhaskar, K Vijaya (2019) studied the text *Unaccustomed Earth* by Jhumpa Lahiri in the light of physical and emotional displacement, rootlessness, assimilation, isolation, alienation, failed relationships, marital problems, misunderstandings and so on.

Mahto, Mohan Lal (2019) found a feminist perspective in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's novel *Get Ready for Battle*. The study tries to uncover the situations where the female characters strive to rise and create their own identity in a male dominant society. The

paper concludes with the understanding that Jhabvala advocates for freedom of women and beautifully depicts appreciates their fight for it.

Beniwal, Gunia and Sunita Rana (2020) focused on the fictional aspects of the writings of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. The study analyzes the elements in Jhabvala's fiction works, namely, *A Backward Place* and *The Householder*, which include comedy, irony, detachment, satire and her observation of real life situations.

Jacob, Joy and Sheeba Thomas (2021) analyzed the works of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala in the light of voicing the marginalised, specially the women. The paper focuses on the themes of feminism, marginalized women, gender discrimination, and patriarchal dominance and so on.

Jadaun, Surendra Singh and Shyam Ji Dubey (2021) described the religious wisdom as presented by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala in her select short stories. The paper concludes that Jhabvala, in her short stories, represents the Indian religion, especially Hinduism, in a shallow way and her observations, though keen in the matter of life and relationships, were weak and feeble in the matter of Hinduism.

The present literature review highlighted that the short stories of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Jhumpa Lahiri have their focus on multiple contemporary themes that include, but are not limited to, women issues, voice of the marginalized, familial issues, personal and professional problems, identity crises, emotional problems, loneliness, alienation and more. Moreover, the literature review found that the characters of both the writers are live, vivid, and simple and yet effective, impactful, and impressive.

CHAPTER - 2

CONFLICTING EMOTIONS

2.1 The Concept of Conflicting Emotions

2.2 Conflicting Emotions in Jhabvala's Short Stories

2.3 Conflicting Emotions in Lahiri's Short Stories

Chapter 2

CONFLICTING EMOTIONS

2.1 The Concept of Conflicting Emotions

To understand the idea of conflicting emotions, first, the two comprising words; that is, conflict and emotions; are to be separately understood. Conflict literally means a fight, an argument or a difference between two or more ideas or wishes, etc. Conflict can be of different types, including conflict with self, conflict with others, conflict with environment, and conflict with the supernatural.

Conflict with self includes all the internal battles that a human experiences. It is the internal battle that a character struggles with. It is a fight between two contrasting ideas in the mind of the protagonist. *Dr Faustus* is the best example of conflict with self. It often creates the most powerful of characters as the character himself becomes both the protagonist and antagonist like *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

Conflict with others is easier to explain as it deals with different ideas represented by different people. Most of the time, it stems from difference between values, ideas, motivations, perception, desires, etc. When two or more people with different perceptions meet, conflict is bound to happen. In a story, the protagonist and the antagonist are usually the representatives of different ideas thus there is a conflict between them.

Conflict with environment includes, but is not limited to, the physical landscape of the story. Environment of a character includes the society in which the character lives. It gives the characters a social guideline to follow, yet when a character stands against the social rules, it creates a conflict of environment. It signifies that conflict of

environment occurs when the social expectations or rules and the character are in conflict with each other. It can also occur when a character is literally at odds with the nature, for example in Ernest Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea* the protagonist is at conflict with nature, thus, it is a prime example of conflict between man and nature.

Conflict with the supernatural occurs when a character faces opposition from supernatural forces such as fate, religion, out worldly beings, deities, magical forces, etc. Throughout ancient literature; particularly, in the Greek Mythology, Arthurian Lore, Norse Mythology and Indian Mythology; man versus supernatural is an abundantly present conflict. Shakespeare's Plays are filled with the examples of conflict with the supernatural. Homer's *Odyssey* is another prime example of this kind of conflict.

The other word, emotion, means a strong feeling, such as love, anger, fear, etc. It is defined as a state of consciousness in which a person experiences joy, sorrow, fear, anger, hate, courage, disgust, wonder, peace, etc. A character's experiences and moods are described through their emotional state.

According to literary theory, there are close to no classifications and definitions of emotion. Nevertheless studying the human psychological framework, emotion has a few theories that can be considered. They are helpful in understanding the literary characters and their psychology.

The major theories regarding emotion can be classified into three categories, psychological theories, neurological theories and cognitive theories. Physiological theories argue that the responses within the body are the reason for emotions; neurological theories suggest that the brain leads to emotional responses; while

cognitive theories propose that thoughts and other mental activity are responsible for emotions.

Given below are a few theories of emotions in brief:

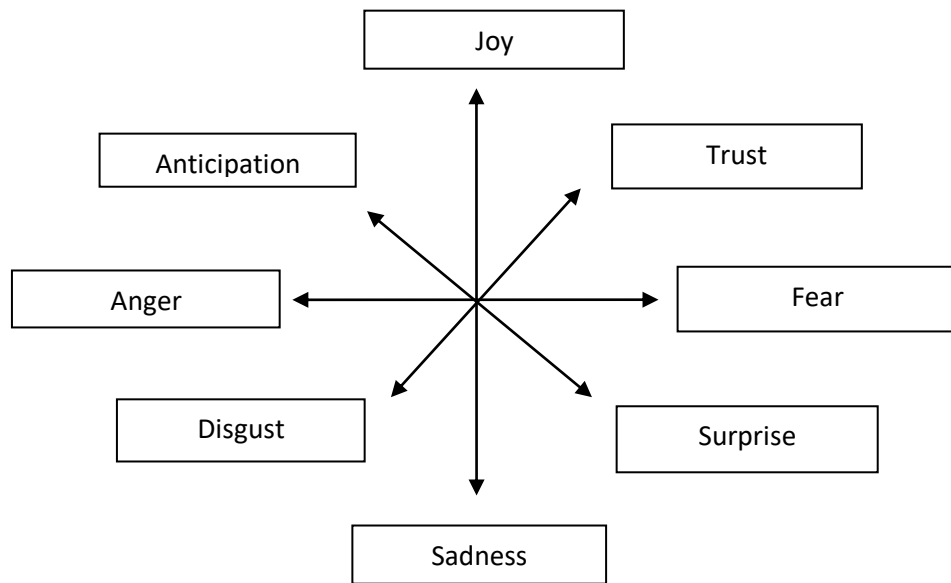
According to the evolutionary theory of emotion, emotions exist to serve their purpose. They motivate people to give quick responses to their environment and thus, help to improve the chances of survival.

The James-Lang theory of emotion states that an external stimulus is responsible for a physiological reaction, the emotional reactions are dependent upon how one interprets the physical reactions.

The Cannon-Bard theory of emotion mentions that the experience of emotions and the physiological reactions such as sweating, muscle tension, trembling, etc occur simultaneously.

According to the Schachter-Singer theory, which is a cognitive theory of emotion, thoughts are responsible for emotions. The Cognitive Appraisal theory mentions that the brain first assesses a situation and the resulting response is the emotion. Given here is the wheel of emotions as given by Psychologist Robert Plutchik:

Figure 2
Wheel of Emotions by Robert Plutchik



Source: Based on Review of Literature

This wheel represents lists eight emotions in pairs of opposites; Joy–Sadness, Trust–Disgust, Fear–Anger and Surprise–Anticipation. Robert Plutchik has given a theory of emotion in which he defines eight primary emotions and studies their triggers and reactions as depicted in the human behavior.

Robert Plutchik argues that there are six primary emotions that control the other subsidiary emotions. Human interact and reacts through these six primary emotions. A brief regarding the human emotions and their expressions is given in the table below, along with description:

Table 4
Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotion Depicted Through Table

S No.	Emotion	Expression	Description
1.	Joy	Smile, Laughter	A pleasant emotional state that elicits feelings of happiness, contentment and satisfaction.
2.	Fear	Wide eyes, Tense stretched lips	A primal emotion that is important to survival and triggers a fight or flight response.
3.	Surprise	Raised brows, Open mouth, Gasp.	A brief emotional state following something unexpected; it can be either positive or negative.
4.	Sadness	Frown, Tears, Lack of focus in eyes.	An emotional state characterized by the feeling of disappointment, grief or hopelessness.
5.	Disgust	Wrinkled nose, No eye contact, Gagging.	A strong emotion that results in feeling repulsed.
6.	Anger	Glare, Tight lips, Eyebrows drawn together.	An emotional state leading to feelings of hostility and frustration.

Source: Based on Review of Literature

Thus, understanding conflict and emotions separately, the idea of conflicting emotions can easily be understood. It means with the conflict that the character experiences in their emotions. Each and every situation where a character experiences two or more opposing emotions simultaneously is an example of conflicting emotions.

2.2 Conflicting Emotions in Jhabvala's Short Stories

Like Birds, Like Fishes

The Interview

“The Interview” is a story that follows the stream of consciousness technique. It is a style of writing developed in the early twentieth century. It focuses on the thoughts of a character as also how they express them throughout the story. In literary criticism, it is a narrative mode that is used to depict the multitude of feelings and thoughts that pass through the mind of the character and captures the thought process of the character in a realistic way.

This particular story follows the thoughts of a young man who battles the idea of getting a job versus being free. This story accounts for his thoughts during a particular morning here he goes to an interview for a desk job. He gets up in the morning, gets ready, eats his food prepared by his wife and sister-in-law, and leaves the house for the interview hoping to get the job while wishing to not get it too.

Throughout the morning the young man keeps wishing for things he could be doing for pleasure instead of going to work at a job for money. He wishes to have money to buy a movie ticket, to be able to take a quiet walk without any stress, to be able to stay dependent on his brother for survival, and most importantly, not having to work in an office crunching numbers. As a young man his feelings of conflict about the job are described in the lines,

“No, I did not want to go to the interview. . . . I know I have to work, in order to earn money and give it to my mother and sister-in-law for the household, but there is no pleasure for me in the work. . . . What pleasure could there be for me in

that? I am a very thoughtful person and I like always to sit and to think my own thoughts . . .” (LBLF, Jhabvala, 105)

Though, he forces himself to go to the interview where he reaches a little late, he just could not take the anxiety and stress of facing the interview. The young man leaves the office building the moment his name is announced for the interview. The story ends with him running off from not only the building but also the block of offices. He ends up in a small tea and breakfast stall where he sits to eat a sweet cake and tea pondering over what to do when he reaches home.

The young man feels the conflict between his responsibility to attain a job to earn for his family and his personal need for leisure time. He wishes to be able to go to the movies in the morning, take long walks to think about the movies and life in general, eat good food, relish the attention he gets from the women in his life and to indulge in many more individually pleasing activities. Another conflict in his life is his sister-in-law, who he feels is a beautiful lady unlike his own wife. The protagonist wishes to get a chance to be able to please her physically but is bound by the familial relationships.

A Stronger Climate

A Young Man of Good Family

“A Young Man from a Good Family” is a story of an Indian Foreign Services aspirant, named Ranjit, who comes from a well to do family in India and has an affair with a foreigner named Georgia. Georgia has a simple job and lives in her small shabby apartment. She is an eccentric and modern woman who is a few years older

than Ranjit; Ranjit tries his best to be level headed and live according to his family's reputation and traditions; but the two are in love.

Georgia and Ranjit sometimes meet at her apartment; sometimes go out with friends and sometimes to movies and diners. Their life seems to be extremely different from each other. Georgia is much travelled, believes in being the change in the world, does whatever she wishes, drinks, smokes and still manages to impress people around her with the stories of her exploits. Ranjit, on the other hand, has never been out of India, behaves prim and proper in the family gatherings, his manners are exemplary, and yet, he feels like puppet at times. Together, Georgia and Ranjit both challenge and inspire each other.

Though, Ranjit's family knows about Georgia and Ranjit's affair though being a modern family, they are happy that Ranjit gets to experience this relationship, they are not appreciative of Georgia. They believe this to be a time bound thing that will end eventually. Sometimes even Ranjit is fed up with Georgia's eccentric nature.

By the end of the story, Ranjit had decided to end his relationship with Georgia and stopped all contact with her due to his studies. He believed it to be best for himself. But after one meeting with his friends he realizes that his relationship with Georgia is neither only physical nor just a passing affair. This realization compels him to find Georgia and ask her to stay in India with him. The emotional conflict he feels regarding Georgia is depicted in the lines,

“He felt outraged and knew what he ought to do was leave at once and never come back again. But there was something else too, which added to his fury and at the same time coloured it with sorrow, and that was the idea that she who had made him what he was now – or rather, who had begun to unmake him from

what he had been – should be threatening to go away and leave him to – what?” (ASC, Jhabvala, 136)

There is conflict in Ranjit’s family regarding Georgia where on one hand, they like to boast about the openness of the family where their son has a foreign girlfriend; on the other hand, they want this relation to end as soon as possible as they do not want this to be a permanent situation. Ranjit has his own inner conflict to deal with. He is inspired by Georgia and her ideas, and at the same time, does not feel it necessary to do something about it. Georgia’s conflict is internal as she understands that she is eccentric and acts irrationally at times, but later on, she terribly regrets her actions.

How I Became a Holy Mother and Other Stories

An Experience of India

“An Experience of India” is a simple yet impactful story of a foreign young girl, who comes to India with her husband, Henry, who is transferred to India for his job. Her endeavors in India are a mixture of happiness, excitement, disappointment, sadness, and exuberance. In India, the protagonist did not travel with her husband. Henry had his official work to pass his time and he anyway never preferred the cheap and local transport that his wife preferred.

The narrator wants to experience the real India and thus wishes to meet the common public. The young girl does not want to travel as a foreigner with money and resources who would only visit the beautiful and scenic places of India; rather she wants to experience India as a common Indian living with limited resources through cheap public transport.

During her travels, the main character meets a number of different people, men specially, who took much interest in her. The women she talks to are fascinated by her color, physique, long blond hair and generally her persona; whereas the men usually wish to gain sexual favors from her. She enjoys the fascination of the women wholeheartedly and grants sexual favors whenever she wishes. The protagonist was never was fond of these encounters with random men but obliged them nevertheless.

One such encounter gets her involved with Ahmed, an eighteen-year-old Muslim musician from a family of musicians. The protagonist loves the carefree and gay behavior he had, she appreciated the times she spends with him and was all in all excited just to be with him. She is so fond of Ahmed that she asked him to move to Delhi with her. This proves to have a negative impact on their relationship as Ahmed becomes homesick even with all the pleasures before him. Soon, he asks her to send him back. The protagonist gives him the money required for his travels and that is the end of their relationship.

Letting Ahmed leave is a difficult decision for her. She is sad for a long time and decides to look for inner peace in the guidance of multiple spiritual Gurus. She is not satisfied with the life in these ashrams that she visits until one of her friends, Julie, asks her to stay in the ashram where she is.

In this ashram, she was satisfied and finally begins to attain a little peace. Yet the spiritual Guru again turns out to be a fraud and once again she leaves the ashram. But this time, she goes back to her husband. These experiences with travelling and fake spiritual Gurus have drained her and she becomes depressed. Her husband is still supportive of her decisions and when she asks him to leave India to anywhere else he agrees.

Henry is able to find a new opportunity to work in Germany and the two have plans of leaving soon after. Though, at the last moment, while Henry is ready and keen to leave India, the narrator has an epiphany and refuses to leave at the final moment. Even in those final decisive moments she knows that she can never be truly happy anywhere other than India.

The epitome of emotional conflict is depicted in the narrator in the final moments when Henry is adamant on leaving and she declines. Her time in India had been troublesome, torturous even, but she knows that if she ever wished to be truly happy, she needed to stay in India and continue her journey. The said conflict is depicted in the lines,

“Now I feel compelled, that I have to do this whether I want to or not. And partly, I don’t want to, I feel afraid. Yet it’s still like an adventure, and that’s why besides being afraid I’m also excited, and most of the time I don’t know why my heart is beating so fast, is it in fear or in excitement . . .” (HIBHM, Jhabvala, 183)

With this realization, she understands that the journey will be difficult and without her husband to count on, she would be drifting. The real conflict is in her adaptation of India where, on one hand, she loves to travel and explore exotic India; on the other hand, she is scared of what it can do to her.

How I Became a Holy Mother

“How I Became a Holy Mother” is a story that depicts all that is wrong in the world of organized religion in India. This is a story of a young girl named Katie and her experience with devotional institutions in India. She came to India in search of peace

and tranquility. The story depicts with realism how the hypocrisy of some leaders cheats a large group of people.

Katie's search for peace and tranquility takes her to different ashrams throughout India. After the recommendation of one of her friends, she came to a beautiful and peaceful ashram built in the slopes of Himalayas where one could see as far as the top of the Himalayan range. She loved the place and was impressed by the Master. Here the lead Guru was called the Master.

Her journey as a disciple was an interesting one where she stayed in the ashram for months while all she did was listen to the Master's sermons and meditated. She appreciated the little she got in her small room. Her friendship with the chief disciple Vishnu, who was supposed to be the next Master, was a thing of interest for many in the ashram.

Her acquaintance with Vishnu was not a romantic one but the Master's followers started to see Katie as the doom for Vishnu who would deflect him from the path of righteousness. Though the Master himself was appreciative of the friendship of his disciples but Katie still had to suffer from the conflicts of the others.

By the end of the story, Master advised Vishnu and Katie to become a couple and spread his teachings in America. The story ends with a sermon in America that Vishnu and Katie lead. The two still were not in love with each other but they both agreed to a marriage of convenience where Vishnu and Katie both gain in monetary terms and in fame. Katie's wish to attain eternal peace is somewhat accomplished by the end but still, she was unhappy with being the Holy Mother.

The story seems to move on a gradual pace where the protagonist experiences different things in India and at the end comes to an Ashram where she is chosen to be the Holy Mother and life partner of the next head Guru of the Ashram. Her experience of India is sometimes tragic and sometimes beautiful and peaceful. The story depicts India as it is; with all its flaws and grandeur.

The story illustrates a number of themes but the most important one seems to be that of conflicting emotions that beset Katie. She appreciates all she has managed to accomplish, the fame, the money, the power to spread the message of peace and love. However, she also perceived the fakeness of the message and how people try to benefit from it by lying and cheating. This understanding makes her dissatisfied—consequently the conflicts arise.

Bombay

The story “Bombay” is about the life of an old man, a member of a Parsi family whose ancestors came to live in the outskirts of Bombay. The house had been handed down from one generation to the next. The story begins with the Uncle, his brother and his niece, Nargis living in the said house.

The Uncle was separated from his wife in the early days of his marriage and never married again. Thus, he had no kids of his own; whereas his brother married once to Nargis’s mother and lost her when Nargis was only a couple of years old. The two brothers were the ones to raise Nargis on their own. The three became a happy family over the years, had some difficulties on the way but came out victorious and managed to uphold the family name.

Uncle was a journalist by profession whereas his brother was a lawyer. But the two never regularly worked rather, they picked up freelance jobs whenever they felt that the money was running low. The two had focused all their energy on raising Nargis and providing for her. They never were hard working like their ancestors and when they had Nargis to take care of, they decided to be freelancers and work only when necessary.

The family money was not properly taken care of and after the marriage Nargis into another wealthy Parsi family, they were left nearly penniless. Nargis's father died short after her wedding but her Uncle, continued to live in difficult conditions while living in a small rented room. The story shows the struggle that the Uncle goes through as an old man dependent on his niece both physically and financially.

Throughout the text, Nargis kept trying to convince her Uncle to leave the rented room and join her family in her mansion. But he was all against the idea. He was never a fan of Nargis's sisters-in-law who live with her. He believed his free will is dependent on him having his own place and space. Though, by the end of the story, once he has become sick with fever—Nargis did not listen to him anymore and managed to take him to her place.

The conflict in emotions is visible in both Nargis and her Uncle throughout the text. Nargis treats her uncle just like her father and loves him too much to counter his wishes. This creates a conflict in Nargis where on one hand she wants to take care of her uncle, take him with her and help him to the best of her abilities; on the other hand, she feels tied and helpless as her uncle's wishes are not the same.

The Uncle depicts the emotional conflict at the end of the story when he is living at Nargis's mansion. He likes to be taken care of by Nargis but hates his life there. His

time at the mansion is filled with regrets, remorse, and dissatisfaction. He wished to live in his own place but being a cripple and dependent, his wishes were never properly expressed. His conflict stays in his heart and he keeps fluctuating between the two situations.

On Bail

The story “On Bail” revolves around the life of the Narrator, her Daddy, Rajee and Sudha. The narrator is a young lady who graduated with satisfactory results and her father had huge hopes for her. Yet she ends up doing a meager job of a cashier in a small shop. Her father is somewhat disappointed with this development and yet he cannot do anything about it as it is her own choice.

Rajee is a complex man with great eloquence. He goes around meeting people in different cafes and pubs to get financiers for his different business ideas. Rajee also has relations with both the narrator and Sudha. He also seems to be an overly trusting man as he even believes someone he met in jail and wishes to get into business with him. He does have some redeeming qualities that make each of the two women love him even after knowing about his relationship with the other.

Sudha is an older lady, married, with family. Still she chooses to spend time with Rajee as she truly enjoys his company. She is the wife of a rich man and thus has access to huge amounts of money. Rajee does not wish to take her help but is unable to support himself. The narrator earns but only enough for sustenance, she cannot afford to provide for Rajee’s eccentricities.

The story depicts conflict in each stage. When narrator finds out through her Daddy that Rajee is in jail she does not know any other way but to go to Sudha for the money

required for his bail. The narrator's father is in constant state of conflict where on one hand he wishes to take his daughter away from Rajee and on the other hand he knows that Rajee makes her happy and thus stays quiet.

Sudha is not conflicted about Rajee at all; rather, she is in conflict with her own life. She wishes to have a husband who would give her love and attention and when her desires are not fulfilled within her own home, she looks for Rajee. Her conflict is choosing between satisfaction of her desires versus her duty towards her family.

The narrator, at times, feels situational conflict where she has to choose one of the two unlikely scenarios. She does not wish to part with Rajee and likes to wait for him; she does not wish to go to Sudha's house but she needs the money; she wishes to marry Rajee but knows that she has to honor his wishes—are a few examples. Consequently the story depicts various forms of emotional conflicts.

Prostitutes

The story "Prostitutes," depicts the unfulfilled desires of the women who make a living through prostitution. The story depicts three generations of the same family. The oldest one is known as Maji, who has left prostitution and now only sings *bhajan* (hymns) in her small home; Tara, Maji's daughter, who has become the mistress of Mukund Saheb and lives in a better area where he could easily visit her; and Leila, Tara and Mukund Saheb's daughter, who is a young girl studying in school.

Maji is an old lady who has been practicing the art of singing hymns since she left the prostitution business. She does not sing anything else anymore. Her troop of music players are all in different places now but one *tabla* player still comes regularly and as her accompaniment. In the story, she acts as the voice of reason and truth for Tara.

Tara's daughter on the other hand is a young little girl who goes to a boarding school that Mukund Sahib pays for. She is only mentioned in the story as a future that Maji and Tara look forward to. They both wish her to have a better life than them and maybe a proper job here she can live with respect and expect to be loved.

The story presents Tara as the protagonist whose heart is always at odds between wanting to go after love and money. As much as she wants to choose love that means declaring her feelings to Bikki. Should she ask Bikki, when she knows that Mukund Sahib is her only hope for a financially secure future? Throughout the story, Tara is in constant conflict between giving in to her love for Bikki against the social and financial security that Mukund Sahib provides her and her child. In the end, for the sake of her daughter and her comfort, Tara holds back her love to opt to stay with Mukund Sahib. Though, Bikki stays an integral part of her life, he does not get to be in love with her.

Expiation

As the title suggests, the story, "Expiation," is one that deals with remorse, atonement, as well as making amends. The major characters of the story are the narrator, his wife, his brother, Sohan Lal, his youngest brother Ram Lal also known as Bablu and Bablu's friend, Sachu.

The family was a lower middle class family at the beginning of the story where the oldest brother, the narrator, had to fight tooth and nail to provide for the family. The family owns a small cloth shop, which later picks up and the brothers earn enough for the whole family. Sohan Lal helps with the said shop but Bablu always preferred to stay in his own world of thoughts.

As time goes by, the family realizes that Bablu's behavior is different from the normal teenage behavior. Even before that, at the young age of nine years, he learned to steal from his oldest brother and sister-in-law. By the time he became a teenager, he did not have any friends. Though, he liked dressing up, watching movies and leading a leisurely life in general. He never liked to work in the shop or anywhere else.

During his teenage years, he had his own distinct personality. The family had also changed and developed with the business. Now they were all free of their ancestral debt and had a proper house for themselves. The family had turned around their financial situation and was now a well-to-do family of the upper middle class. At the young age of sixteen, he ran away from the house. After two years, he came back but not alone; his friend Sachu accompanied him.

Bablu and Sachu stayed for a few months with the family; and then one night, took a huge sum of money from the safe and again ran away. This was a shock for the whole family but most of all, to the narrator. He was about thirteen years older than Bablu and had practically raised him.

The narrator was always in conflict with his duty and his love towards Bablu throughout his life. From the younger days, raising Bablu had been a challenge. He wished to ignore all that was bad in Bablu and love him as his own child. However Bablu made such horrendous mistakes in his life that he ended up in jail along with his one and only friend. The story ends with Bablu and Sachu's deaths and the loss that the narrator felt over this.

Farid and Farida

Farid and Farida is the story of a young Indian couple who move to New York with the intention of making big in the business world. They wished to create a business of Indian handicraft and artefacts out of their contacts in India along with possible connections they hoped to make in New York. Though this scheme turned out to be a failure; and along with their business, their marriage also failed.

The broken marriage was a result of the frustration over the failure that was both financially and emotionally troublesome for Farid and Farida. The two decided to follow their respective wishes and part ways as Farid was adamant that he wanted to stay in New York to continue his struggle whereas Farida wished to go back and live in peace.

Farid is informed of the whereabouts of his wife Farida twenty years later, he goes to India to meet her only to find her in the Himalayas, sitting under a banyan tree. She had her own fleet of handmaidens who took care of everything for and around her. There was a line of pilgrims waiting to touch her feet. To Farid, it seemed like Farida had turned herself into a better brand, a Holy Woman.

The two were happy to see each other but Farida could not forgo the path of spirituality and join Farid as he had suggested. She asked him to continue meeting like this and not wish to have his wife back as her path had completely changed. It was originally Farid's suggestion to go to London and make money through the Holy Woman persona that Farida had attained.

Farid and Farida both stay in conflict with each other throughout the story. Even though they wish to stay together their personal and professional choices take them

apart. Farid and Farida both struggle between love and money. First Farida chose love. Self-love. Went back to India and immersed herself in her thoughts, with time, became a saint. The next time around, when Farid chooses to stay in India and chooses love, Farida chooses money and fame and leaves for London.

The story takes a drastic turn in the end when Farida takes up the chance to travel abroad to spread the message of love and peace and Farid decides to sit under a tree and wait for her return. The last lines of the story display Farid's resolution, "He thought he would just wait here until she came back for him. Of course, this might take a long time – many years even . . ." (EIUE, Jhabvala, 42)

My Nine Lives

Gopis

The lead characters of the story Gopis are the narrator, Lucia and Vijay. The narrator is nearly forty years old living in New York with her own business running splendidly. She was an accomplished focused woman in her society, single, never married, admired by others. Though, her meeting with Lucia reminded her of her waived past where she went to India at the young age of twenty and was infatuated with an older man there, named Vijay.

Lucia is a young girl of twenty, with her parents divorced, no boyfriend, and completely infatuated with the idea of India just like the narrator at that age. Lucia was around sixteen when she started to learn Bharat Nattyam; with the dance, she was introduced to the transcendent love of Krishna and the Gopis. She was so mesmerized by the purity of love and the stories related to this love that she wished nothing more than to visit India and experience the purity herself.

Vijay is the one common person who inspired the Gopi-like devotion in both the narrator and Lucia. Vijay was about twenty years older than the narrator, and yet the two had a long lasting affair that ended when the narrator shifted back to New York, but the relationship continued as a secretive friendship between them.

Vijay is a shady character who, by the end of the story, got into trouble for being involved in some scandal regarding a local political leader and bribes. Even before the scandal, he was a well connected man with a number of favors being exchanged through him. The narrator remembers him as a strong, independent proprietor who stayed calm in face of any adversity. After around twenty years, he went to New York alone and visited the narrator where he met Lucia. This is when he was hiding from the Indian police who were looking for him with regard to the scandal.

Even with the difference of around forty years, Lucia became infatuated by Vijay. For her, Vijay was the embodiment of the Lord Krishna himself who mesmerized the world even though he had his flaws; he was the perfect person who deserved the devotion of both the narrator and Lucia, and all the other ladies who had the pleasure of his company. She even went to India for the years Vijay was alive and her experience of India was a contrast to her imaginative Krishna and Gopi love that she thought would be present throughout India.

The story consists of multiple emotions but the one that stands out is Lucia's perception of India that has two contrasting images. One is the learned understanding that she attained from her dance teacher that expressed India through the stories of Krishna, filled with love and devotion. The other perspective was gained by her experience of three years in India that taught her the reality of life. Thus, the story

depicts two conflicting emotions that Lucia experiences about the exotic place that is India.

A Choice of Heritage

The story “A Choice of Heritage” deals with the struggle of the narrator who, at different times of his life, finds the truth of his birth and life. The major characters of the story are the narrator, his father, his mother, his grandmother also known as Begum and Muktesh; the minor characters include some of the other family members both from the paternal and maternal sides of narrator’s family.

The narrator was only a baby when he lost his mother. His memories of her were negligible. His father never mentioned her and neither did his paternal aunts who took care of him after his mother passed away. His first real conversation about his mother was with his grandmother in India. She loved to talk about her daughter and inform her grandson of his mother’s character.

After he grew up, he realized how different he looked from his own family members. Though no one else seem to be bothered by this difference of appearance, he began wondering about his heritage. Whenever he visited his grandmother, Muktesh made sure to visit him and Begum. The narrator always assumed that Muktesh, though he was a powerful politician by the time narrator as eighteen, was a friend or an acquaintance of the Begum herself. But he later found out that Muktesh was a dear friend of his mother’s. Wondering about Muktesh and his father, the narrator states,

“My father was as English as it was possible to be and Muktesh as Indian, but when I was with them, I felt each to be a counterpart of the other. . . . They both spoke

slowly – my father habitually and Muktesh because he was expressing himself in English . . . I loved to look from one to the other.” (MNL, Jhabvala, 143)

By the end of the story, it is signified that the narrator is actually Muktesh’s son and not his father’s. This was not revealed in so many words to the narrator but he understood the references. This revelation made him question his own heritage and wonder about what it would mean to have another family where he was technically a part of but grew up to be a stranger. This revelation created conflict in the heart of the narrator that was not resolved. Rather, it is a question that he has to live with for the rest of his life.

2.3 Conflicting Emotions in Lahiri’s Short Stories

Interpreter of Maladies

Interpreter of Maladies

The narrator of the story “Interpreter of Maladies” is a tourist guide named Mr Kapasi who also serves as an interpreter as he knows a number of languages. In this story he mentions his encounter with a non residential Indian family. Mr Kapasi’s first impression of the family is that they look like Indians dressed as foreigners. Mr and Mrs Das had come to India on a tourist visit to Konark with their three children, Bobby, Ronny, and Tina. Mr Kapasi was their guide.

The story unfolds with their first meeting. Initially, the family treats Mr Kapasi like a separate entity that is there to enable their visit. But later, the family learns to trust Mr Kapasi after he returns Mrs Das’s purse filled with money. This incident makes the family rely more on Mr Kapasi for their each and every need. As the time goes by, both the family and Mr Kapasi become friendly and more accommodating.

Both Mr and Mrs Das are in their early thirties, but look much younger. They do not seem like a couple who have three grown children; with Bobby being nine years of age, Robby being a little younger, and Tina being the youngest, the family looks beautiful and complete to Mr Kapasi. Mr Kapasi on the other hand is an older man in his late forties or early fifties. All of them travel together to different places in and around Konark.

The conflict in the story is displayed late in the text. The one and only conflict that occurs on the story is that of Mrs Das who wishes to confide in someone with the biggest secret of her life. She and Mr Das had been friends since childhood and married young, during college. Thus, she did not have any close friend other than Mr Das. But the secret that burns her is one she has to hide from Mr Das. Hence, in a moment of weakness, she shares it with Mr Kapasi.

She knows that her second son, Ronny, is not Mr Das's son but Mr Das is unaware of this knowledge. It is Mr Kapasi who points out to her whether she is sad about the situation or guilty. The trust she places in Mr Kapasi by disclosing her secret is one where she understands that they will not be seeing him again after leaving India. The emotional conflict that Mrs Das has lived with for years is out and open to only one other person and yet the turmoil she lives with is unchanged.

The aforementioned stories all depict the theme of conflicting emotions. The treatment of conflict in all these stories is different from one another. Lahiri and Jhabvala both deal with conflict in their own way. Though they both treat their characters with love and care, the true identities of the characters are depicted through their reactions in the face of difficulties.

All the types of conflicts that are discussed initially in the chapter are clearly depicted in the stories of both the authors. Here, the importance of conflicting emotions and their impact on the life of the characters is visible, which is at times positive and at times negative.

CHAPTER – 3

FAMILIAL DISCORD

3.1 Understanding Familial Discord

3.2 Theme of Familial Discord in Jhabvala's Short Stories

3.3 Theme of Familial Discord in Lahiri's Short Stories

Chapter 3

FAMILIAL DISCORD

3.1 Understanding Familial Discord

The importance of family can never be understated. Every individual needs their family for love and support. Family helps an individual in many ways. It gives trust that there are people one can rely on; that even if one fails or lags behind, there are people who would care for them even with their flaws; this unconditional support is not something one can buy; it is only provided through a loving family.

Even though family provides unconditional love and support, it is also necessary that one is willing to provide the same. Not because there is a give and take system, but because as much as it is one's right to ask for love and support from their family, it is also their responsibility to give love and support to other family members. It is not a trade; rather it is mutual understanding that helps keep the family together.

Just as in any relationship, when one feels as if all the efforts are one-sided, the relationship starts to fail; similarly, when all the efforts of keeping the family comfortably together is put upon one person, the family starts to crumble. There has to be mutual efforts, understanding, trust and most importantly, love, between all the family members; only then the family lasts together and revels in that state.

A family consists of a multitude of relationships interwoven with each other. It includes relationship between the brothers, sisters, children, spouses, uncles, aunts, cousins, children and parents, the spouses and the parents-in-law, parents-in-law and grandchildren, and many more. The dynamic of each of these relations is different than the rest. Especially in case of a child present, all the dynamics change. The

expectations and responsibilities change and so does the role of each individual in the family.

A family is like a set of cogwheel individuals, who, upon working together in the right manner, becomes productive and supportive of each other. Even if one of the cogwheels change its course and deviate a little, all the other cogwheels or members need to make adjustments to accommodate the change.

Being a part of a family requires efforts, sacrifices, responsible attitude, adjustment, unconditional love and support, the ability to put others before self, and so on. People born and brought up in big joint families have different attitudes then those brought up in nuclear families. This behavioral difference is due to the difference between the experiences at the growing age.

A nuclear family is one where a couple lives with their children in a house without any other family members or relatives. It is an institution that provides individual attention, personal time, and freedom of choices, along with many more opportunities that help create an independent adult. The financial responsibility also belongs to one or both parents only. So interference from other family members rarely occurs. Moving and shifting from one place to another becomes a smooth transition. Similarly, travel plans and budget also becomes easier to manage.

On the other hand, nuclear family creates isolated individuals as the child learns to stay alone from a young age. The children do not get as much chance to mingle with other family members. Nuclear families create an uncertain environment for the elders of the family. Though, one gets to take individual financial decisions, it leaves all the responsibility to one or two individuals, creating an environment without safety or

security for the members. There is no one to rely on for the adults. The responsibility of a nuclear family often becomes challenging.

Whereas in a joint family is where a child gets to grow up with parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and so on. All the direct relatives live together. There is lesser financial burden on one individual as the whole family pitches in to have a better livelihood. The responsibilities are shared and thus, create more comfortable lives. Along with the financial support, there is emotional support and mental stability in a joint family. The children learn to share and coexist with others.

On the flipside, the joint family leaves lesser room for personal space or aspirations. It can also result in more friction between family members as the dynamics of a joint family are vastly different than that of a nuclear family. The children in a joint family sometimes feel as if they are forced to share and thus become bitter towards the other family members.

Nuclear and joint, both kinds of families had their own advantages and disadvantages. But these are all generalization of the situations. It usually differs person to person. How someone reacts to a particular situation is highly subjective. The family creates the first social dynamic for the child and every child learns a lot from their family. Be it a nuclear family or a joint family.

In both kinds of families, there is friction, conflict and sometimes even fights. It mostly does not compromise the love in the family but it is a milestone that has to be crossed. Any dissatisfaction in the family members is expressed during the time of conflict. An argument in the family can occur due to many reasons.

Whenever the family members have different views or opinion on any matter, when members misunderstand each other or jump to wrong conclusions, when there is a lack of positive communication in the family, it usually ends up in dissatisfaction in the members. This dissatisfaction leads to unwanted but essential arguments.

There are a number of causes that leads to arguments in a family. It can occur due to a drastic or unexpected change in the family dynamics. Different developmental stages of a family bring different challenges for each family member that might lead to conflict and arguments. The change may be either positive or negative; any kind of change needs adaptation. It is the adaptation that becomes stressful for the family members.

Moving to a new place is a big change in itself. The adjustment required to make this kind of change takes a toll on each member of the family. Changes in financial situation—be it a raise or a demotion, can become a tricky situation for the family to handle. Any long distance relationship is difficult to manage; it usually leads to misunderstanding, dissatisfaction, and conflict. Separation or divorce is another complicated situation due to which a family argues.

All the developmental stages of a family bring their own difficulties and challenges. Learning to live as a new couple is a huge adjustment for both. It sometimes leaves partners exhausted, irritated, and sometimes even scared. Birth of a baby is another celebrated milestone that brings a number of unexpected pressures. The family dynamic is hugely affected by the birth of a second child. It not only affects the parents but the elder child as well.

The development of a growing child is throughout a difficult time. The child going to school brings separation anxiety to both the parents and the child. Entering the

adolescence age, the child experiences physical changes that bring confusion and doubt in the child making it difficult to communicate with them. The teenage child is equally frustrating as they learn to lead their life on their own terms. These are all general examples that affect and change the family dynamic making it difficult to communicate positively. All these situations lead to some kind of dissatisfaction that result in argument.

It is important to understand in these or any other difficult situation that the family members need to be willing to negotiate. There are many ways these situations can be dealt wisely. But still, some key points are; try to keep the problem and the person separate, one should remember that the person is not the reason for the problem, it is the situation; keep in mind that the idea is to resolve the problem and not to win the argument; stick to a specific problem while discussing it, define it and try to resolve the problem, do not get distracted; respect other person's point of view without being judgmental; find some common ground; try your best to remain calm; and most importantly, agree to disagree.

To resolve an argument, it is extremely important to be a good listener. The key points are; to stay calm; put emotions aside and take the high road; do not interrupt the other person while speaking; listen actively to what is being said and what they mean; ask questions whenever in doubt or want to clarify the meaning; while speaking, communicate the other side of the story clearly and calmly; and most importantly, do not get distracted by other issues, make the best attempt to avoid other issues.

Another solution to the situation includes working as a team. It includes counting as many solutions as possible; willingness to compromise; collectively decide to choose

a solution and make sure that everyone understands it; stick to the decided solution, do not change the plans on one's own; and if necessary; write it all down to reduce any further doubts and clashes.

It is important to remember that conflict between family members does not necessarily lead to broken families. It can happen when the family members have different views or beliefs. Any conflict ends in a peaceful resolution only when the family members remember to negotiate properly and respect each other's point of view. Mutual respect, patience, and willingness to negotiate are the key to solve any problem.

3.2 Theme of Familial Discord in Jhabvala's Short Stories

Like Birds, Like Fishes

The Old Lady

"The Old Lady," as the title suggest, is a story of an elderly lady. It depicts a day, rather a morning, in her life. She lives with her son, Bobo, daughter, Leila and granddaughter, Munni. Her other son, Satish, visits whenever he can. This particular day, all three of her children get together to decide the next course of action regarding the divorce between Leila and her husband, Krishna.

When the story begins, the old lady is shown to be deep in thought, spiritually awake and happy. Munni's disturbance does not seem to bother her. Though, the family meeting continues to be a bother for the rest of the family, the old lady is happy to find all her children at one place.

Her elder son, Satish, is a professional who is busy all the time. Whenever he visits, the old lady want to feed him, talk about him getting married, discuss familial matters,

but he dismisses her as if her intellectual understanding is way less than his. The old lady understands what his son thinks, but she never retaliates. Her younger son, Bobo, is a free spirit guy who does not work or exercise, he stays at home, eats and makes comments over the household happenings. Her daughter, Leila, the youngest, is a mother of a young girl, Munni. Leila and Munni stay with the lady as Leila wants a divorce from her husband, Krishna.

The family meeting is called to discuss the proceedings regarding the said divorce that Leila is adamant on finalizing, the old lady wants to stop, Bobo is neutral and Satish just wants to be done with the stress of dealing with it; he wishes to either finalize the divorce or Leila to give up on it altogether. Krishna, on the other hand, is a timid and thoughtful man who only wants Leila to be happy; even if it is on the cost of their divorce. Munni is too young to understand any of this but is usually aware of the stress around her.

The family is one where everything is in chaos, nothing seems reliable and all everyone does is raise questions. It depicts a modern household where the present younger generation makes decisions on the basis of their education and knowledge rather than traditions and experiences of the older generation. The discord in this family is not only related to the current problems to be solved, rather, it seems to be a constant condition in their lives that they have learned to live with.

A Stronger Climate

The Young Couple

“The Young Couple” is a story that accounts the experiences of Cathy and Naraian, who are a newly married couple. Naraian went to Oxford for studies, during which he

stayed there for five years, met Cathy, a charming British woman, and came back to India with her. His family accepted Cathy as Naraian's wife and appreciated her. Though, they wanted her to follow the rules and commandments that every Indian woman follow; which turned out to be the reason for conflict in the family. The beginning of the familial conflict is written in the story as,

“What the family discussed most vigorously was Naraian's refusal to enter any of the family business . . . every Sunday – in fact, usually – the discussions turned into quarrel, with voices raised, tables thumped, and once or twice it had ended with Narayan, and Cathy in tow, storming angrily out of the house.”
(ASC, Jhabvala, 53)

Naraian and Cathy started to live separately in a flat in a posh building away from his family while the family supported their wish and understood that the new couple needs their privacy. Though they insisted that Cathy and Naraian both visit the house twice daily for their meals, which was difficult for both Cathy and Naraian as they were not habitual to the heavy Indian meals twice a day. Later on, they went to the house only once a week; every Sunday for the family gathering.

The couple had their own ways of life where Naraian went out every day to look for work and Cathy spent her days in the flat. At the evening, they went out together, sometimes to meet friends, sometimes to different restaurants for dinner and sometimes to just take a walk. They were happy in this way. Though on the weekends, they had to go the family house that triggered some sort of conflict in the family; about Naraian's job, Cathy's lifestyle, or that they do not come home often enough.

Cathy and Naraian had their own quarrels as well but they always resolved them in the end. Once Naraian took a job and found out that Cathy is pregnant, the situation changed completely. He never again was angry with Cathy; he took care of her, tended to her whenever she felt sick and loved her all the more for she was expecting a baby.

After a while, this simple setting did not satisfy Naraian and he decided to move back to his house with Cathy. This hurt Cathy as this was something she never wished to do but was forced into. Even then, with all the fights and clashes that the family faced, the love and affection for one another is always there that can never be denied. Being pregnant, she understood this was the better choice than living alone in the flat. The story depicts the importance of family. Even with all the quarrels and clashes, a family stays together and supports each other.

How I Became a Holy Mother and Other Stories

The Housewife

“The Housewife” is the story of a simple housewife, Shakuntala whose wish is to be able to express her true self. She has all the duties of a housewife that she efficiently completes. She wakes up at four in the morning, practices her music for an hour before any of the family members have woken up. She did not want to disturb her family with her practice.

The family consists of Shakuntala, her husband, and husband’s aunt Phuphiji, her daughter, Manju and grandson, Baba, who keeps visiting as they live in the same city. Shakuntala takes care of her house and her husband. Her husband does not wish to be bothered by the household tasks rather, he wishes to earn and provide the family with

money. He does not wish to be a part of the familial matters including the discussion with Phuphiji about Shakuntala's music practices.

Phuphiji does not agree with Shakuntala's passion for music and tries her best to stop Shakuntala. Manju does not ask her to stop or put more focus around the house, yet she is not a supportive figure. In this particular matter, she just stays quiet and lets her mother be. Baba is too young to realize anything that is happening around him.

The freedom of expression is lost in her. She loves to sing, music is her passion, but the duties of a housewife always stop her from living her dreams. Even her music teacher mentions this; he says that she is perfect in the bookish terms but her voice is not free and thus her emotional and personal ties are a hindrance in her truest expression of music. Her love and passion for music is described in the lines,

“Shakuntala sometimes felt guilty. . . . She loved all of them but she could not deny to herself that her singing meant even more to her than her feelings as a wife and mother and grandmother . . . it was true that with her music she lived in a region where she felt most truly, most deeply herself. No, not herself, something more and higher than that. By contrast with her singing, the rest of her day, indeed her life, seemed insignificant.” (HIBHM, Jhabvala, 116)

By the end of the story, when her music master does not visit her for the whole week, she goes out to find him at his place. She did not expect what she witnessed there. His wife had died and she was sympathetic towards him. For the sake of freedom and expressing herself with true freedom, she got into physical relations with him. This does not in any way affect the lives of her family members but this one act of rebellion frees her from any and all inhibitions she might have had. The love and care

that she has provided her family with for numerous years become nothing when she takes one single step towards her wishes.

There is no day to day discord or troubles visible in the family, but in the undertone, Shakuntala had been suffering for years. She wished to be free, to be able to express her passions and desires and once in a while to be able to do as she wishes rather than following her duty throughout her life. The discord depicted in this story is in the subtexts and undertones.

My Nine Lives

My Family

The story is told by the narrator who is now a grandmother of two grownups; has lived a full life with her own adventures and failures. She tells the story of herself and her whole family with love and affection. Her only daughter Debbie is a slightly delusional character. Debbie only sees what she wishes to; but loves her children Andrew and Veronica wholeheartedly.

Andrew was an intelligent young man who went to Princeton University and was promised a bright future. But, even with all the efforts and hard work, he could not attain the desired results and ended up becoming a failure in his late thirties living with his mother and grandmother. Though, his affection for his younger sister Veronica never faded and neither did Veronica ever waver in her devotion towards her brother.

Veronica became a famous actress and was loved and appreciated for her art in the movie industry. Even though she was famous and was usually surrounded by her admirers, she never accepted any project without her brother's approval. Their age

difference of fifteen years never was an issue between them. Veronica's reverence towards her brother is depicted in the lines, "it was always, and still is, her brother to whom she turned for guidance. This began in her childhood when she was six and he was twenty-one." (MNL, Jhabvala, 155)

The secret that was a trouble for the whole family was the truth about Debbie's birth. Though the narrator was married to Gerd and the two had a healthy and happy marriage, Debbie was actually the daughter of Professor Hoch, who was Debbie's employer. Gerd knew this long before the two had gotten married. But Debbie only found out after Gerd's death when the narrator herself informed her daughter of the truth of her parentage.

The theme of familial discord in the story is not depicted in the sense that the members fight and contradict each other; rather, it is depicted through the narrator who understands the character traits in her child and grandchildren that are the result of their ancestry of Professor Hoch. This becomes important as Debbie and Andrew both had strong reactions to the information. Veronica remained the level headed one—did not let the information ruin her life or career.

Debbie went out to meet Professor Hoch's sons, her half brothers, in hopes of establishing some sort of amicable relationship with them. But she was sent away without any acknowledgement. Andrew threw himself in the books and papers written by Professor Hoch in hopes of understanding him better, but without any background in philosophy, he again failed at this task. All the characters experience discord in their own way and never once question their life's situations. They only struggle internally and try to cope with the reality.

Dancer with a Broken Leg

The story “Dancer with a Broken Leg” is about a famous Indian classical dancer named Dharma who experienced international glory while performing in different nations. She was married in a traditional Brahmin family but the family did not appreciate her passion for dancing on stage. So, when her son, Vidia, was six months old, she left that house to join a performance group and travel the world.

For years, she lived her dream; her life was just as she had imagined. She got to perform for India on international stages, she got to experience the glory of being an artist and she got to experience the love of hundreds of admirers. She loved her life as an Indian classical dancer on an International level; until, she met with an accident which broke her leg and left her with a limp.

Dharma’s life in New Delhi was a simple one with limited means and even more limited access to the outer world as it was difficult for her to go out due to the limp in her leg. She lives with her son, Vidia, her friend LK and for the time being, the narrator as well in a small apartment in New Delhi.

LK is an old and failed politician who is about twenty years senior than Dharma and the two share an emotional bond that brings them together in the times of need. LK had been with her since she came to New Delhi to live there. He comes and goes as he pleases and regards Vidia as his prodigy in the political world.

The family that Dharma had chosen for herself is neither ideal nor perfect. Though, in this family free will is exercised and thus all of them are with the other due to personal choices. Vidia and the narrator choose to marry at a very young age; Vidia, just out of college and the narrator barely eighteen years of age. Even before the

marriage, the two had been sleeping together and Dharma was appreciative of their choices and free will.

The life here was not all rose petals for Dharma. Vidia and Dharma had passionate and loud fights frequently. LK and Dharma on the other hand, argue in a civil manner most of the time, with LK's satirical remarks being the highlight. But once, after Dharma had taken the narrator to the abortion center after her marriage to Vidia, LK was angry enough to beat her with his walking stick while Vidia did nothing to stop him; rather, he even held the narrator to stop her from intervening.

The family had seen many ups and downs in the course of a few years that the narrator spent with them. The story climaxes with LK leaving the house when he finds out that Vidia had joined the leading party instead of taking the position that he had attained for him in the opposition. The narrator leaves the family and India once she finds that Vidia is having an affair with the daughter of the leader of the ruling party.

The story mentions the last and final meeting of Vidia and the narrator where Vidia had become a huge political figure and visited New York for a conference. The meeting is described with the narrator's perspective as,

“He stared at me with the fixed smile and the questioning remark with which important people shield themselves. I had to tell him who I was. For a moment the smile left him, but was almost at once replaced by a very cordial one – the sort extended to a former acquaintance whom one has not seen for a long time and is not anxious to see again.” (MNL, Jhabvala, 201)

Here the two did have an encounter but they refuse to meet properly as old acquaintances, they just share a greeting and move on. The story does not mention anything of what happens to Dharma in the end. But it is evident that she never attained the familial peace and comfort that she desired.

A Lovesong for India

Innocence

The story “Innocence” includes a couple named the Malhotras, who are normally called Sahib and Bibiji. In the story, they live with their three tenants—an aspirant writer Dinesh, a young lady Key and the narrator herself who is an American woman living in India to find her spiritual path. The story revolves around the Malhotra couple who have a history of their own.

Mr Malhotra is from a wealthy family, he went abroad to study, became a lawyer, and came back to India to start his own practice. He got married after he returned to India and kept planning to start his law practice all the while using his ancestral money. He even did practice for a while and got into some bad company and became a part of a big scandal, which was even covered by the newspapers.

The Malhotra couple was the talk of the town due to the scandal that even had them trapped in jail for a while. All the three tenants were witnesses to their fights every now and then. Initially, they fought inside their bedroom in hushed whispers and the tenants were saved from their fight but by the end of the story, they had started to fight openly and the tenants were privy to the details of the fights. This is shown in the lines,

“There seem to be a change in the relationship between husband and wife – or perhaps this was the way they always were once the bedroom door was shut. Now they didn’t wait to be alone, they were bitter and angry with each other and didn’t care who heard them.” (ALI, Jhabvala, 20)

The troubles of a married life are expressed in the story where the couple is deeply in love with each other, ridiculously angry at each other and yet are unable to express their true feelings; be it of love or anger. The family welcomes the tenants in their home to cover their expenses as Mr Malhotra’s license was cancelled due to the scandal.

The love-hate relationship that the couple shares is the perfect example of familial discord. The true love that Mr Malhotra has for his wife is exposed only by the end when in a fit of rage she stabs him with a kitchen knife. Even in this difficult situation, Mr Malhotra wishes to save her wife and states that he stabbed himself. The tenants are in awe of the situation and admire them both for their love and devotion to each other.

The Malhotra couple has seen good times and bad times together; they appreciate the good memories and blame each other for the bad times they are in. They hide their fights from the world and wish to lead a comfortable life; but the events leading up to the scandal and after it, make the couple full of with a rage that affects their relationship with each other.

Bombay (pre-Mumbai)

“Bombay” (pre-Mumbai) is the story of a simple village girl named Munni and her life in Bombay. She is an innocent girl who belongs to an interior village of India but

is filled with desire to live and lead a life of bliss and happiness. She was married by her family at a young age in an arranged marriage setup where her husband would beat her. So she decided to divorce him and move on with her life; but her family was against her decision. She decided to fight for her rights and after divorce, moved to New York with the help of her friends who helped her get a job and settle there.

She was a beautiful girl and had to brush off a number of suitors even at her work place. She had no desire to marry again or get into another relationship. Her past experiences were in striking contrast with the free life she enjoyed in New York. Her meeting with Davy was by chance while his attraction toward her was also something that she tried to brush off but could not. The melancholy and romance that filled his eyes was something that attracted Munni in the first place.

Munni and Davy stayed in a relationship for a while before he proposed marriage but Munni was adamant that she wishes to stay free from the shackles of marriage. Only after the insistence of Abhinav, Davy's father who was a huge Bollywood star; did Munni agreed to marry Davy.

They moved to live in Bombay in Abhinav's grand mansion. Munni and Davy had a good married life but being the children of a huge Bollywood star, their life was always in the limelight and the magazines wrote a number of articles about them; and they did not always write good things.

The theme of familial discord becomes prominent in later part of the story when Davy's mother gets sick and all the gossip from the magazines get to Davy's head and he decides to leave Munni in Bombay with his father and goes to Switzerland with his mother to for her treatment. The story ends with the couple living separate lives who stay connected through letters and poems. Another couple that struggles with

connection is Abhinav and his wife who, in spite of living in the same house for years, led separate lives and live in separate quarters of the house.

Talent

The story “Talent” has three major characters named Magda, Robert and Ellie. The secondary characters include Lottie, who is Magda’s mother, Hannah, who is Robert’s Mother. Another Minor character is Frank, who is the butler in the building where Robert lives. Ellie is a young twenty-year-old talent who came to New York to make a singing career. Magda works as a successful talent agent and Robert is a famous music director. The story begins when Ellie made contact with Magda and with Robert through Magda.

Robert and Magda are cousins as their mothers are sisters. Though the two sisters have a somewhat strained relationship, as they are not fond of each other for their life choices but still, the shared past and the loss of their husbands have put them in a situation that the two are a comfort for each other. Living in the same city, the sisters each have their own place but meet each other whenever possible.

Due to the strain between the mothers, Robert and Magda never could create a strong relationship since their childhood. The two grew up in the same city, work in the same industry and thus have formed a friendship in the later years of their lives where they try to live according to their terms rather than those of their parents’.

After Ellie came into their life, she stirred up much discussion in the family. Due to some problems with her landlord, Ellie had to move places. Since it was difficult for her to find some place on a short notice, Magda offered her the spare room in her house as she liked Ellie more than any talent she had ever managed. Maybe, Magda

liked her more than just business allowed her to; she was fascinated by Ellie and at times it seems that she appreciated her as a partner more than just a business opportunity.

Ellie, on the other hand, was not that keen to know Magda. Rather, she was fascinated and even attracted to Robert. Though, Robert was much older than her, about fifteen years of age difference, but she still wanted to spend all her time with him. Even after numerous efforts on her part, she never could get a place in Robert's heart as he was adamant that he does not wish to be in any kind of relationship in the near future.

Even after Robert had clearly explained his situation to Ellie, she refused to let go of her attraction towards Robert. By the end of the story, Robert's and Magda's mothers understand the complicated situation their children have gotten into and try to solve it for them; but it all goes in vain as Ellie is adamant on her choice and takes her career lightly to prove her loyalty towards Robert.

The theme familial discord is in the undertone sometimes and Ellie shines as the protagonist, but the reason behind the smooth transition of the story is the bond and trust that the family holds in each other. They are more expectant of each other, wish to bring out changes in each other, taunt and scold each other for their mistakes and yet, in the face of an adversary, they stood by and helped each other.

Critic

"Critic" is the story of a lone man who walks his own path, no matter what the society requires him to do; he only does what he likes. The protagonist of the story is Theodore Fabrik, also known as Theo by his friends and family. He had dreams of becoming a huge name in the list of writers of Broadway, but he ended up becoming a

theatre and movie critic. He was highly appreciated by his readers and the film and theatre community along with his mother who used to be a theatre actress in her time before moving to New York.

In his early twenties, young Theo married Eileen, his college sweetheart. Though, Theo and Eileen stayed married, Theo has had a number of affairs. His mother, who lived with him and Eileen, did know about his affairs along with Eileen, but the two always stayed quiet on the topic.

The story takes a turn in Theo's life when he meets a movie actress named Patty, who wished to change her image to start doing serious and important roles in theatre. Patty and his mother convinced him that he could write a play for Broadway while keeping Patty as the lead heroine. His mother chooses a play for him to rewrite from the ones he had written in his younger, struggling days.

In the effort of understanding Patty as his leading lady in the play, he started to have an affair with her that did not last long. Eileen and his mother were aware of this affair as well but they still kept quiet. Though, once he got into working on the play, he did not go out of the house at all. He spent all his time in his study and just wrote the play. He even missed a few of his weekly articles that were his main source of income.

Theo, Eileen and Theo's mother seem to be strong and together as a family but the reality is that there is plenty of dissatisfaction between them. Theo's mother is sad for leaving her acting career behind and lives vicariously through Theo's success. Theo loves perfection in a person and lately, with age and time, Eileen had become too curvy and unattractive to Theo. Though, Eileen still loves Theo and tolerates all his affairs and quirks, she is dissatisfied in the relationship.

3.3 Theme of Familial Discord in Lahiri's Short Stories

Interpreter of Maladies

A Temporary Matter

The story "A Temporary Matter" depicts the life of Shobha and Sukumar, who have been married for years and live in a small apartment in America. The story begins with an official letter that announces the news of power cut in the area for about an hour every evening for the whole week. The couple complains a bit but realizes that it is better to be informed beforehand.

Shobha has a job, she goes to the gym regularly and thus, she stays out of the house for more than half a day. Whereas, Sukumar has lost his job and is a stay at home husband. He takes care of the house, cooks, cleans and is responsible for the house in general. They have an understanding where they both contribute to the house in their own way.

This inconvenience of power cut turns into a fun game for the couple when they decide to utilize this time with candle light dinners and confessions. The game starts with small, harmless confessions that make them smile and laugh at their younger days. Due to this mini competition they reminisce about their happier days when all was good between them and they enjoyed frequent company of their friends and family.

Shobha would stay at home, cook different curries and chutneys, open their home and heart to their guests and be happy in general. But one big blow that hurt their lives and shatters all their dreams was the loss of their still born baby. Shobha was nine months

pregnant and Sukumar was out of town on a work trip when the inevitable happened and they lost their happiness.

The discord in their lives started with this painful incident where the couple was on the verge of becoming parents but lost their child instead. Months after this incident, Shobha started a job and later, Sukumar left his to become a writer. But Shobha ended up taking care of the finances and Sukumar became a homemaker. The power cut gave them a perfect opportunity to discuss and manage their issues with each other and their own grief.

The confessions initially seem to strengthen their bond and bring them closer. But the reality hits on the last night of the power cut when Shobha confessed that she wished to live separately from Sukumar for a while so that she can get out of her grief. This hurts Sukumar who was under the impression that they were moving forward together. The discord is at its peak when Sukumar, in his hurt state, confessed to have held their dead baby in his arms. He says, “Our baby was a boy. His skin was more red than brown. He had black hair on his head. He weighed almost five pounds. His fingers were curled shut just like yours at night.” (IM, Jhabvala, 22)

This seems to be the final straw to strengthen Shobha’s decision of separation. The story clearly depicts how the two are still in love to their core, and still they hurt each other enough to separate from each other. The discord in this couple is due to unsettled grief that both of them try to ignore.

Sexy

“Sexy” is the story that explains a little boy’s perception of women and how it changes his understanding of the world. The story depicts a family where the man

gets into an extra marital affair after meeting a young and sexy woman accidentally. The main characters of the story include Dev, Miranda and Rohin. Lakshmi and her cousin, Rohin's mother, are the minor characters.

The story depicts the intricacies of an extra marital affair through the perspective of the other woman. In this story, Miranda is the other woman who has an affair with a married man named Dev who is from Bengal, India and lives in London. At the young age of early twenties, she had this affair which has given her the best days of her life. She is mesmerized by the way Dev makes her feel.

While having an affair with a married man she witnessed the troubles of a wife through Laxmi's cousin, who was facing a similar situation where her husband was having an extra marital affair. When Laxmi's cousin and her son, Rohin, came to visit her, she asked Miranda to watch Rohin for a day so that her cousin can unwind.

This day with Rohin proved to be game changer for Miranda when he described the word sexy to her. According to him sexy means with being with someone without loving them. This makes her realize that her place in Dev's life is not one of love but only comfort.

Thus, after this day, she decided to end things with Dev in a couple of weeks. It is depicted in the text where she thinks, "She would see him one more Sunday, probably two, then she would tell him . . . there was no point in dragging it on." (IM, Jhabvala, 110) As fate would have it, they could not meet for the next three consecutive Sundays which, in the end, feels like them drifting apart rather than her calling it off.

This story is one with the theme of familial discord where no one witnesses any fights yet the discomfort of staying in a loveless marriage is clearly visible throughout. The

discord in a marriage with an extramarital affair is depicted not through the fights but through the other woman with whom the man had an affair. The emotional turmoil that Miranda faced was difficult on one hand and unethical on the other. She wished to do right by Dev's wife and stay away from Dev but her love for Dev was hard for her to forget. Unknowingly, she became a part of Dev's family and its discord.

Unaccustomed Earth

Only Goodness

The story "Only Goodness" is a story of changing and complex relationships. Sudha and Rahul are siblings who start off in a close and accommodating relationship, but with time, they drift apart and become distant. The relationship they have with their parents also changes. The expectations their parents have with them is different than the ones they have from themselves. Though, Sudha tries her best to be an obedient child and follow the rules set by their parents, Rahul becomes a rebel and tries to find a life of his own.

The theme of familial discord and loneliness becomes prominent in the story when Rahul becomes an alcoholic. Even though he was a top student since a young age, he leaves his studies behind, stays at home all the time and leaves only to get more alcohol for himself. He starts to come out of his alcoholism when he falls in love with a woman named Elena, who also has a baby girl, named, Crystal. Instead of becoming a graduate and getting a job, he starts to train as a chef after meeting Elena. This job, to his parents, is a joke compared to what they had expected from him.

Sudha, on the other hand, completed her studies, got a job, found a partner, Roger, and with the blessings of her parents, married him. After a few years of marriage, she

even gave birth to a son named Neel. Even though she looks like she lives a perfect life, she has to deal with her own guilt. Rahul is lonely because of his alcoholism and Sudha is lonely because she feels as if she is the one who got Rahul into alcoholism. This is a secret she never dared to share with anyone, even Roger. In the end, this secret is the reason Roger claims that he cannot trust her anymore, taking her to the epitome of sadness and loneliness.

Sudha's Family initially is an ideal and close knit family of four and ends up with them all living separately with differences and unsolved emotions. The troubles of family are affecting each one of them. A family is one where the joys and sorrows, troubles and peace, love and hate, appreciation and indifference, all are shared. This particular family shares all these and more.

This story depicts all the ways a family can go wrong. The parents, even though filled with love and compassion, are disappointed; the older sister is a do-gooder who ends up feeling like the one who did the most damage; the quiet and composed brother, who ends up with alcoholism; the perfect brother-in-law, who ends up feeling cheated and not trusting his wife; this story is an ideal example of familial discord.

Hema and Kaushik

The title *Hema and Kaushik* contains three stories that can be read separately but are connected. The stories "Once in a Lifetime," "Year's End," and "Going Ashore" are all connected. They portray different times in the lives of Hema and Kaushik. "Once in a Lifetime" is written from Hema's perspective, "Year's End" from Kaushik's perspective and "Going Ashore" from both of their viewpoints. Their meeting in "Once in a Lifetime" is due to familial situations, in "Year's End," Hema is not so much as mentioned as Kaushik is busy with his life and problems. But in "Going

Ashore,” when the two meet by chance, there is a chemistry that they cannot deny or ignore. A simple, chance encounter ends up being a love affair of a lifetime.

Year’s End

The story, “Year’s End” is told through the perspective of Kaushik. He is twenty-one years old, rather than the sixteen-year-old boy from the story “Once in a Lifetime.” The story has changed its course to an entirely different situation as Kaushik finds out that his father has remarried—Chitra. Now he is the step-brother of two little girls; ten-year-old Riya and eight-year-old Piu.

The family dynamics changes drastically after the marriage. Kaushik’s mother had been a liberal thinking, free woman, who liked occasional smoke and drink. She wanted to live near the coast, loved water and swimming, wanted to live happily even though she was suffering from cancer.

Chitra was a stark contrast to Kaushik’s mother. She was conservative, wore a sari all the time, did not drive or stay alone, looked down upon smoking and drinking liquor—believed in serving the men of the house. Kaushik was surprised that his father remarried, let alone marry someone so opposite to his mother.

The girls and Kaushik start out to have a good relationship but once Kaushik lashes out at them for secretly looking at his old pictures and that of his mother, the girls close off. This triggered Kaushik, he lashed out on the girls and left them alone in the house and left. Their next meeting was at Kaushik’s graduation where the girls were closed off towards him. Kaushik’s realization and remorse can be found in the lines,

“The girls were polite to me, respectful of the fact that it was my day, but at the same time it was as if we’d never met . . . the memory of that night was now the

only tie between us, eclipsing everything else. In their utterly polite way they made that clear.” (UE, Lahiri, 293)

Kaushik’s father was a liberal man who let Kaushik make his own decisions from a young age. As an adult, Kaushik’s father did not stop him from anything nor did he ever force him to love and appreciate Chitra and the girls.

Even with the appreciation and care that Chitra was willing to give him, Kaushik became closed off and alienated. The family was a broken one, with Kaushik’s father being lonely and sad after his wife’s death leaving Kaushik feeling alienated and irritated about the whole situation. After the marriage, Kaushik’s father found a little bit of peace that he was looking for, but just as Kaushik wanted, he was left to look for his own path.

The theme of familial discord is clear in the text throughout as the whole story revolves around how Kaushik tries his best to cope with the situation with his family. The emotional turmoil felt by Kaushik and his father after his mother’s death are extremely different and yet it binds them in a way that cannot be changed. Though both of them deal with the problems differently but the lack of understanding that Kaushik has for his sisters shows his drawback, being young and inexperienced.

This Blessed House

In the story, “This Blessed House,” Sanjeev and Twinkle is a newly married couple who are learning to live with each other. Their chemistry is good but the conflict is there too. They are a couple going through the transition phase in their relationship. Sanjeev is a well settled man with a comfortable job and bright future. Twinkle and

Sanjeev's parents have been friends for a long time and when they asked their children to meet and consider marriage, they readily agreed.

Twinkle is an intuitive and passionate young lady who does not bind herself with the shackles of conservative thinking. Sanjeev initially seems to be a conservative young man who is afraid of what others would say if he displays any Christian artifacts that they found around the house. Yet due to Twinkle's persistence and love for the art, he had to concede and let her decorate the house the way she wishes.

The story is told through Sanjeev's perspective. He feels a kind of discord with minor habits of Twinkle that irritate him. Sanjeev tries his best to keep to himself all of Twinkle's tactics that irritate him. He tries to avoid the behavioral difference between the two of them. Sanjeev is an organized person who prefers the house to be in a certain way; specifically he wishes the house to display his cultural affiliations, perfection and cleanliness. Twinkle, on the other hand, was rather free spirited and preferred aesthetic beauty over religious affiliations.

The couple, though different from each other, learns to deal with this discord and manage to find love and acceptance in spite of the differences they face. In this story, the discord does not appear as conflict rather, it is only in their thoughts. They both battle between their expectations of their partner and the reality they have married. The struggle and discord both are internal in this story.

The Treatment of Bibi Haldar

Bibi Haldar is the protagonist of the story "The Treatment of Bibi Haldar." Bibi Haldar lives with her brother and sister-in-law. They live in a four story house that has tenants in the second and third floor. Bibi Haldar lives on the fourth floor, in the attic,

where she works the inventory and papers of the cosmetic shop that her brother, Mr Haldar owns. The tenant families are all sympathetic towards Bibi Haldar and try to take care of her.

She seems to have an illness since childhood that had kept her at a distance from the world. She had never learned to cook, clean, embroider, stitch, wear a sari, to behave like a lady, none of these was expected of her as her whole family believed that she will never be married or settled. From the text, it is understood that she gets fits. The family had tried all forms of medicine, including Allopathic medicine, Homeopathy, Ayurveda, and all that they could find.

The story develops with two separate events. One is when a doctor told the family that the only way Bibi can be better is marriage. Once she gives birth, all her physical problems will be over. Chaos ensues in the family where Bibi is given a crash course in ladylike behavior; she is taught to wear a sari, to embroider, to cook some simple dishes, to walk and talk properly, to be quiet and complacent.

The other event was the birth of Mr Haldar's child. This made Lady Haldar panicky as she feared that the illness of Bibi can be transferred to her child. The family tries to explain it to her that Bibi's illness is not contagious but she was out of her wits and scared enough to take her husband and move to another house where Bibi was not invited. Bibi was left alone in the house with tenants to take care of her.

The tragedy in Bibi's life does not end here. The tenants were mostly sympathetic towards her and gave her food while she lived in the attic with a open terrace. After a few months of this, the tenants were all surprised to see Bibi out in the terrace vomiting. This was clear that she was pregnant and no one knew who the father was

and Bibi was too out of her wits to know it herself. Though there was a huge search in the society of the man who impregnated Bibi, it was not a fruitful effort.

The story climaxes with the birth of Bibi's son. After the customary rest of a couple of months, one fine day, Bibi came out of her room and opened the door of the shop to sell all the remaining products she had. With the money she made, she continued the same business and earned enough to sustain with her child. Though the people around her still waited for her to have another fit but she never did. The childbirth had cured her and gave her the strength to start again.

The story depicts the familial discord as a naturally developing phenomenon. At the beginning of the story, Bibi had a supportive family but due to certain circumstances, the family became distant and fell apart. By the end of the story, Bibi had found a reason to go on—in her son. Her newborn baby became her new family. The story depicts familial discord in an organic way where the changes are all troublesome but handled well by Bibi Haldar.

Familial discord is a theme that has been discussed in the stories since the dawn of time and still continues to be a difficult matter to understand. It is difficult as in a familial setting; all kinds of the emotions are included in every single episode. It includes all the emotions like, love, affection, dissatisfaction, anger, hatred, and so on. The complexity of family relations is beautifully depicted in the above mentioned stories by both Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Jhumpa Lahiri.

CHAPTER - 4

ASSOCIATIVE JUNCTURE

4.1 The Notion of Associative Juncture

4.2 Associative Juncture and Jhabvala's Short Stories

4.3 Associative Juncture and Lahiri's Short Stories

Chapter 4

ASSOCIATIVE JUNCTURE

4.1 The Notion of Associative Juncture

Association means with an alliance between two or more people to achieve a specific task. People come together and associate with each other to get a sense of togetherness, similarity, belongingness, connection and to attain amiability. There is a distinct sense of achievement when people in society come together to achieve what is impossible for someone alone to achieve.

Association is a union between people with a motive. The said motive can be anything including social service, self development, self and social gratification, emotional support, social voracity, and extraversion, and so on.

Motivation forces a person to initiate action, be it within a person or depicted to the world. The primary motivation covers all the physical requirements. It includes hunger, thrust, and avoidance of pain, aggression, fear, and sex, and so on.

Motivation, in human behavior, is the reason behind all the tasks that a person completes. It is the process that guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. It is usually of four types. Extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, introjected motivation and identified motivation.

Extrinsic motivation is one where a person is motivated by rewards or incentives; it may be in the form of praise, fame, money, or others. It is derived from the external form of incentives. Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is the exact opposite of extrinsic motivation. It means with doing a task for the sake of internal gratification

rather some external gain. Third kind is introjected motivation. It means with motivation due to the internal negative reasons. Be it guilt for previous mistakes, constant negative feedback, no positive response, and so on. Last, but not the least, identified motivation is one where a person understands the need to accomplish a task but does not until there is a desperate requirement for it.

According to the human motive theory of psychology, human motives are distinguished as under three categories; namely, affiliation, power and need for achievement; these are the primary reasons that energize and drive a person's behavior.

Studying the social motive, it is understood that nearly all motives are socially relevant as they affect the social status of the person in one way or another. Some examples of social motives include affiliation, achievement, altruism, aggression, power, approval, and many more.

It is also relevant to understand how and why people come together in groups with the aim of a common goal. A group can be both formal and informal. Formal groups are the ones formed in an organization, which include command groups and task groups. Informal groups are formed due to people coming together that include interest groups and friendship groups.

Command groups include a manager and their subordinates who follow the organizational hierarchy. It is a relatively permanent group in an organization. A task group is made for the specific purpose or outcome; it is not necessarily a part of the organization. At times, it is formed temporarily.

Interest groups are formed by the people of common interest who come together to live and enjoy their interest. Friendship group are ones which confirm to the social needs of a person along with the need of belongingness which are satisfied by the groups formed by people of similar age, ethnic background, religious and political affiliations and so on to travel, gossip, meet and enjoy their time.

Though, the individual need for satisfaction is the main attraction toward joining a social group, its importance in society cannot be denied. It is beneficial for both the group and the individual as combined goals are met when the people with similar interests come together. There are a number of benefits of affiliating with a group for each individual. Some of them are mentioned here:

Security; as being part of a group leaves behind the insecurity of standing alone. People feel stronger when there are others with them who have similar interests, motives and tasks.

Status; as a part of a reputed or active group, one receives recognition in the society that satisfies one's need for appreciation as the works of members of the group are usually shown to everyone.

Self-esteem is a personal benefit of joining a group as being a part of something bigger boosts one's self esteem. One is able to know their self-worth and value of the work they do.

Affiliation is the state of being closely related that is belonging. Being affiliated to a group fulfils the social needs of an individual. Regular interaction with others is satisfactory for most people.

Power, because a collection of people is powerful. While in a group, people rely on each other; the collective forces of all are stronger than that of a single person. For a person, who wishes to be a strong influence on others, being a part of a group gives power to them without any formal title.

Goal achievement; it is easier in a group as the talents of different people are utilized to the full potential as opposed to the individual whose talents can be limited. The knowledge and power required to complete a job gets fairly divided and thus the work becomes easier.

All the above discussion is regarding the personal and social level of motivation for association. On familial level, the dynamics of motivation change drastically. As in a familial setting, the requirement for association is not only on a personal level, but associations are made for the betterment of the whole family and at times because of the family.

There are times in a familial setting where the characters are not willing to stay associated to the family but are required to do so. It may be due to a sense of duty towards the other members, due to being thankful for their past deeds, due the obligation that they are family or most importantly the love and admiration that they have for each other.

It does not mean that the familial associations are always a burden to the said character, rather it means that familial associations is not something one chooses, rather, it is one that is given or provided by God, fate, or chance. With the familial association, love and affection play the most important part in being together rather than the goal oriented associations made in the social construct.

Families are not only God given, at times it can be chosen as well. In the selected stories, there are numerous examples where the characters move to a different demographic and associate with the people there to create a family of their own or associate themselves with a resident family in such a way that they become a part of the said family.

As discussed in the chapter above entitled, Familial Discord, a family can have various reasons to get into fights or disagreement. But the association between them that has been in existence for years keeps them together as the history of togetherness creates a sense of security and connection. It can be said that the fights and disagreements are there because of the comfort level that a family members have with each other.

The associations made with friends and acquaintances are different than that of the family but their impact on the characters is no less than that of the family. Friendships, just like family, are based on trust and respect. Sometimes friends affect a character in decision making just as much as their family.

When a character associates with negative character the resulting social, behavioral and cultural changes that the character experiences creates entirely different situations than the beginning and situations mostly end up being negative. Similarly, positive associations create positive changes and help a character grow and realize their full potential.

According to the above discussion, associative juncture can be defined as a point of association between people; it may be for selfish or selfless reasons, but the impact of associative juncture is huge in life as the kind of people one associate with can determine the course of one's life.

4.2 Associative Juncture and Jhabvala's Short Stories

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala

Like Birds, Like Fishes

A Birthday in London

“A Birthday in London” is a story of four friends coming together to celebrate the birthday of one of them, Sonia. The others are Mr Lumbik, Mrs Gottlob and Else. They are all older people, above the age of fifty, but all are young at heart and want to live their life to its fullest. They all come from different backgrounds, have had different journeys and yet are somehow friends who like and trust each other.

Sonia is a widow who has two children, a boy and a girl. The girl is married and has a son of her own; the son is twenty-six years old, lives his own life with his friends, girlfriends, photography and cinematography work and travels a lot. Her late husband, Otto Wolff, is mentioned often in the story as Sonia reminisces about her past with him. She has been a widow for years now, but it is understandable as Mr Wolff was much older than Sonia. The others, Mr Lumbik, Mrs Gottlob and Else, all, at some point in the story, reminisce about the old days.

Sonia is a simple and direct woman who gracefully expresses what she feels. Even when she realizes that her son, Werner, has forgotten her birthday, she is calm and content as if she did have her son's company on this special day. A simple letter from her daughter, Lilo and pictures of her family makes her emotional enough to cry. Mr Lumbik, on the other hand is a constant flirt who has faced many things in his time, but the happiness of finally attaining the British citizenship makes him happy and cheerful. Mrs Gottlob is an old, spinster woman who stays happy no matter what. Else

is a hardworking woman who has a job as a seamstress, which requires long hours and great patience.

This story documents an evening in the life of these characters. They came together to celebrate, but the evening is full of emotional upheavals and tears; tears of joy and sorrow both. They all have their specific personality traits that make them a fun group together. Their association is a mystery; how they came together in the first place and became friends is never discussed but the text makes it clear—this point of their association is a form of true friendship that they all adore, cherish and love.

Lekha

“Lekha” is the protagonist of the story who, at the young age of twenty, has married a much older man who is a department head. Her reason for this marriage is not given in the story but it is clear that she is not happy in her position. She is an introvert and prefers to spend her time alone. The only friend she has made is the narrator who is the wife of one of the subordinates to the department head.

Lekha doesn't associate with anyone else, but when she meets a young, inspiring, ambitious and creative film maker, Govind, who takes an interest in her, she is overwhelmed. Govind came to visit the narrator only for a while but in that short time, Lekha and Govind became pretty close. Their affair is a secret that they both sacredly hide. But one evening, when the narrator went to visit Lekha, the affair became open to her.

This affair is the reason for Lekha's change of behavior. She started going to the parties, meeting everyone who came to her, smiling and laughing with people, and most importantly, she was happy. This was a welcome sight for all the people in the

society, especially for the narrator as she had taken Lekha under her wing. But after discovering the affair, she was sad and disappointed in both Lekha and Govind.

The story moves ahead when Govind goes back to work and Lekha is left alone. She has a young romantic heart and thus she believed in everything that Govind said. But she did not know that Govind has had many affairs before and his idea of love is one which lasts only till he is meeting with the other. Once he is gone, he completely leaves Lekha behind. This saddens Lekha and she once again, she stopped going out and meeting anyone, including the narrator.

Lekha's association with the narrator was for the comfort and support that she provided. Once the narrator told her that she does not agree with her association with Govind, she breaks that bond too. After that, Lekha is totally alone and thus, she looked to Mrs Nayyar for association, who is the rival of the narrator.

Lekha's association with others always has reasons relating to her comfort; whereas others, specially, the wives of the other subordinates, wanted association to Lekha due to her position as the head's wife. Govind had his motive to associate with Lekha; he wanted another artist to connect with, and Lekha being a seasoned dancer did the job, but this association could not last. The story maps out the associations that Lekha makes to survive and sustain the harsh realities of life.

My First Marriage

“My First Marriage” is the story of a young girl who falls in love madly and irrevocably with a simple, uncouth, mighty and older man. She does not name him throughout the text, just call him M. She knew that he is not an acceptable match for her according to her society; but she was so infatuated by his words, ideas, and

passion that she decides to elope with him. They have a simple quiet wedding that was not even registered. It was as if they were married only in the eyes of God.

They did not have much in terms of money; rather they did not have any as M was unable to actualize any of his ideas so far. They lived with M's family for a while in his ancestral home. She was happy there with all the good ladies of the family teasing her about M and listening to all the gentlemen of the house talking in the evening about everything from philosophy to business. She believed she was growing as a person and evolving towards being a better human being.

M's company was not only a physical support for her; it was a mental and psychological peace that she experienced with him that attracted her. She truly believed in his ideas of moral education, his school, and requirement of a better learning system for kids. She trusted his capabilities, his will, and his unwavering faith. She even trusted M when she got to know about his first wife Savitri, whom he had left and she was living with her father now. Though he talks about her reverently; almost as if she was still his inspiration and power, and yet she trusted him even more. Thinking of Savitri, her thoughts were,

“... I saw how much nobler and more advanced Savitri was than I; and I hoped that, if the time ever came, I too could be strong like her. . . . Once he said of her, ‘She is a candle burning in the window of the world.’ and that was how I always thought of her – as a candle burning for him with a humble flame.”
(LBLEF, Jhabvala, 196)

The love, trust and faith she has for M never wavers, no matter the situation. Even when he became depressed, secluded, and separated himself from everyone, including her, she stayed by his side and waited for him to address her. When he started getting

fame as a spiritual preacher, she knew the time for him to leave is soon and yet she stayed until he told her specifically that she should go back to her father's place. The next day, he was gone. No one knows where.

A few more days later, her father came to take her home. She willingly went with him. She slowly started getting into her old routine. She played tennis, watched cinema, read novels, attended parties, laughed and lived freely, just as before, but now she had an aura of maturity around her. She was more poised and more confident. She knew the difference between a life for money, materialism and fun and a life full of love, tranquility and peace.

The story depicts how a simple encounter can turn into one of the most important associations in life. Her experiences with M were a once in a lifetime experience where she learned, lived, and loved to its fullest. Her association with M was not only fruitful to him but extremely so for her as well. Though, she ends up marrying Rahul in the end, it is important to understand that the love she shared with M is still with her.

A Stronger Climate

The Biography

The story "The Biography" contains three main characters, Jonathan Jones, Anita and Miss Bridget Law. Jonathan is a young and budding writer who wishes to write a biography on one of the first Indian leaders who is long gone from the world physically but his legacy still lives in the work of his successors and party members. Anita—a spinster at a ripe age, is the niece and the only living relative of the said leader. Jonathan meets Anita in hopes of getting an interview regarding the leader.

Miss Bridget is Anita's friend who joins Jonathan and Anita most of the time and is writing a book on Indian women entitled "From Pardah to Parliament."

Anita is a progressive woman who was mostly educated in boarding schools abroad. She is inspired by the new age modern ideas and believes India and its thought processes to be backward. She does not like the new leadership of India where people are uneducated, uncouth and have no manners. She believed that India needed to learn from the west and gain from their knowledge. She believed that Indian knowledge and tradition, as ancient and powerful as it is, is unable to help India sustain itself in the contemporary modern era.

Jonathan did not only meet Anita regarding his book, he also met the recent head of the said political party, that is, the successor of the deceased politician. Though, his meeting with him was not fruitful regarding the book, it certainly provided Jonathan a different perspective from that of Anita and it helped keep his book subjective. Sometimes, Sometimes, Anita hosted private dinners with just two guests—Jonathan, Miss Bridge.

Miss Bridget was a lady with a sweet tongue but Jonathan never took a liking to her. She would sometimes bring her writing to read to Anita and record her responses as her understanding of Indian women was better than that of Miss Bridget.

The story is one where people from different backgrounds and perspectives have come together to create associations that benefit them all. Jonathan's association with Anita and the minister both were due to his wish to write a book and become a published author. Miss Bridget made association with Anita as she needed a few friends with a better insight of the understanding of contemporary Indian women. She

does not seem to be a likeable person; Jonathan clearly never liked her but Anita loved her company.

Anita needed someone to write about how great she thought her uncle to be and how India could become better by following in his ideas and methods. She liked Miss Bridget and her ideas as she believed a good book about the progress of women in India is going to improve the impression of Indian women around the world in general.

Other than meeting a few foreigners that she truly liked, she had become a private person after the death of her uncle. The associations made in the story are all due to one or the other personal reason. Real relations and true affections are not present in the text.

A Spiritual Call

The story “A Spiritual Call” has three main characters; Swamiji, Daphne and Helga. Swamiji is an Indian spiritual guru who travels the world to spread a message that he had attained after years of meditation in the Himalayas. “Meditate, look into yourself, and so, by looking, cleanse yourself; harmony and happiness will inevitably follow.” (ASC, Jhabvala, 93) He believed that it was his task to spread this message and once he had completed the task, he wished to go back to the Himalayas to meditate.

Daphne is a disciple of Swamiji who got into contact with him in one of his travels to America. Daphne heard him speak and was mesmerized by his charisma. She decided to join him for one of his meditation sprees in India where Swamiji teaches meditation to his disciples. Helga was from another country. Daphne and Helga met at Swamiji’s temporary ashram where they both were to learn to meditate and better themselves.

The story depicts the associations made by different people at different stages of their lives for different reasons. Swamiji is depicted as a genuine person who truly wishes to make an effort to create a change in the world. He tries his best to meet different people in various areas of the world to spread his message and to attain his life goal. Daphne and Helga are two of the thousands that he had met and influenced.

Daphne and Helga both had a satisfactory life in their respective countries but they were not satisfied with their own lives. They were unhappy and felt like they were living under the expectations of others. This prompted them to seek out Swamiji, create an association with him that lasts longer than any of them expected as the Swamiji offered both to join him for a lifetime of spreading his message to the world. In the last lines of the story, Daphne came to terms with her situation with the trust she put in Swamiji, she thinks,

“She was glad to be with Helga, and she thought probably she would be glad to be with Mrs Gay Fisher as well. She was completely happy to be going to California and anywhere else he might want her to accompany him.” (ASC, Jhabvala, 110)

How I Became a Holy Mother and Other Stories

A Star and Two Girls

“A Star and Two Girls” is a story about the struggle of freedom from the cages created by the self. The famous movie star, Suraj, feels refreshed when he encounters two simple yet aloof girls, Gwen and Maggie, who happen to meet him at a random party while visiting India. The random encounter becomes a friendship that is both

nurtured and cared for by all three of them. The girls are not mesmerized by Suraj, rather they see him as a human with flaws and choose to befriend him.

Suraj's character seems to be boastful, self-indulgent, and rude at first, but after witnessing him through the eyes of Gwen and Maggie, he becomes a loveable, caring, and somewhat pitiful character. The girls on the other hand, who seem to be aloof, disinterested and superior at first, through the eyes of Suraj, become perceptive, supportive and focused young girls. The story takes the east-west encounter with a storm and depicts the two worlds with alarming contrast that connects at a human level in the form of the unimaginable friendship.

The story ends with Gwen and Maggie leaving India to go back home. This seems to be the end of their uncanny friendship but that is not the case. They continue to write letters to each other for months but they missed each other for obvious reasons. Suraj did not have much to write to them and the girls did not seem to be as interesting in letters as in real life. Suraj sometimes wished that the girls were there, in his drawing room, and talking to him in the uninterested and aloof manner that they had. The association created by the girls in India is present in the hearts of all three of them.

A Course of English Studies

The story "A Course of English Studies" depicts a young woman, Nalini, who went abroad for further studies. Her struggle to adjust in a new environment along with her longing for her home is beautifully described in this story. The fascination she had about the studies abroad which were filled with beautiful imaginations and passions crashes due to reality with her experience of a course she took abroad.

Here, she moved into a small room on the top floor of a simple house with the landlady, Mrs Crompton, living downstairs. She loved the view her bedroom window provided. Initially, she filled her days with experiences that she had read about in the books, she likes to take walks where the characters of her stories meet and visit the places where the writers of the previous generations lived.

After a few months, she develops affection for the English professor, Dr Greaves, and got into a relationship with him. The professor is older in age and is married with a number of children. The affair did not last long and Dr Greaves ended up going back to his wife. Due to this affair Nalini is left with a broken heart and mounds of papers to write. Her last letter to her mother depicts the maturity she had gained through this experience and a longing to go back to where she belongs.

The story through depicts the associations that Nalini makes and their affects on her life. Her association with her friends abroad provided her with perspective; her associations with the professor made her realize the importance of her mother and her wisdom. The story depicts how important one's associations are in the process of getting on with life.

My Nine Lives

Springlake

The story "Springlake" is the tale of a house bought by a European immigrant who wished to adapt the identity of an American. His children Halley and George were the caretakers of the mansion after the death of their father. Their mother was not well and basically just uninterested in the property and thus mostly stayed in New York

where George was her only companion. After the marriage of Halley and Teddy, the family included Teddy and their Daughter Lisa wholeheartedly.

Halley and George both were artistic people. Halley wished to become an actress and George a writer. But the two had been failures in their respective field of choice. But still, their passion and love for the art never diminished. Teddy on the other hand, was an extremely passionate man who never could chose one specific field and stick to it. He was always looking for something. Whatever he did, he did with utmost love and truest heart.

Halley and Teddy's daughter, Lisa, was the opposite of her parents. She was more like her grandfather than Halley, George and Teddy combined. The traits that made him a respectable citizen of America were all transferred to Lisa instead of his children. She was the practical one, the responsible one, the decision maker, and most importantly, she knew how to handle money and improve their quality of life.

The story starts with the first generation that is, Lisa's grandfather, who worked hard to raise his desired social status. He was smart, keen, and money minded. His children became influenced by art and literature like their mother and went down the path of failure. The third generation, Lisa, was again a person of practicality and social intelligence so that she became the next unspoken decision maker for their house, Springlake.

The story revolves around the aspirations of these people for Springlake and to accomplish their ideas of Springlake. The story develops as they all made associations to different people. The grandfather had brought Springlake with the idea of having a place to unwind and to invite guests to relax and enjoy weekends.

George, Halley and Teddy wished to turn it into a performing arts centre for which, Maggie was their biggest supporter. Maggie was a retired actress and had a lot of experience in acting along with speech elocution, stage decoration and performing arts in general. The four of them planned and planned but due to the lack of money their plans were never actualized. Lisa's reason to be the decision maker was clearly expressed in the lines,

“With Father gone, it was Lisa who had assumed his authority. At first, George had liked to call himself as the head of the family responsible for all decisions. But after he had made such a mess (I'm sorry to say) of our financial affairs, Lisa took them away from him – just in time, before we lost more than we could have afforded.” (MNL, Jhabvala, 108)

Lisa on the other hand wished to make money out of Springlake so that the expenditures to be made on Springlake were covered by the revenues from the property itself. She used her association with the law firm she works for to make Springlake into their summer party place. With the detailing of a mansion and the grounds of a palace, Springlake proved to be the best place for them.

In the story, Halley, Teddy and Lisa were only characters that did not change from beginning to end. Other than them, George and Maggie both changed their ideas of Springlake from a performing arts studio to a rented summer house under the influence of Lisa. Throughout the text, all the characters wished to find associations and support for their ideas of what could become of Springlake.

A Lovesong for India

A Lovesong for India

The story “A Lovesong for India” is the account of the life of a couple named Trilok Chand, commonly known as TC and his wife Diana who was from Oxford. The two had met at the University of Oxford while completing their education there. TC came from a family of Westernized aristocrats who had been in civil service in India; Diana on the other hand was from a family of officials who had been serving in India before Independence.

The two had a lot in common in terms of their background and education. They even looked similar; both were short and angular. In the initial years of his posting, TC spent extensive time in the outskirts, living in the quarters made by the British officials that made Diana feel as if she was living with the legacy created by her forefathers. Her association with the people in those places was always cheerful and comfortable. She preferred her life in the remote places where she felt useful and appreciated.

TC on the other hand, wanted to live in the cities where he was closer to the ministry and could do more in the decision making process. He also preferred the society and particularly his social circle in the city. When he got a promotion and was transferred to Delhi, he was pleased, his friends organized dinner parties and were happy to be together; but Diana was dissatisfied with this development.

By the time they moved to Delhi, their son Romesh, was almost an adult and appreciated the life he found there. Though, both of his parents wished him to follow the family tradition and join the civil services, but he has other plans. He wished to

become a businessman and later on, he did. Though, the means he used were unethical and that created a rift between the father and son once the details of his transactions were open to TC.

The story is a fine example of associative juncture as throughout the story the characters have been in contact with different kinds of people—their situation and reactions differ from time to time. Romesh's association with a corrupt politician spoils the reputation and friendships that TC had created over the years through hard work and dedication. Though, Romesh ended up getting free and moved his business to Bombay, TC and Diana stayed in Delhi and moved to a small flat as TC resigned from his job as a civil servant.

School of Oriental Studies

The lead characters in the story “School of Oriental Studies” include Professor Maria Von R, poetess Anuradha and her son, Som. It was a chance encounter that brought Maria and Anuradha together. Maria wished to translate the poetry written by Anuradha in English and Anuradha appreciated her enthusiasm and permitted her to do so. Anuradha's son, Som, who still lived with her, wished to go abroad to join a PhD program.

The association between Anuradha and Maria initially is a business transaction but with time, they become friends and Anuradha even invited Maria to live with her. Once Maria started sharing Anuradha's place, their relationship became more intimate and personal. Anuradha start to trust Maria with her life secrets and insecurities. Maria is a decent woman who takes Anuadha's trust as a form of respect and upholds it to the best of her abilities.

Anuradha is an outspoken, expressive, friendly and extroverted woman whose works reflect all these qualities.. Her poetry even talks about the passionate nights that she had spent with her lovers while her husband slept in the room below her. She is also insecure in her relationships. After the death of her husband, whom she deeply loved, she became fixated on her son—Som, a simple young man. who feels trapped in the clutches of his mother.

Maria on the other hand is a quiet, compliant, simple and mannered woman who is a forty-year-old spinster who had recently lost both her parents. She was alone in the whole world and found solace in the restriction, shouting, translation work and the life of Anuradha. The association between the two is both a struggle and peace for both of them. Maria and Som too became sort of friends while taking care of Anuradha together.

The translation work that they do together is stimulating to both of them intellectually and physically. By the end of their sessions, they are usually tired and ready to sleep. The duo has an uncanny chemistry where one is a dominant and the other submissive and yet this makes their work better. Maria is extremely understanding of Anuradha's situation and appreciates all the help she gets from her.

The story is about the different kinds of associations made by the characters. The association between Anuradha and Maria is one where both benefit from each other. Anuradha and Som are related by blood and yet most of the time, both of them are disappointed with each other. Som and Maria have an association with each other due to the love and devotion that they feel for Anuradha. The connections made in the story are both by chance and by blood; and their impact in the life of the characters are different as well.

4.3 Associative Juncture and Lahiri's Short Stories

Unaccustomed Earth

Hell-Heaven

“Hell-Heaven” is an interesting short story that covers a time frame of more than twenty-five years of the life of its characters. This story shows the most impactful moments of their lives that depict their emotional state. Usha is the only daughter of Shyamal and Aparna, a simple Bengali couple from India living in Cambridge. Here, they meet Pranab Chakraborty, another Bengali who just came to Cambridge; unlike Shyamal and Aparna, who have spent the past few years abroad.

The story depicts the complexity of relationships between these people who belong to the same land and have met each other far away from home. Their connection is based on the longing they feel for their country and their desire to be in Cambridge which helps their aim for a better life. Pranab ends up marrying an American named Deborah. This union makes Pranab distant from his family in India, who disown him after knowing that he married an American, and from his pseudo-family Shymal Da, Aparna Boudi and Usha. Usha also had her moments of loneliness and distance from each of her relationships.

The relationships all grow, develop, and change with time. Usha is a witness to the drastic behavioral change in Pranab and her mother, Amrita. Being a young girl, she does not understand the severity of the situation but after growing older and learning to be friends with her mother, she later realized how lonely her mother must have felt in those days.

Usha's father, Shyamal, also changes, develops, and improves with time. The relationship between Shyamal and Aparna goes through many changes. After being together for decades, they grow to understand each other better. They seem to be distant and lonely during the initial days of marriage yet grow older to become dependent and loving, filling the gap of loneliness in their lives. Whereas Pranab and Deborah seem to be interdependent and loving in the initial days of marriage, they end up becoming distant. Their marriage ends in divorce.

The most interesting relationship change occurs between Aparna and Deborah. Aparna, at the initial stage of their meeting, had feelings for Pranab. After Pranab married Deborah, her unsaid affections took a backseat. She connected with Deborah after the divorce on the basis of the loneliness she had felt when Pranab married Deborah. Deborah had a similar vacuum in her life as that of Aparna. Deborah mentioned of her insecurities to Aparna, she says, "I was so horribly jealous of you back then, for knowing him, understanding him in a way I never could. He turned his back on his family, on all of you, really, but I still felt threatened. I could never get over that." (UE, Lahiri, 82)

The associations made by the characters in the story are all different from each other. Their reasons for association are different too. Aparna associated with Pranab to fill her loneliness, Pranab associated with Aparna and Usha to forget his homesickness; later with Deborah to feel like a complete foreigner. Shyamal settled in abroad in search of a better life and associated himself with the Indians to feel at home.

Deborah's association with Pranab starts due to fascination of the exotic. Usha's association to Matty, Bony and Sara was with the aim of social acceptance in a foreign land. All these characters have been associated with different people

throughout their lives with specific motifs. All these examples show that at any specific juncture, there are many different associations that a human forms and lives with.

Nobody's Business

“Nobody's Business” is a story about two unlikely friends. Sang and Paul. Paul is a recluse, living with two housemates, Heather and Sang. Heather has an outgoing and generally happy personality, so she spends most of her days at her job or with friends. Paul stays home and studies for his PhD final interview. When Sang comes to live with them, Paul and Sang become acquaintances.

They normally live their own lives and don't bother each other much, but somehow, Paul gets information about the love triangle that Sang is stuck in. She has a boyfriend named Farouk who happens to have another girlfriend named Deirdre. Paul's loneliness is derived from his academic problems that he is trying to overcome, Deirdre's loneliness roots from her complicated relationship with Farouk, but Sang's, even after being cheated and feeling alone most of the time, is not lonely. She is happy with herself. Though, the way her relationship with Farouk ended, she does feel cut off from the world for a while and even moves to London to live with her sister to overcome her feelings for Farouk; yet never at any point in the story, does she seem to be lonely.

This story highlights the theme of associative juncture as it depicts acquaintanceships that happen due to fate—to continue only for a certain period of time. The impact of these meetings is paramount in the life of Paul who is left alone in the end. The association made by Paul and Sang appears to be friendship at a point but it seems

that Paul was the only one who understood it as friendship. Sang was say too absorbed with her relationship with Farouk to think of Paul at all.

The story ends on a note where Paul receives his Doctorate and happens to bump into Farouk. He is astonished to see him enjoying his time with Deirdre whereas Sang still lives in London and has not yet returned. Paul is shown as an empathetic character, who wanted to genuinely help Sang and in a way Deirdre to get away from the toxic relationship in which they both are stuck. But he is left only with the emptiness he feels from losing his friend Sang. His association with all the girls in the story, Sang, Deirdre and Heather, is always respectful and friendly. For all of them Paul is just someone they know; an acquaintance or association for the time being.

The theme Associative Juncture is one that discusses the human connections made by the characters throughout the story. The importance of understanding Associative Juncture include the understanding the contemporary ways of life, human relations, the discrete nature of personal, social, and professional relations—most importantly, the ways these relations affect the characters. The aforementioned stories by both Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Jhumpa Lahiri help us understand the inferences made by the authors regarding their characters and the contemporary society.

CHAPTER – 5

LONELINESS AND ALIENATION

5.1 The Idea of Loneliness and Alienation

5.2 Loneliness and Alienation in Jhabvala's Short Stories

5.3 Loneliness and Alienation in Lahiri's Short Stories

Chapter 5

LONELINESS AND ALIENATION

5.1 The Idea of Loneliness and Alienation

As much the words loneliness and alienation seems to be similar, they are not quite so. The emotions relating to the two are different as well as the situations defined are separated by experiences of the person actually going through them. Loneliness is a feeling of being alone, without anyone to count on, to rely on, to trust or support; whereas, alienation is the feeling of being different from everyone around, having lost all connections from others, however, sometimes being content in this condition.

Loneliness depicts the person facing this situation as aloof, indifferent, uninterested kind of person, which can be easily interpreted as rudeness by others; whereas, alienation depicts the experiencing person as different, separated, mentally and emotionally away, which is usually interpreted as ignorance by others.

Loneliness is an emotion that is universal in humans and unique to each individual. It has no single cause; each human experiences it in their own way. According to many researchers, it is associated with introversion, isolation, poor social skills, and even depression. It is said that loneliness is not necessarily about being physically alone, rather it is the feeling of being isolated and alone that triggers the emotions of loneliness.

Loneliness is defined as, “a distracting feeling that accompanies the perception that one’s social needs are not being met by the quantity or especially the quality of one’s social relationships.” (Hawkley and Cacioppo)

While there are many definitions of loneliness available that relate it to the physical state of being alone, loneliness is actually is a state of mind. A person who is alone may crave human contact, some kind of connection that comes with the company of another soul, whereas, loneliness is much harder to deal with.

For example, a person alone at home might not be lonely as they have learned to enjoy themselves in their solitude, whereas, a freshman in university feels lonely while being surrounded by mostly new classmates, roommates, and hostel mates. This shows that the state of being lonely is a mental state that has to be treated internally whereas the state of being alone can be easily treated by finding some company.

Solitude, on the other hand, is another entirely different phenomenon. It relates to a situation where one enjoys the state of being alone. Solitude is a temporary state where the person enjoys their alone time and later, when it seems appropriate to them, they go out to meet others. Solitude is a kind of bliss that lasts for a while according the choice of experiencing human whereas loneliness is a mental state where the experiencing person wishes to get out and meet people to connect with but cannot due to the mental state of loneliness.

There are multiple reasons due to which a person might feel loneliness. Loneliness can occur due to situational variables including moving to a new location, distance from friends and loved ones, separation from the partner, death of someone significant, physical isolation, and so on.

Mentioned above are the external factors. But, loneliness can also be a result of a psychological disorder like depression. Depression often leads people to withdraw socially that sometimes leads to isolation. It can also be vice-versa; that is, loneliness may very well lead to depression.

An internal factor such as low self-esteem can also lead to loneliness. People with low self-esteem often believe that they are unworthy of other people's time and attention, which forces them to lead an isolated life. This results in feeling lonely. A personality trait like introversion also enhances the feeling of loneliness.

There is a number of health risks associated with the feeling of loneliness. Loneliness affects a person in a negative way both physically and mentally. It may sometimes lead to substance abuse like alcohol or drugs. Altered brain function, Alzheimer's disease progression, antisocial behavior, decreased memory and learning abilities, depression, increased stress levels, poor decision-making, are a few of the conditions that may result from loneliness.

These were some of the extreme situations. Loneliness also has some minor effects that seem like nothing in the initial stages but actually affect the both physical and mental health in the long run. For example, among them is less exercise, higher fat content in diet, less efficient sleep, more daytime fatigue.

Recent researches mention loneliness as an increasing problem of the contemporary youth. Due to a rise in the use of internet and social media, the youth are stuck in the show off world making them distant with each other in real life. A few close friends in the real world would help in treating the loneliness among young people.

There are a number of ways with which one can fight loneliness. Some of them are mentioned here:

First, recognize that loneliness is a problem—one needs to make some changes in their lifestyle to overcome it. The changes in lifestyle are not easy to make, it is a

slow and gradual process where one needs to keep on trying and achieve a more healthy steady social interaction in the long run.

One's focus should be on the positive side of the process and should not get discouraged by negative thoughts. A person suffering from loneliness often overthinks and expects rejection or may also be overcritical of possible social contacts. This is where an attitude shift is required. One should focus on building relationships and creating better situations rather than thinking negatively.

As mentioned above, loneliness affects the person both physically and mentally. One should understand and acknowledge these symptoms and try their best to combat them. This includes the need for a positive outlook on life, determination, attitude change, and much more.

Some other things that can be done are to join community service, join meet groups to connect with people having similar interests, start taking a class, join a book club, talk to trusted people, strengthen a current relationship, try and be more confident, start an enjoyable activity. Basically make a concerted attempt to find ways to stay busy, active, and connected to others.

Alienation is a slightly different concept that deals with separation. It occurs when a person withdraws or become isolated from other people or from their environment. People suffering from alienation usually reject their loved ones and/or society. They display estrangement and distance from the world as also from their own emotions.

Cambridge Dictionary defines alienation as, “the feeling that you have no connection with the people around you or that you are not part of a group.”

(Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary)

In sociological terms, alienation is, “the estrangement of individuals from themselves and others; a feeling of normlessness and powerlessness caused by separation and isolation from an individual's sense of self, society and work.” (appliedworldwide.com)

Though alienation is a complex condition; it is quite a common problem. It stems from both sociological and psychological issues. Like loneliness, or any other psychological issue, it can affect one's physical health as well as aggravate existing health conditions. It seems simple but it is just as difficult to conquer alienation as it is to overcome any other mental ailment.

There are a number of symptoms that point towards the problem of alienation. Feeling distance from the loved ones, from friends, from work, from interests are a few common indications of alienation. Other social symptoms include feeling that the world is worthless, feeling like there is no meaning in life, feeling helplessness, feeling separate from others, and feeling unsafe while interacting with others. It can be seen as having difficulty in approaching and communicating with others especially parents, having a rebellious attitude along with the wish to disobey every rule, and so on.

There are also a number of psychological symptoms regarding alienation. It includes a few symptoms of depression as well. For example, overeating or a poor appetite, excessive sleeping or insomnia, lacking self-worth, feeling of hopelessness, fatigue, are some of the more visible presentations of being alienated..

Table 5
Types of Alienation

Type	Definition
Cultural estrangement	Feeling removed from established values
Isolation	Having a sense of loneliness or exclusion, such as being a minority in a group
Meaninglessness	Being unable to see meaning in actions, relationships or world affairs, or having a sense that life has no meaning
Normlessness	Feeling disconnected from social conventions, or engaging in deviant behavior
Powerlessness	Believing that actions has no effect on outcomes, or that you have no control over your life
Self-estrangement	Being out of touch with yourself in different ways, mostly being unable to form your own identity

Source: <https://www.healthline.com/health/alienation>

The aforementioned table mentions six common types of alienation that affects a great number of people.

Considering the causes of alienation, they can be both social situations and/or psychological situations. Social causes stem from the feeling of disconnection from themselves, their environment, or other people. Social situations that can cause alienation include, but are not limited to, a change in environment like changing schools, a job switch, moving to a different place, among other life situations.

Mental conditions that result in alienation include disorders such as anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), self-stigma, illnesses that cause chronic pain or any other circumstances that causes a person to feel disconnected, singled out, or left alone.

Adolescence, a developmental age and stage—can be another reason that triggers alienation. As kids begin to grow and move to adolescence, they experience physical, mental, and emotional changes. Be it in their body or surroundings, these changes baffles them— this confusion possibly makes them feel alienated. They start to see

their surrounding in new light and understanding and due to the physical changes; they become conscious of their appearance and social skills. These changes are sometimes present a severe challenge for the teenager to handle and they can become alienated.

The feeling of alienation may lead to multiple problems in social and personal life. The social problems include poor work performance, be it school or office, criminal activity, drug use, alcoholism, migration, hiding from problems, and many more. It also affects the physical and mental health of the person. The health problems include depression, physiological pain, anger, eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia, among others.

To treat alienation, just like loneliness, the first step is to recognize the problem. After that the general steps of recovery and management include building self-confidence and self-worth. This will need developing an interest in physical activities, attempting to build a social circle by meeting new people. A person plagued by alienation can take up activities that seem interesting, join a group of people to mingle with for outings, talk to family members and so on.

The above discussion shows that loneliness and alienation are different concepts yet similar and connected. While studying one of these, the other cannot be left behind. It is important to note contemporary writings are filled with the theme of loneliness and alienation as these are common problems of current times. This study tries to find and highlight these themes in the selected works.

5.2 Loneliness and Alienation in Jhabvala's Short Stories

Like Birds, Like Fishes

The Widow

“The Widow” is the story of a widow named Durga. Durga became a widow at a very young age. She was married to an older man who died early in the marriage. He was rich, had a huge house, provided for Durga and most importantly taught her to be self-reliant. He preferred a wife who was outspoken, had a mind, strong and can make a stand of her own. He taught Durga to be a confident woman. They had a lot of relatives who, after his death, wanted to take over the property and cast Durga aside. But Durga stood tall and held her ground, she didn't let the property go to her relatives.

Initially, Durga was not happy in her marriage. She hated her husband and all his relatives. But in the last years of her husband's life she became fond of him. She liked all the things he taught her, the confidence he gave her and the liberties he wanted her to have. The old man, even though he was rude to everyone else around, was kind to Durga. He was known as a mean and spiteful old man, who earned his money by unscrupulous means. He was strict with his creditors and refused to support his needy relatives. Yet with Durga, he was always gentle and generous. After a while they got on together very well. So, when he died, it was almost as if she missed him.

Though, the life after her husband's death was still comfortable for Durga, it was a lonely existence. Due to the cunning nature of her relatives she did not get comfortable with them. To maintain a formal relationship, she did not become friends with her tenants. There was no one else around her to help her out. She was lonely.

There was only one person who broke through her walls and became an accomplice for Durga. It was Bhuaji, her late husband's aunt who lived with them. She was always there for Durga. She took care of her, spent time with her, followed her tactics, listens to her tantrums and comforted her when she needed it.

Bhuaji would narrate stories of Krishna to Durga. Stories where Krishna was a young naughty boy like a son Durga might have and stories where Krishna was a young man filled with desires and passion like a husband Durga wished to have. All these stories about Krishna as the son and a lover inspired Durga immensely. She got two statues of Krishna; one as a little boy and one as a young flute player. They represented what she wished to have in real life; a son and a lover. She believed Bhuaji's words that they will complete her and provides her what she needs.

The story takes a drastic turn when a new tenant family comes to live in Durga's house. The family consists of a couple and their three children, two daughters and a son. The son is a young teenage boy named Govind, which is another name of Krishna. Durga instantly feels attached to him. Though, he is a reserved kind of boy, who does not talk to Durga at all, after a few genuine attempts by Durga, he starts to open up.

They start to value their relationship but later Durga's loneliness compels her to see Govind sometimes as her son and other times as her lover. Her attempt to convince Govind to be her lover ends up being the reason for Govind to distance himself from Durga. The end of the story depicts the depth of Durga's loneliness. She willingly donates all her ornaments and silk saris to her avaricious relatives while hearing Bhuaji chant, "As a son and as a lover" (LBLEF, Jhabvala, 78). This was her final attempt to leave her loneliness behind and gain Krishna's love.

The Aliens

Peggy is the protagonist of the story “The Aliens”. Peggy is an English woman born and brought up in a quiet and dainty environment in a nuclear family. She marries an Indian student in England named Dev who belongs to a well to do business family in India. They move to India together to live with Dev’s family. This drastic change makes Peggy’s life difficult.

The story depicts a normal day in the life of Peggy where she has to face the myriad of vast and radical changes—difference of culture, traditional social etiquette, familial relationships, food, and language. Dev’s family accept and appreciate Peggy but they cannot change their ways because of her. Dev’s family is a joint family consisting of his mother, his brother Suraj, Suraj’s wife Sarla, their kids, Babu and Munna. They have servants living in the house as well. They are all loud, in fact totally dissimilar from the life Peggy is accustomed to in her family in England.

The changes that Peggy has to go through are all related to this geographical change that brings about the feelings of alienation in Peggy. She stays with her family but feels alienated from each of them including Dev sometimes. The story is aptly entitled “The Alien.”. In spite of being an accepted and loved part of the family, she feels like an outsider due to the transition she has to make.

Like Birds, Like Fishes

The protagonist of the story “Like Birds, Like Fishes” is a young man named Raj. He is nineteen years of age. The story shows his family as lower middle class, struggling and yet happily managing together. The family includes Raj’s oldest brother Shankar, his wife Mrs Shankar, and their five children out of which Munna is the oldest one.

Munna and Raj does not have much of age difference and thus they become good friends.

Raj has a job as a low level drycleaner's front desk receptionist, which he does not like. Between living with his brother's family, his studies and his job, he is always busy and mostly sad. His life takes a happy turn when he meets his new neighbor, Nalini. One evening, after coming home from his job, he finds her crying at the gate of her house. He decides to help her set up her place and listens to her complain about her miserable life. This creates a bond between the two that develops into an unusual friendship. Slowly, Munna, Raj and Nalini all started hanging out in the evenings.

Nalini's husband has a simple job as a clerk, but he is ambitious and studiously goes to the night school to get his bachelor's degree. Quite a few times, he comes home to his wife playing cards with Raj and Munna listening to the radio. Instead of being mad, he joins them and plays splendidly. This infuriates Nalini even though her husband is supportive of her antics.

Nalini is from a well-to-do family whose financial situation has dropped all of a sudden, and thus her father had her married off to a simple middle class clerk at the young age of seventeen. This is the reason that Nalini keeps reminiscing about her life in her father's home, and in spite of good company, stays sad. To make things easier for her, she makes friends with Raj. Nalini and Raj's meetings make them accustomed to each other. They fight and they laugh, they enjoy themselves and wish for things to stay the same forever; when they are together, seems like anything is possible. It is safe to say that there is a bit of attraction between them.

The climax of the story occurs with a fight between the two brothers, Shankar and Raj, where Raj ends up leaving the house. Nalini sees him leaving and in a split

second decide to follow him. She packs a small bag and joins him. Once they reach the station and catch a train, she realizes that she wants to go back to her husband. The story ends Raj helping Nalini out of the train and Nalini begging him to go back to the way things were. Nevertheless, Nalini ends up going home to her husband and Raj leaving in the train, with hopes of a better future.

The loneliness in this story is found in both characters, Raj and Nalini. Both are in a place that they want to get out of and both are disappointed in the situations they face. Both wish for an emotionally stable and financially better future. Nalini pins her hopes on her husband who is smart, intelligent, and ambitious. Raj on the other hand, is inspired by the letters he receives from his old friend who travelled a lot and is filled with experiences of life. He wishes to follow in his footsteps and live life to its fullest.

Mrs Shankar, Raj's sister-in-law, is also a character who feels lonely and alienated from the world. As much as she loves her family, she wishes for more. But she is a practical lady and understands her responsibilities. She realizes her reality and tries her best to cope with it. She mingles with her neighbors, talks to other women of her society, and keeps tabs of what is happening around. This keeps her occupied and helps her ignore her loneliness.

A Stronger Climate

Passion

“Passion” is a story about the strong feeling of a young American girl named Betsy, towards her love interest, an Indian man named Har Gopal. Betsy was an intelligent girl who took a job in the embassy and came to India for work. She was an introverted

girl with few friends; rather, she only had a few acquaintances, not friends. Due to this, she had her evenings free, which she spent reading. She was an avid reader and visited the American Library quiet frequently.

This is where she met Har Gopal, who was a clerk in the library. Har Gopal was always respectful towards everyone and lived a simple life with the small wage he earned. They were not romantically inclined from the beginning. Once, when Betsy gave him lift till her house, they made an impression on each other. The second time, she invited him over for a drink. After the third time they started to become more and more intimate. This created a bond. Betsy was smitten with Har Gopal. She could do anything for him. In the end, she decided to stay in India; the text mentions,

“Betsy said that they would look for a place for her together; somewhere very cheap, very Indian. . . . She allowed herself to believe that his silence meant assent. At this her heart leapt in joy and her mind shone with visions of her new life that was about to begin for her.” (ASC, Jhabvala, 86)

Betsy was alienated from the world and lived in her own thoughts. She read as much as she could about everything, especially about India. Har Gopal was a man crushed under his responsibilities and duties. He went to work every day as it provided for his family, which included his wife and three children. He worked hard and lived a simple life. Even though he was surrounded by people, he felt loneliness within.

An Indian Citizen

“An Indian Citizen” is the story of a European man named Dr Ernst who settles down in India in the later years of his life. He is a retired person above the age of sixty, who was granted an Indian Citizenship. He is an outgoing person by choice and was never

married. He had a number of friends in India; a few of them Indian and a few European descendents like himself who preferred to live in India after independence.

The story described a day in Dr Ernest's life where he goes out to meet people and embarks upon a journey to meet his Indian friends. He does so after being challenged by Lily, one of acquaintances that Indians are not their friends. He stayed in India because of the weather, the general environment and the friendly and acceptable nature of Indians. Unlike Lily, he believed Indians to be his real friends. Lily is another European lady who stayed in India and has a job in All India Radio.

Dr Ernst is a simple man who wishes to attain perfection in everything in life. He never married because he never found a woman who would fit in the perfect image of his mind. He believed that Lily is just like him in this matter though she always tries to get into relationships with people out of her league. He has a friend named Maiska who lived nearby and whose house was a common meeting place for the Europeans around.

Dr Ernst passes his day making different stops on his way. First he visited Mrs Chawla's house to meet her but her behavior towards him was unwelcoming and rude. Next, he went to a small coffee shop where he sat for a long while looking at different people coming and going. He found it therapeutic and engaging to study the youngsters. Later he went to Maiska's place where he found Lily chilling with Maiska. The only place he felt welcome and where he belonged was here. Maiska had kept her apartment as European as she possibly could. The welcoming strong coffee, the food, the music, the furniture, the interior; everything reminded Dr Ernst of Europe and his place.

The story mentions the theme of alienation in each and every aspect of Dr Ernst's life. He wanted to stay in India, he loved the weather, the blue sky, the lively environment, the wondrous scenery, the open hearted people; he loved India, Indians, and everything about them. But he felt alienated because he never felt accepted by the common people. His love for India is not more than his love for his culture and this makes him feel alienated in the place he wished to be in the most.

How I Became a Holy Mother and Other Stories

A Bad Woman

"A Bad Woman" is a story of an unfortunate woman named Chameli. She is someone who is a victim of fate. The first tragedy she faces is the death of her husband. The societal regulations regarding widowhood restrict her life in many ways. She tries to escape that with the help of Sethji, a middle-aged, upper middle-class man, who gave Chameli a comfortable life in exchange of fornication. He only came to Chameli when he had time. So she led a comfortable but an uneventful and dissatisfactory life.

Ravi comes in her life to bring eventful and satisfactory changes. They keep meeting when Sethji is away on business. The adultery of Chameli and Ravi looks more like true love but Chameli later realizes that she is only a small comfort in Ravi's rather unhappy and critical life; just like she is only an escape to Sethji from his busy and fast life.

Her needs and desires are ignored by all the men in her life. She tries her best to choose her own path but is rather confounded as to what is next due to the uncertainty she has had to face throughout her life. The story has an open end where Chameli ran out of her house and found a moment of solace around the sea.

The story throughout depicts the theme of both loneliness and alienation in all the major characters. Sethji wished to have the company of Chameli from time to time as he was lonely and frustrated with his life. Ravi looked for company due to his alienation from his own family where his free spirit was not appreciated. Chameli got into relationship with these two due to her circumstances and loneliness. After the death of her husband, she had continued to lead a lonely existence that she wished to get out of. The story ends with Chameli running away,

“Chameli ran away. Right out of the house, along the streets, till she got to the beach and to the sea and could get no further. She sank down at the edge of the sea where the waves roll as endlessly, as boringly as ever. But she didn’t mind them now – on the contrary, she asked for nothing better than to be allowed to sit here in peace and watch them.” (HIBHM, Jhabvala, 41)

Suffering Women

The story “Suffering Women” is about the women who, at one point of time, wished to become famous movie stars but ended up leading common lives in much a smaller scale than they had anticipated. The lead characters in the story are Anjana and Sultana. Both had dreams and ambitions but were all crushed in the face of reality.

Anjana wished to be an actress in Bollywood but ended up being a mistress to a famous movie producer. She even had a daughter with the producer. She later quit working and lived with her daughter Kiku where occasionally the producer would visit. He paid for the house, for Kiku’s education gave their daily expenses to Anjana. Though, they are not married, they are in a relationship and this information is open to his wife and family as well.

Sultana had a similar dream, she wished to be an actress like Anjana and the two had been rivals in the film industry in their younger days. Though, the way their dreams got shattered, the two became friends. The similar situations of failure in the industry made them understand each other better and become friends. They share secrets and support each other in life. Sultana ends up alone in her flat, though she still works and takes up minor roles in the movies, her personal life is very sad and lonely.

These women have the worldly riches but the lack in either personal life or love or freedom. Something is always missing. The two lead women in the story lead entirely dissimilar lives and made different decisions. Yet both end up being lonely in their respective lives. Anjana, in spite of being with the producer and having a daughter, she did not find peace in life, she was dependent on the producer for her financial needs; Sultana, who chose her career over family, fell into the depth of loneliness as she did not have any emotional support system either.

In the Mountains

“In the Mountains” is the story of a girl in her thirties named Pritam who chooses her own path. She decides live alone in the mountains to read, study, and surround herself with peace and nature. She comes from a wealthy family and has a past, but she chooses to leave it all behind and lead a life of peace and tranquility. The story depicts a couple of days in the life of Pritam when her family comes to visit her in the mountains.

The story has three major characters, Pritam, her mother and Doctor Sahib. Pritam is a simple living, high thinking kind of girl who never liked her life in the city with her family where she was expected to be just like them and be an asset to the family. She preferred the quiet and tranquil environment of the mountains where, unlike the city,

there was no one to dictate her routine and the few visitors she did have, did not mind her way of life.

Pritam's mother, on the other hand, preferred the fast and active city life where her dinner parties were a hit among her peers. She liked the environment of excitement and activity. Most importantly, she is sad for her daughter who is living a life of solitude and alienation. Pritam's mother is unable to accept the simple fact that her daughter preferred solitude.

Doctor Sahib is a quiet and simple man without many resources. He lives a little further than Pritam in the mountains. His small hut is visible from Pritam's place. He is a certified doctor who earns a small living by treating patients in the nearby village. He has his heart in studying and reads all that he could find. Though he is financially weak, he is the one and only friend and support that Pritam has in that secluded area.

The visit from her family was only for a day but the day makes her experience all the reasons for which she had left the city and came to the mountains. The story depicts the Pritam's choice to stay alienated and be happy in her own world. Her resolution to stand alone against the social norms is as strong even at the end of the story as it had been when she made the choice to live in the mountains.

A Lovesong for India

The New Messiah

There are three major characters in the story "The New Messiah," namely, Rita, Kris and Nathan Silveira. Rita and Kris are brother and sister who have always been there for each other. They lost their parents at a young age and became co-dependent soon after. The two always trust and believe in each other. They never let anyone else come

in between them. They did not have many friends or relatives and thus they never bonded with anyone else.

Nathan Silveira is a somewhat famous and critically acclaimed movie writer and director. He came to New York with an idea in his head that he wished to convert into a movie, entitled 'The Messiah'. Though, he needed producers for his idea and thus he attended a number of events to socialize, create contacts and find someone who could invest in his work.

As Nathan came to New York, he needed an assistant. Rita was offered the job on the suggestion of an acquaintance of both. The job was not that difficult for Rita and since it pay was good, she soon rented a small studio apartment and decided to call her brother Kris to live with her. The two had survived severe poverty for a long time and thus, the small, dirty, smelly apartment was almost an upgrade for them.

Rita was a dedicated young woman who worked hard to provide for herself and her brother. Though, after growing up he also tries his best to find a job and help out but his charismatic personality always attracts one or the other trouble—Rita has to intervene. Kris is attractive, smart, handsome, with deep eyes and perfect built. He always earns a number of admirers everywhere he goes.

Once Nathan met Kris, he was also mesmerized by the special charisma that Kris emits. Kris's personality affected Nathan so much that over time, he changed his idea of the Messiah and adapted it in a way so that it totally suits Kris's personality. Nathan wished that Kris should play the part in his movie but as always, Rita is a bit apprehensive of Nathan's intentions as she would be of anyone who has been mesmerized by Kris.

The story depicts the emotional state of all these characters and the primary emotion felt by them is that of loneliness and alienation. Rita is alienated from the world and wishes to hold on to Kris and yet, even when Kris is there with her, she feels lonely at times. She completely trusts her brother and never wished to force him to do anything. Nonetheless to her, he was too naive to see the bad in people.

Kris is not lonely but rather alienated from the whole world. He is aloof and disinterested, over above and beyond the material realm of this world. His charisma is rooted in the detached interest he takes in the world. He is interested in everything and at the same time remains above them all.

Nathan on the other hand was lonely and alienated in both his personal and professional life. Personally he was alone and had no one to rely on while professionally, the people he met always put their own interests before his. He was attracted to Kris's aloofness and admired him as a contemporary Messiah who could guide the world to its betterment. The struggle of the three characters with loneliness and alienation makes this story a memorable one.

5.3 Loneliness and Alienation in Lahiri's Short Stories

Interpreter of Maladies

When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine

The story "When Mr Pirzada Came to Dine" is an account of the experience of a young girl named Lilia who witnesses the painful partition of Bangladesh through the sufferings of a certain Mr Pirzada who usually had dinners at her place with her parents. Mr Pirzada was from Dacca, which was under the rule of Pakistan at the time. His family was back in Dacca and he had come abroad to finish his book.

Lilia is a young school girl in the US studying American History. She does not know much about the history of the independence struggle in India or Pakistan. Through the course of the story, her father used to tell her a lot about it to try educate her of the difficult situations that people face in Pakistan. Initially, she was uninterested, but Mr Pirzada became her biggest reference point who was worried sick about his family in East Pakistan.

Lilia noticed the little changes in the behavior of elders around her who sometimes told her the reality going on. Other times Lilia retired her to her room for her homework. She perfectly understood that the situation was serious once when she saw all the elders freeze listening to the news even though before the news they were all having a good time carving a pumpkin. The inevitability of war for the independence of East Pakistan and India's involvement in it made all the elders restless and worried about their relatives there.

The story depicts the theme loneliness through the character of Mr Pirzada who felt lonely without his family as he is abroad. The theme of alienation is depicted through Lilia, being the citizen of America and a descendent of India, faces a conflict where she wished to learn more about India but was not allowed to study it due to being in an American education system.

A Real Durwan

“A Real Durwan” is the story of Bhoori Ma who used to live in the basement of a small apartment building. She was officially the sweeper of the building but would also do little things for the people in the building in exchange of little money, food, clothes, and shelter. She acted as a watchman for the building and also takes an account of the people entering and leaving.

The story moves forward when a couple Mr and Mrs Dalal install a sink in their house as well as one in the stairwell for everyone to use. Initially, everyone is happy about it but later on it became the reason for quarrels between them. They all slowly became resentful that they can also take care of their building; Mr and Mrs Dalal are not the only ones who can work for the betterment of the building.

This pride and ego made them spend their money on the outer look of the building. One of them paid for the white wash, one for the gate and handles polish and others something or the other to make the building look more beautiful and clean. This resulted in a number of workers going in and out of the building.

Bhoori Ma initially took account of all these changes bravely, kept at her job and noticed every one of the workers, but once the workers become too many for Bhoori Ma to count, she gave up on trying to keep count of them. Because of all these workers she had to stop the sweeping and move to the rooftop for the duration of the work. She seemed to have nothing to do these days and thus, she went out for little walks and started to spend small amounts of the little money she had.

The story ends on the day the outside sink on the first floor staircase was stolen. That day when Bhoori Ma returned from her evening escapade, she found the people of the whole building outside waiting for her and discussing the issue of the theft. They ultimately decided that the building is getting better and thus, they need a Real Durwan now and the ignorance of Bhoori Ma was punished with her getting out of the building. This mishap not only cost her job but also her place to stay.

The primary emotion depicted in the story is that of loneliness and alienation. The declaration of Bhoori Ma since the beginning and the way she reminisces about her past depicts that she misses her past and the happier times that she had experienced.

Throughout the story she had been lonely but by the end, due to this incident, she became alienated from her surroundings and the people in it.

Mrs. Sen's

“Mrs Sen's” is a story about an eleven-year-old boy named Eliot who lived alone with his mother. His mother had a job that required long hours and thus he had to stay with one or the other babysitter after school till his mother came to pick him up. After being with a number of sitters, Eliot and his mother met Mrs Sen whose husband was a professor of mathematics in the university. They lived at the university campus.

Once the arrangement was made, Mrs Sen would wait for Eliot at the bus stop near her house. They both would go to Mrs Sen's house together and spend the evening there. This particular setup was made by Mr Sen to make sure that Mrs Sen would not spend much time alone. She had been born and brought up in India where she was surrounded by people all her life. The loneliness of this new life in the university with Mr Sen spending only evenings with her was a torture.

Mrs Sen's struggle with loneliness is depicted through Eliot's perspective in the story. He was the one who notices that Mrs Sen clears her spices for Indian cuisine before his mother arrives; he heard her complaining about driving on the other side of the road as opposed to India; he observes her when she wishes to find out whether she is alone or not; he may not understand most of her struggle due to his young age and inexperience, but he registers each and every change that presents itself through Mrs Sen. He tries his best to empathize with her but is unable to express himself.

The cultural difference that Mrs Sen is struggling with is not only in the social sense. She misses the day-to-day and hour-to-hour chaos of India where she lived with a

number of relatives in one house. She misses the noises of having people around. The quiet of the university campus troubles her while she wonders if she shouts would someone hear her.

Once after a minor accident where Mrs Sen and Eliot were only slightly injured, Eliot's mother stopped sending him to Mrs Sen's house, which made Mrs Sen's situation even worse. She stopped going out altogether. Since she had married Mr Sen and came abroad with him she was lonely. By the end of the story, she had alienated herself from her environment and it seems as if she was bordering on depression.

Unaccustomed Earth

Unaccustomed Earth

The story "Unaccustomed Earth" is told through the perspective of Ruma and revolves around her family. She is a lady of Indian decent, born, and brought up abroad. Her parents tried their best to give her, and her brother, Romi, an Indian upbringing. Though, since they are all living in America, the cultural influence of that place has made them part Indian and part American.

Romi lives his own life, not being bothered by familial matters. After the death of their mother, the emotional connection between Romi and his family takes a big hit. Their father tries his best to cope with the situation but is unable to form emotional connections with his children other than helping them out when needed. Loss and memories of their mother is visible in all the interactions between the family. Ruma married an American named Adam and settled in Seattle with their child named Akash.

The story starts when Ruma's father decides to visit her for a week in Seattle. The story revolves back and forth between the memories of her parents when her mother was alive and the current situation. Sometimes the contrast of the two seems alarming and sometimes it shows the adaptive nature of human which here, can be defined as survival instinct.

"Unaccustomed Earth" depicts the loneliness of Ruma and her father. Mrs Bagchi, a friend of Ruma's father, is another character whose loneliness is heartfelt and with whom Ruma's father connects due to the similarity of their situation. Ruma's father and Mrs Bagchi, both have lost their life partners and live a nomadic life where they travel for months and come back home only for a little while. They try to cope with their loneliness through new friendships and travel.

Ruma on the other hand misses her mother, thus, she is not filled with loneliness but rather have her moments where she feels lonely due to all the warm memories of her mother. She finds it difficult to imagine that her father is managing everything on his own. For a while, she feels lonely for her father.

Ruma and her father share the past, they share the loss of Ruma's mother, but are unable to connect on the basis of that loss. The week shown in the story is the first time Ruma's father visits Ruma after her mother passed. This proves to be an eye opener for Ruma about how her father has changed—in a process to cope and survive. The loneliest of the characters seem to be Ruma's father and Mrs Bagchi, who have lost their partners and yet are destined to live on. Ruma is also lonely sometimes, but she still has her family to count on. Ruma's brother, Romi remains distant. Though, much isn't discussed about him in the text, it can be assumed that their mother's death is one of the reasons for his distance.

Going Ashore

The third and final part of the trilogy, Hema and Kaushik, “Going Ashore” is a story about a chance encounter between old acquaintances, Hema and Kaushik. They were not romantically inclined when they met as teenagers in “Once Upon a Lifetime.” But in the story, “Going Ashore,” after meeting by chance at the age of thirty-seven and forty respectively, their chemistry and attraction is undeniable.

The story starts with Hema who is doing well in her career but is lonely in her personal life as she had just broken up with her then married boyfriend, Julian. In her desperation to not continue living alone, she had decided to get into an arranged marriage with Naveen, who was a PhD holder in physics just as she is a PhD holder in Egyptology. As much she tells herself that it is a love marriage as the two of them has chosen each other, she knows in her heart that it was an arranged marriage.

Kaushik, on the other hand, lives a nomadic life as a photographer. He did not want to plant roots and stay in one place, he wanted to travel and see the world. His aversion to stay in one place stems from his fear of making connections with people. He is content in being lonely. He always alienates himself from every situation he faces so as to stay objective and not feel the pain. This alienation from the world that he follows with all his heart makes him forget the importance of being with family and how to appreciate human connections.

The story moves at a pace that keeps the readers hooked and yet the characters are fully developed. Hema and Kaushik are dealt with different kinds of troubles in life. They both have learned to tackle their problems differently. This difference made Hema a lonely person and Kaushik an alienated one. As much as they wanted to be together, Hema’s loneliness and need for companionship along with Kaushik’s

unwillingness to commit to accommodate his alienation, were the true reasons that kept them apart. The story ends with a tragic accident in which Kaushik dies and Hema did not share any details of their affair with anyone and ended up marrying Naveen. The love between Hema and Kaushik found a way to exist in the world without them being together.

All the aforementioned stories depict the theme of Loneliness and Alienation. It is clear through the study that the theme is an important one. In contemporary times, usually the first and foremost indicator of any kind of personal struggle of a character is their behavioral traits. Loneliness and alienation are also emotions that dictate the behavior of the character. The stories show the importance of the emotions and emotional intelligence. The contemporary times are filled with struggle and despair; the human struggle is not only physical anymore, the emotional and personal issues take precedence over only physical survival. The emotional and personal growth of a character occurs only after they face their own challenges in the world.

CHAPTER – 6

COMMONNESS OF THE COMMON

6.1 A Study of Commonness of the Common

6.2 Commonness of the Common in Short Stories of Jhabvala

6.3 Commonness of the Common in Short Stories of Lahiri

Chapter 6

COMMONNESS OF THE COMMON

6.1 A Study of the Commonness of the Common

The common person is a simple phenomenon but as everything else in nature, its making is complex. Everything naturally available is simple, as every person on Earth is habitual of the things that nature provides us; but to truly understand them, one needs to uncover the way they are made and kept in the world.

The simple desires of a common man include food, a family, financial security, a house, a car, mental peace, personal happiness, social respect, and so on. These are all small and meaningful things that provide a sense of completion in life.

To understand the inner workings of the common public, their emotional and mental state must be studied. Common people are identified with their limited means and simple desires. There are a number of traits mostly seen in common people. Not all of these are present in all of them, but a different combination of these positive and negative traits makes a common person. Mentioned here are a few positive traits of a common person that makes them special:

Generosity—is giving not only in monetary terms. Generosity is a trait that makes a person happy to help. A generous person is mostly approachable and willing to provide; not at the cost of personal loss, but as much as they can without hurting anyone. Generous people share money, thoughts, words, influence, attention, time and things. Generosity is the reason humans are able to live in the society, which is made up of individuals who are willing to help each other in times of need.

Integrity; it means the quality of being honest and having strong moral values. It is the trait that makes the people of the society reliable and thus binds them together. It creates trust between humans. Loyalty is another similar quality that supports the society and makes people trustworthy.

Devotion is the quality of great love or the act of giving time and energy to somebody or something. It is the quality that motivates people to be loyal towards their family, society, state, and country.

Love the best quality of all that is the real reason for humans to connect with each other and form groups and societies in which people support and motivate each other. Love is the basis of all the connections in the world.

Kindness is only second to love. It spreads from one person to other through action. When one person shows kindness to another, it motivates others to behave in the same giving way. Kindness makes the society a better place to live in.

Sincerity is the quality that means with being true to one's own words. A person is known to be sincere when he/she believes what they say and shows what they really mean or feel. It makes people believable and trustworthy.

Self-control is the ability to keep one's thoughts, emotions and words in check and appear calm even when one is angry, sad, excited, happy, afraid, and so on. This self-restraint makes the society calmer and better.

Peaceful indicates someone who is calm, quiet and content. It describes a person who wishes to avoid arguments, violence, and war. When people in the society are peaceful and loving, the society becomes harmonious to live in.

Faithful means with being true to the facts, accurate, and/or always supporting and staying with a person, belief or organization. The quality of faithfulness instills a positive connection between the members of society.

Patience is an amazing quality that enables a person to tolerate difficult situations even when it takes a long time to improve conditions.

Determination is the quality that enables the beholder to be focused on one specific goal or purpose.

Persistence is the continuous action to accomplish that purpose. These two qualities support each other and motivate other people to follow the positive ideas that help in the betterment of the society.

Open-minded is a simple trait that makes people accept different perspectives even when one does not agree with them. It enables the society to have people with multiple views and beliefs to live together and thrive.

Fair is the quality of being appropriate in a particular situation; being just in the face of law and order; and treating each side or person with equality.

Cooperative means with being helpful to each other or any task that is done together by the people working together. An ideal society is where people are cooperative, helpful and support each other.

Some other related traits are being tolerant, spiritual, and optimistic and many more. But a person is not only positive, they also have gray and negative shades to them. Again, not everyone has all of these negative attributes; people have a combination of both positive and negative traits. It does not mean that these people bad, it just makes them imperfect which in turn makes them human. Some of the negative traits are

mentioned here, a few here are the exact opposite of the positive ones that has been mentioned above:

Dishonest is a person who cannot be trusted, who lies, steals, or cheat and one who lacks honesty and integrity.

Disloyal is someone who does not support the group they live in; be it their friends, family, colony, society or country; at times, they might even try to harm them. Dishonesty and disloyalty are the reason for people to lose trust in each other and become skeptic.

Impatience is a not so negative, per se, but is definitely annoying to the people around. It means with someone who does not stay calm while waiting for something or is easily annoyed when something is slower than expected.

Greed is a trait that makes people lose grasp of the understanding of what belongs to them and what does not. People who try and take something that belong to others are known as greedy.

Pessimistic is a person who sees the negative side of everything; someone who is marked by distrust and disbelief; who always sees the glass half empty; one who lacks hope and joy; who sees the worst in things and always thinks that the worst will happen. It negatively affects the life of the person socially, mentally and personally.

Cruel means with someone who causes pain to others, be it physical or mental; someone who does not have humane feelings; who inflicts pain or suffering to others. Maliciousness is similar to being cruel as it means with having desires to cause someone harm. The person who is cruel and malicious is a pain for the society and is usually hated by the others.

Merciless is someone who does not easily forgive others. This kind of attitude supports the hatred in the society and makes the place difficult to live in.

Narcissistic is a personality disorder where a person has an inflated sense of their importance; lack of empathy for others; a deep need for attention and admiration; and have a sense of entitlement. It is difficult to live with a narcissistic person and more so when they are in a position of power.

Being unkind, mean, petty, rude, abrasive and disrespectful, all relate to being unpleasant, unfriendly and difficult to deal with. All these traits are not appreciated in society as they create an unhappy environment where it becomes idiotic to expect love and support from others. This creates an air of dissatisfaction in the society.

Obnoxious, quarrelsome, caustic, selfish, are a few other negative traits that hurt the self and the people around. It is difficult to fight the negative traits that make a person negative, but there are examples in life and literature that support the idea that every individual is unique and can make their own destiny. They can usually choose how they behave and react. All these positive and negative traits belong to all the humans in general.

All these qualities not only affect the society but the self as well. The person, who holds these qualities, gets affected by these too. Their standard of living, their thought process, their quality of life, their peace, their happiness—all spheres of life are affected. It is to be noted that one can change according to their wishes and enhance the qualities they want in them and submerge the traits that they wish to minimize. In this situation, one must choose wisely. A person can choose to lead a happy life or a sad one according to their choices.

Other than positive and negative traits, leadership traits also play an important role in the life of a person. These include confidence, dominance, boldness, persuasion, authoritarianism, ambition, resourcefulness, enthusiasm, charisma, being proactive, decisiveness, and many more. Anyone who has even a few of these qualities has the means to make a good life for themselves.

Children, on the other hand, have an entirely different personality. Though, children start to show the positive, negative and leadership traits from a young age, they also have a playful side to them that provides them with a number of traits that grownups sometimes lack. These include being playful, active, zany, silly, funny, wild, affectionate, talkative, fidgety, lively, stubborn, rough, rowdy, shy, smart, joyful, and so on.

In the literary fiction, characters are classified as heroic characters, villainous characters, romantic characters and so on. All these have their own set of character traits that makes them different from the rest.

Heroic characters are the usually the main character in the story who tend to be on the good side. They stand for all that is just and are stoic and gentlemanly. Character traits of a heroic character are strong, courageous, dauntless, fearless, daring, brave, reliable, tough, and so on.

Villainous characters are the antagonist or the anti-hero in a story. As the name suggests, they stand for all that is wrong and negative. These characters are sometimes written in a way that highlights the goodness of the hero. Character traits of a villainous character are evil, cunning, murderous, vengeful, deceptive, immoral, maniacal, and so on.

Romantic characters, also known as the love interest, can be any of the character in the story, including heroic character, villainous character, stock character, major character, minor character, or any other. Character traits of a romantic character include wit, charm, affection, sentimentality, charisma, intensity and so on.

Any kind of character can be a common character as some of the traits of a common man are always present on each character. This idea behind studying the commonness of the common character is to highlight the traits that makes a human relate to another; to analyze how the simple and controlled character becomes a protagonist or an antagonist; to focus on how a character confines to the traits of commonness and yet can rise to a pedestal of a hero.

6.2 Commonness of the Common in Short Stories of Jhabvala

Like Birds, Like Fishes

A Loss of Faith

“A Loss of Faith” is a simple story of a common man, named Ram Kumar, who works as a shop assistant for years at the same shop with the same employer. His familial conditions keeps changing through this time but his one constant has always been the trust his employer has placed in him over the years.

The story begins when Ram Kumar is a young boy living in pitiful conditions with his four siblings, mother, uncle, aunt, their kids and grandmother. His father died at a young age leaving him and his family dependent on his uncle. As his elder brother, Vijay, grew up, their mother hoped that Vijay would earn and take her away from this toxic environment, where she and her children were all tortured, fights were frequent as they were basically considered a bother to the uncle and his family.

Vijay ended up in bad company and became a freeloader in the uncle's family. After a while he ran away to only came back after two years to meet and leave to live his own life. After this betrayal from Vijay, all the hopes their mother had were shifted to Ram Kumar who was a slender and quiet young boy. He was not suitably built to do manual labor, but by chance, he got a job as a shop assistant. Initially, he was hired as an errand boy, but due to his interest, hard work and love for the shop, he became a shop assistant after only a year.

After a while, Ram Kumar, his mother and two sisters moved to a separate house. Due to his job and the money he earned, he became the master of the house. But when Vijay visited, he still treated Ram Kumar as he always had. Vijay came and left according to his convenience. He never bothered to ask whether he was welcome or not.

At the right age, Ram's mother chooses a bride for him. Initially, the marriage is a happy one. Later on, it becomes unpleasant and toxic; so much so that Ram's wife even starts making advances towards Vijay and casts Ram out from her interest. To witness this hurts both Ram and his mother.

The situation turns bitter when his uncle dies and his aunt and grandmother start to live with Ram and his family. The climax of the story happens with Vijay's sudden and tragic death. The family all mourn at the loss of their family member. Later, Ram's mother developed a disease and money had to be spent for her treatment.

Throughout his life, he never questioned his employer, never asked his salary to be raised, never lost his devotion for his work, never became bitter towards life, even though he was in the worst of situations. But his mother's sickness made him want

more money. The overall stress of the household held him accountable to earn more. When he asked his employer, he was denied.

The final act of the story is the one where Ram Kumar is in the shop setting up another porcelain doll when all of a sudden he felt extreme rage for everything that has happened to him and his family. He did not even realize when he expressed all that rage on that poor doll. He broke it into pieces. This is his one and only act of rebellion.

The theme commonness of the common is depicted in each and every scene of the story as it is a story of a simple common man. His aspirations, his troubles, his simple desires, his controlled emotions, his dispassionate demeanor, his underrated life and everything related to him screams of a common man phenomenon. The simple yet impactful life of Ram Kumar makes the reader aware of the troubles of a lower middle class man who never had a chance at happiness other than his job which was basically a satisfaction to him and a break from his miserable life.

The Award

The story “The Award” is about the experience of Dev Prakash who is a celebrated poet in England and in India. His works are also a prominent theme for the research scholars and nationalists. This story records a morning in Dev Prakash’s life where he finds out that he will be awarded the next Academy Award. Dev Prakash prefers a simple lifestyle in India; he does not like fancy clothes, garden parties, and the phony Indianness that people like to show off. He does not own any silk shirts rather he prefers handloom cotton.

This particular morning a young man came to meet Dev Prakash in hopes of completing his PhD about Dev Prakash's works. For a few years he was exiled from India and he stayed in England. The young man asked him questions about the poetry that Dev Prakash has written in England. This remains Dev Prakash of his experience in England. His most celebrated poem is entitled "My Country Is a Rose in My Heart."

While explaining the circumstance in which this particular poem was written, he states that while an exile from his own country he didn't suffer in day-to-day life, rather he enjoyed his life in England. He found friends there, who met up regularly, talked about poetry and enjoyed their lovely evenings. Nevertheless, being an exile from his own country was an ache in his heart throughout his experience in England. He suffered not in the day-to-day life but his existence in total. That is what inspired his poem—"My Country Is a Rose in My Heart."

Considering the theme, commonness of the common, this story depicts Dev Prakash and the PhD aspirant as common men. Their attachments are towards different things. Dev Prakash is attached to India—his love for India and poetry is what makes him a poet. Whereas the PhD aspirant has his family to support, his financial needs are more important to him than the literary advancement he will achieve after his PhD. Both of them represent different sides of a common man. One is completely focused on the emotional and personal being of the self whereas the other does each and every thing for his family.

There are other minor characters in the story as well. These are Usha, Aruna, and Minister Gokhale out of which Usha and Aruna are present to celebrate the news of the award to be given to Dev Prakash while Minister Gokhale is the person through

whom Aruna found out about the award. Through Dev Prakash conversations with Usha and Aruna the reader find out about Dev Prakash as a character and his individuality. This story mentions a simple yet impactful day in the life of Dev Prakash.

The Sixth Child

The story “The Sixth Child” mentions the experience of a simple shop owner, Babu Ram, on the day of the birth of his sixth child. The story is written through the perspective of Babu Ram and how he deals with his anxiety. On the morning his wife’s labor started, he describes his feelings as being awkward, useless, unwanted as also embarrassed in his own house.

Babu Ram tries his best to spend his day as normally as possible. He asks about the regular store information, works on his accounts books and does not give any reason to his subordinate question his state of mind; but this does not last for long. His anxiety gets the best of him and he ends up leaving the store earlier than usual. Even if to just get away from the questioning eyes of his subordinates.

After having five daughters, everyone he knows tells him to be hopeful for a boy this time; every time he responds with a simple yes and says nothing more. He loves his daughters dearly and wants to give them the world, but he also longs for a boy of his own, his son. As the social rules dictate, he wished his son to ignite the fire to his funeral pyre. But also, he wished to be able to bring the young boy to his shop, go out with him, have him in the shop wearing a little dhoti and hat pretending to be the shopkeeper, teach him the worldly ways, trust him to take care of him in his old age and most importantly, to be a man in the house with him.

People say that the sins of this life hinder in the process of fulfilling one's heartfelt desires. Thinking this, Babu Ram remembered his old uncle who had stayed with him for the longest time, both at home and at the shop. He had him cast out of the family when he found out that the old man was stealing money from the shop. He had always felt that it was a wrong thing for him to have done.

This time, when his sixth child was about to be born, he wished nothing more to rectify his mistakes and become worthy of a son. Thus, he leaves the shop early and goes to get the old man back to his place that was living with a few of his distant relatives. The old man was extremely happy to see him. He did not even have to ask for the old man to come with him, he was instantly ready and left for Babu Ram's place. He believed that this simple act has absolved all his past sins and made him worthy of a son.

Happily, reached his place with the old man at his tail, hoping to receive the good news of his son; but when he reached home, it was quiet all over, signifying the birth of a girl. His hopes for having a boy are shattered, but the moment he holds his little girl in his arms, he falls in love with her and welcomes her wholeheartedly in his life. Just like his other five girls. The old man and Babu Ram are both happy to be in the house and are filled with happiness.

The text talks about the superstitions and ideologies, traits and misconceptions of the common man. How a society is shaped into one or the other idea is an interesting way to understand the development of social conceptions. Many a time in the text, God is referred to as the one who decides and fate as the ultimate doer, this helps a man resign and accept the situations in a better and graceful manner.

Independence

The story “Independence” tells the life of an Indian lady, Sumitra, her daughter, Monika, and granddaughter, Kuku. The story revolves around the idea of independence and what it meant for all these women of different generations from the same family.

Sumitra was the daughter of a wealthy businessman who lived in Bombay in the pre-independence era. Sumitra had a foreign education—studied abroad in British boarding schools. She had all the etiquette and behavioral mannerisms to well equip her to handle international guests and organize their welcome parties.

She was married to Harry who lived in Delhi, and she became an integral part of the political personnel’s social circles. Initially, she and Harry went to these parties together that Sumitra had organized that were an amalgamation of western comfort and Indian tradition. Later on, he stopped going altogether, as he was never comfortable there.

She became the hostess to great all the foreign nationals, she took their wives shopping and knew all the best places to buy the Indian handicrafts thus used to stay away from her home and family most of the time. This affected her family life and both Harry and her daughter Monika became estranged towards her.

Monika was always overshadowed by her mother’s huge persona; though, she had always appreciated her in front of the world, she was filled with rage and anger against her. She believed that throughout her life she had to walk the path her mother had chosen for her and was refused true independence due to her. She believed all her problems were because of her mother and her loose behavior. She never voiced these

concerns and only in front of her daughter Kuku did she say how she truly felt about her.

Kuku was a modern girl with a satisfactory life she led away from both her mother and grandmother. Though they did not question her choices, she had to move to Mumbai for both her job and her love. She lived in Mumbai with her boyfriend and worked as a filmmaker.

These three women of the same family from different generations wished to attain independence and freedom. Though they belong to an upper class family of modern India who are rich and liberal, they still had to struggle and create their own world where they were free. Their struggle is similar to common people thus, even though the story discusses the life of a rich family, the story deals with the theme of commonness of the common.

The Temptress

“The Temptress” is the story of an old lady, usually known as Ma, who went to New York on the insistence of Tammy and Minnie. She came to New York at the ripe age of over sixty and stayed for a long while. She is said to be an ordinary Indian housewife but to Minnie, Tammy and her followers, she has extraordinary powers.

The young generation in New York was mesmerized by the Indian spiritual leaders and wished to have them around. The people in the West many times asked one or the other spiritual Guru to join them and managed to arrange for the fare and stay so that they could have an introduction to spirituality.

Minnie was one such impressed person who wished to bring Ma to New York and arranged for her to stay with her but soon she grew out of her fascination and asked

her to leave. She was impressed by the spiritual and personal connection that Ma makes with her followers.

However, once she had to live with her in the same house, she hated the scent of her hair oil, her cooking, having her followers around and the voice of her singing every morning. which was enough to wake up the whole neighborhood. She soon decided that her house is not a place for Ma and asked her to leave.

Ma then moved to Tammy's place where again she stayed for a while. But by that time, Tammy and Minnie both had made plans to join another spiritual preacher called Doktor. He was soon to come to them and stay with either Tammy or Minnie. And so Ma had to find another place to stay.

This tussle of moving from one place to another never really affected Ma as she was all aware and accepting of God's plan. Though, Ross, who was one of Minnie's and Tammy's friends, turned out to be her savior and helped her manage to find a new place to live.

The story has a theme of Commonness of the Common at its core as the story throughout discusses the troubles, adventures and fascinations of a common man. The spiritual enlightenment that the youth seek is also something common in contemporary society. It is hard to find it and so the public follow the spiritual Gurus. The story depicts that even when one finds a Guru, this discovery does not guarantee spiritual success.

A Stronger Climate

In Love with a Beautiful Girl

“In Love with a Beautiful Girl” is a story about a young, twenty-five-year-old gentleman named Richard, who is a British diplomat in India. He was good at his job and spent his leisure time with other diplomats and their parties. He did not like them much. Unlike his preference, they did not truly understand the Indian ways though he was sincerely so fond of them. He was bored because he and other diplomats lived their life just as if they were back in their country; not nearly following the lifestyle of India.

Ruchira, on the other hand, was an Indian girl, brought up with a British inspired household. Her father was an Oxford alumnus, her mother a hierarchical princess, and her house was inspired by the grandiosity of the British and Indian traditions. Though, she was born and brought up in India, her parents had provided her with the freedoms of a British household. They wished to have a modern educated daughter who was able to survive and flourish in the western world.

When Richard met Ruchira, he felt as if all his imaginings had come to life. He met her at a point in his life where he had lost interest in India, the diplomat parties, the pseudo British society that they wish to create around him, the inability to connect to India at a grass root level; all these had made him unhappy. In fact, he wished to leave both his job and India. Ruchira was a breath of fresh air for him. She inspired him to take interest in India again. She was his muse whenever he listened to Indian music, Indian history, Indian folktales and studied Indian art and architecture.

Richard was smitten and spent much time with Ruchira. Whenever he went to her place, he first had a chat with her father, sometimes tea with her mother, he liked when he and Ruchira sat at the patio swing overlooking the garden. He preferred to spend time with her alone. Still, she wanted to go out, meet people at parties, watch movies, discuss and find new things; every time they were together, she wished he would take her out. Richard never stopped from being what she wanted.

Ruchira liked him too, but never explicitly expressed her feelings; she only hinted at the things that he could do for her. Many times she tried to gauge what he could provide for her and even hinted that she could marry him if he could provide her with all she needed. Their love was not one-sided but Richard's admiration towards Ruchira was way more than hers towards him.

Though, the story talks of two separate cultures, the love described in the story is has all the common traits and indications of a young love, be it from any culture. The attraction felt by Richard and Ruchira, the mild expressions of love, the ignorance towards social rules and the belief in one true love; all that that these two feel are examples of commonness of the common.

6.3 Commonness of the Common in Short Stories of Lahiri

Unaccustomed Earth

A Choice of Accommodations

“A Choice of Accommodations” is a simple yet impactful story of how a couple searches for a spark in their relationship, which has grown stagnant with time. In this story a two-day incident is depicted, where the lead couple, Amit and Megan go out to attend one of Amit's old friend's wedding. The two days that they spent in the quite

simple hotel are filled with emotional turmoil and shows how distant they have become. Yet the story is also filled with anecdotes and memories that show that the love in their relationship is still strong and thriving.

Amit and Megan's relationship is strained, stagnant, and somewhat lethargic for both of them. There is a hint of loneliness in their lives where they both feel as if they are on their own. Initially, there seems to be a lack of dependency on each other. But, as the story develops, the relationship is shown to be way stronger. The story shows, how two people who are so in love with each other can drift apart, but even then, a little effort and adjustment can bring out their love and affections.

Marital problems are common in every household. The intensity of these problems is the parameter to decide whether a couple can handle the situation themselves or if they need help. This particular story, "A Choice of Accommodations," deals with the problem of a stagnant relationship and habitual behaviors; where Amit and Meghan have let their love be buried deep under and let the social, personal, and mental stresses take over.

The two days depicted in the story shows how a little distance from the worldly issues and stress makes one remember their connection with each other. As a common couple, Amit and Meghan have made many mistakes in their lives. They are angry with each other and yet they choose to stay together; not because of their kids, social pressure or habit, but, because of their love and affection.

Once in a Lifetime 6

"Once in a Lifetime" is a story narrated through the perspective of Hema. At the time she is a young girl of thirteen. The whole story revolves around the feelings Hema has

for the unwanted (on her part) guest in her house. Hema's parents, living in Cambridge, decide to entertain their old friends as guests for a month's stay. They are three people, father, mother and their son. In this story the names of any of these people are not disclosed. Hema, being a young girl, always refer to them as "you," "your mother," "your father," "my mother" and "my father."

The story continues on a steady pace where Hema narrates her experience with the family. All her emotions about the young boy; the attraction of the first meeting, the irritation on giving him her room to stay, the dissatisfaction of not being able to communicate, the happiness of finally spending time with him, and the fear of being in on the secret that his family was hiding; are expressed beautifully in the text.

This story depicts the theme of commonness where all the emotions of the young Hema are depicted as a part of growing up and adjusting with the new people. The experience of meeting an attractive boy for the first time and the subsequent emotional turmoil faced by Hema depicts her as a common young girl.. The families portray how people change with time and situations. The story ends with the boy telling Hema about his dying mother and Hema crying with fear of being in the same house as her. This reaction also shows the theme of commonness in youngsters.

The theme Commonness of the Common is one that is present in most contemporary works as the stories revolve around the common public. The theme is important to study as the stories of the common public are just as inspiring as that of the celebrated world level leaders, champions, artists or professionals. They may be people from middle or lower class, without an abundance of money, fame or leisure, but their struggle is nothing less and their small victories are just as important for the peace and

development of the world. The few such stories detailed above are those depicting the common people, their struggles, their victories and their failures.

CHAPTER – 7

CONCLUSION(s)

7.1 A Critical Analysis of Core Chapters

7.2 Original Findings

7.3 Relevance to Modern Literature

7.4 Future Scope of the Study

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION(S)

7.1 A Critical Analysis of Core Chapters

The first chapter starts with understanding the ideas of Rootedlessness, Rootlessness, Short Story, Diaspora and Comparative Literature. It further moves to stating a note about the lives and works of the selected authors; that is, Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Jhumpa Lahiri. This chapter ends with the literature review of the selected topic.

The second chapter is a core chapter that specifically deals with one of the major themes of the study that is Conflict. The chapter starts with explaining concept of conflicting emotions. The meaning of Conflict and Emotions are explained separately, with their classifications and theories required to understand them. The next part of the chapter briefly discusses the stories in the selected texts that deal with the concept of conflicting emotions.

The third chapter discusses the theme of Familial Discord. The different types of families and their impact on the young adults are explained in this chapter. Later, the term Discord is dealt with in great detail to understand how discord works in a family setting. The chapter tries to find the various reasons of discord as given in the selected texts. The stories that have familial discord as their primary theme are briefly discussed and analyzed.

The fourth chapter is entitled Associative Juncture. Here the theme of associative juncture is explained in detail while focusing on the impact it created on the people who are under the said association. The relations between the people who associate

with each other are analyzed in the selected texts. The chapter briefly discusses the short stories by the selected authors that discuss the theme of associative juncture.

The fifth chapter is Loneliness and Alienation. The chapter starts with explaining the concept of Loneliness, its personal and social impact then continues to study ways to counter as also cope with it. Later, the concept of Alienation is dealt in a similar manner to find its causes and effects on people. The two terms are then compared and their similarities and dissimilarities are also delineated. The chapter goes on to briefly mention all the stories from the selected texts that depict the theme of Loneliness and Alienation. .

The sixth and last core chapter is entitled Commonness of the Common. In this chapter the traits of a common person are explained. All the positive and negative traits found in common people are outlined in the chapter along with the social implications of those traits. The chapter goes further with a brief discussion of the stories that depict the commonness of the common.

7.2 Original Findings

The study found that Lahiri and Jhabvala both interpret conflict in their own unique ways. All the types of conflicts that are discussed initially in the chapter are clearly depicted in the stories of both the authors. The importance of conflicting emotions and their impact on the life of the characters is found, which is at times positive and at times negative.

Considering the theme of Familial Discord, the study found that the complexity of family relations is beautifully depicted in the above mentioned stories by both Jhabvala and Lahiri. It is a challenge to understand the theme of Familial Discord

completely as in a familial setting all kinds of the emotions are included in every single episode. It includes all the emotions like, love, affection, dissatisfaction, anger, hatred, and many more.

The study unravels the importance of understanding Associative Juncture to include perceiving contemporary ways of life—the human relations, the difference of personal, social and professional relations, and most importantly, the ways these relations affect the characters.

It is clear through the study that the theme of Loneliness and Alienation is an important one. In contemporary times, usually the first and foremost indicator of any kind of personal struggle of a character is their behavioral traits. Loneliness and alienation are also conditions that dictate the behavior of the character. The stories illustrate the importance of emotions and emotional intelligence.

The study also discovered that the theme Commonness of the Common is one that is present in most of contemporary works as the stories revolve around the common public. The theme is important to study as the stories of the common public are just as inspiring as that of the world recognized leaders, champions, artists or professionals.

It is important to note that the characters in the said stories may be people from the middle or lower class, without an abundance of money, fame or leisure, still their struggles are nothing less while their small victories are just as important for the peace and progress of the world.

In the short stories of both the writers the theme of nostalgia is apparent. It is reflected in the portrayal of major and minor characters—they want to keep a connection to

their native land. Though coming back to their native land is not an option most of the time, the first generation migrants still wish to visit their homeland.

The stories reflect feelings of alienation, isolation, and rootlessness even in the second and third generation of migrants as forefathers of some of the characters were settled in the foreign land on account of different reasons such as better job prospects, better lifestyle, or any other family obligations. These characters of later generations also felt a connection towards their ancestral land and a kind of detachment towards the land they have lived on.

The present study also found that when Indians landed in foreign countries they found the new places to be emotionally, physically, and environmentally different from their homeland and psychologically became victim of rootlessness as they were not fully accepted. However, their next generation(s), they were deeply rooted in their foreign land of work and attained satisfactory professional status in the society. Nonetheless still, being of Indian origin, they have a great fascination towards their ancestral homes.

The study disclosed problems and challenges related to personal and professional life of Indian Diaspora and how they cope with that in personal and social life. The study also highlighted India's great culture and heritage that Indian immigrants are increasingly promoting through various traditional socio-cultural activities and celebrations.

The study also revealed the quest for self and identity conflicts within the Indian Diaspora community. Most of the characters living abroad or foreigners living in India, all suffer from identity crises while they try to find themselves in the new

environment. The study also found the impact of this geographical change on the characters.

The research also unfolded the Indian Diaspora community lives in foreign lands without making any discrimination in the name of caste, creed, and religion. Accordingly it represents a microcosm profile of mini India.

The study highlighted the Indian community even living at a foreign land has not kept aside the essence of family values they share, care, and respect each other like most of the Indians in India.

Through the study of these short stories, it is evident that the situation of women is better in the west. The women in India are oppressed and docile, and the ones who take their rights seriously and try to lead a life of freedom, lose the familial front and have to survive alone; whereas, in the west, a considerable number of the women are able to attain both freedom and family.

The outcomes also provide ground for the hypothesis of this study. The hypothesis taken up at the initial stages of the study is “Rootedness and rootlessness are prominent themes in the select short stories by Jhumpa Lahiri and Ruth Praver Jhabvala.” After completing the research, the outcome proves that rootedness and rootlessness are prominent themes in the works of Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Jhumpa Lahiri. Be it any of the short stories by the selected authors, the hypothesis stands true and positive.

7.3 Relevance to Modern Literature

With the social and economic development in the modern age, the literary world also witnessed growth and flourished with an increase in writing and publishing

opportunities. In case of short stories in India, proper development started only after the independence. This study is important as it deals with the authors who wrote in contemporary times with an understanding and exposure to the world.

The modern literature incorporate themes like inner conflict, realism, naturalism, urbanization, globalization, psychological awareness, social reformation, identity crises, alienation, loneliness, familial problems and the like. These themes are prominent in the works of Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Jhumpa Lahiri. The study of these themes helps in better understanding of the contemporary literature.

Like the themes, the characters of these works are relevant in the study of the contemporary literature. Characters depicted in the present study are a blend of Indian sensibilities with the modern western world. Some characters are old who provide an insight into the past; some are young who help in creating a premonition of the future; and the rest are youth who display the reality of their time. The true sense of their time can easily be deciphered through the characters described during a specific time frame.

Along with themes, this study is helpful in understanding the social principles of the contemporary times. The study provides an idea of the society of the time through its characters and situations. The actions and reactions of a character explain the psychological and social aspects of its time.

The social and personal situations depicted in the selected texts depict the characteristic traits of the contemporary literary themes. At first glance, its relevance seems to be limited as it only discusses the themes in the short stories of the select writers. But once the text is scrutinized, it is reflected that the present study has its importance in the present literary world and in the future as well. After the above

discussion, it is clear that this study helps the readers to create a better understanding of the contemporary literature.

7.4 Future Scope of the Study

There is tremendous scope in the field of comparative literature where the selected works can be compared to other prominent writers on the basis of different themes. This study discusses the themes of and related to rootedness and rootlessness. There are a multitude of other themes that can be studied in the future. The other contemporary themes of identity crises, history on a personal level, religious level and community level, impact of technology, intertextuality, and many more can be studied in the selected text.

This study was focused on two select authors; the same themes can be analyzed in the works of other contemporary Indian Diaspora writers; and in the works of other writers as well. The works can be compared to the works of international writers including American writers, Canadian writers, Anglo-Indian writers, African writers, Afro-American writers, and the writers of all ethnicities who write in English. The works may be compared to the translated works of different languages as well.

The linguistic part of the text had not yet been explored where the structural composition of the text shall be analyzed on the basis of different literary theories. Theories like Structuralism, Deconstruction, Chomsky's theory of universal grammar, and so on can be applied to these works along with the speech and language development theory of behavioral, nativistic, semantic-cognitive and socio-pragmatic study. The application of linguistic theories opens the text to lexical and semantic understanding.

The study can be extended to the other literary works of the select writers as well. The authors have also written a number of novels and essays other than the short stories selected for this study. Ruth Praver Jhabvala has worked as a script writer, novelist, essayist and more. Jhumpa Lahiri on the other hand, had written novels, essays and short stories; she has started writing in Italian and her Italian novels can be studied under translation studies.

This opens the bounds of comparative literature in multiple languages as well. With the study of translation, these works can be compared to the writers of other languages. The themes of contemporary literature are similar throughout the world. The translation study also helps understand the difference between cultures and societies.

Through the comparative study of texts of different languages, the social and cultural aspects of different nations and societies can be unveiled and the social relevance of the texts is found. The intricacies of human nature can be found in literature throughout the world. As literature is the depiction of the contemporary society.

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