



***TRANSFORMATION OF FUNCTIONAL FAMILY AND
RECONSTRUCTION OF HOME IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S THE LOWLAND***

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By

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**Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Management Universiti
Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts**

November 2017

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

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November 2017

Chairman : Rosli Talif, PhD
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Jhumpa Lahiri, an American writer with South Asian origin, has continued writing about immigrant families and their attempt to construct home in her latest novel *The Lowland* shortlisted for 2013 Man Booker Prize. Lahiri can be uniquely categorized among the immigrant writers dealing with “imaginary homeland.” In this dissertation, I specifically focus on how Lahiri extends the concept of “home” by showing her main character trying to create his “imaginary homeland” in America, while his beloved brother in India is fighting to reconstruct their homeland by joining Naxalite Movement ended up being executed, while the parents are forced to witness the scene. The concept of “Home” used in this dissertation is discussed through the theories of Rosemary Marangoly George, which is here connected to “Social Imaginary” or “imagination as social practice” defined by Arjun Appadurai, connoting that our world shifts as we move from one place to another. The idea of “ethnoscape” defined by Appadurai will be discussed in this research in order to show how Lahiri depicts the stability and flow of these characters’ life affected by immigration. Moreover, the notion of family and family structure transformation for immigrants is under scrutinization in this research work exploring the ways in which Lahiri attempts to depict immigration changing the structures of the families, which is resulted from the global movement of people.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sastera

**TRANSFORMASI SERTA PENGUBAHSUAIAN SEBUAH KELUARGA
DAN RUMAH DI JHUMPA LAHIRI'S *THE LOWLAND***

Oleh

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Jhumpa Lahiri, penulis Amerika yang berasal dari Asia Selatan telah meneruskan karyanya tentang keluarga pendatang asing dan usaha mereka untuk membina rumah dalam novel terbaharunya *The Lowland* yang tersenarai dalam Anugerah Man Booker 2013. Lahiri boleh diklasifikasikan dalam kalangan penulis pendatang asing berunsurkan “fiksyen sesebuah tanah air”. Dalam disertasi ini, saya bertumpu kepada konsep “rumah” yang diadaptasikan oleh Lahiri sebagai watak utama dengan kewujudan “tanah khayalan” di Amerika, sebaliknya saudara maranya telah dibunuh di India ketika memperjuangkan negara menyertai Pergerakan Naxalite. Konsep “rumah” yang dibincangkan dalam disertasi ini berlandaskan teori Rosemary Marangoly George, yang berkait rapat dengan “fiksyen sosial” atau “fiksyen sebagai amalan sosial” yang membawa maksud kepada geseran dunia berlaku apabila kita berpindah dari satu tempat ke tempat yang lain dijelaskan oleh Arjun Appadurai. Idea “ethnoscape” yang ditakrifkan oleh Appadurai dalam artikelnya “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy” akan dibincangkan dalam kajian ini untuk mengaitkan bagaimana Lahiri menggambarkan kestabilan dan aliran kehidupan watak-watak ini yang terjejas kerana imigrasi. Tambahan itu, dengan transformasi dan perubahan struktur keluarga serta keluarga pendatang asing adalah dibawah pengawasan diselidik dalam disertasi ini bagaimana Lahiri menggambarkan imigrasi mengubah struktur keluarga yang berpunca daripada pergerakan rakyat secara global. Keupayaan watak utama menadaptasi watak utama dengan wujudnya persamaan kolektif yang mengakibatkan berlakunya “kewujudan krisis kepunyaan” digambarkan oleh Lahiri di dalam bukunya *The Lowland*.

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This thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Let me return to my hometown entombed in grass as in a warm and high sea.

Giorgio Bassani, "Saluto a Roma"

Today's world is changing frequently due to globalization and the progression of technology. The amazing speed of this progression has enabled people to communicate face to face though they are thousands of kilometers away from each other. Also through air traveling everyone can make choices about places where they want to live or work. This is how migration has grown, even though it is not a new issue in the world. Migration has also been expanded by colonization that often creates a setting which results in the migration of large numbers of people. The rest of migrations were due to finding a better vision and opportunity, though migrants were not aware of the point that by arriving in the new land they will face a new culture and home which is totally different from what they knew in their homeland. These people always feel a sense of being rootless due to the displacement. Facing the problem of being stunned by the culture of the majority these people stick to whatever little they have of their home and culture.

Since fifty years ago, a vast number of Indian-origin authors have written about the issues related to immigration in their novels. Though mostly fiction, their works of literature offers a varied and valuable view of what life is like in other countries for first and second generation of immigrant. Most of them offer up usual themes about balances between new and old, loyalty to family and the difficulty faced once settled. Among Indian novelists, Jhumpa Lahiri, an emigrant writer, has been addressed as "the public face and voice of the second generation" (Bhalla 183) and, consequently, is considered as the representative of the Indian - Bengali immigrants in America through presenting stories about the shared experiences of these people. She is the first Asian American Pulitzer Prize winner for her first collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), which made her a recognized author concentrating specifically on the life and experiences of the Second generation of immigrants in America.

Likewise, Indian English novel is the accommodation of political, social and personal challenges of a great number of immigrants in different parts of the world. Globally recognized writers like Amitav Ghosh, Anita Desai, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and Jhumpa Lahiri have significantly drawn a huge attention to the struggles and traumas related to “leaving one's homeland and coming in contact with another culture” (Bran 5). These writers create works highly bound with the concepts of “home” and “family” which are the main issues regarding leaving ones hometown and starting a life in a foreign land. Sanjukta Dasgupta in “Locating home in a Liminal Space: Longing and Belonging in the Fiction of Bengali American Women Writers” categorized these writers to show that among these Indian diaspora writers, “male migrant writers engage more with concerns regarding ‘imaginary homelands’ (Rushdie, Ghosh, or Rohinton Mistry), whereas female writers of the diaspora (including Jhumpa Lahiri) focus on the very basic quest for home as a secure, familiar space” (82). In addition, Sukrita Paul Kumar in *Interpreting homes in South Asian Literature* mentions that:

The very basic quest for home, the domestic space, the security of the enclosed space, do not seem to be such an integral part of most migrant male writing, for instance, the novel of Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie and Rohinton Mistry, among others. Male migrant authors engage with macro concerns regarding imaginary homelands, affiliations as a national or transnational identity of a dual passport holder and would probably not notice the fusion and confusion of cultural identities that, for example, a lunch of 'pasta with chicken', served to a visiting Asian woman faculty at an Australian university guest house, can cause. (84)

In “Locating home in a Liminal Space, Longing and Belonging in the Fiction of Bengali American Women Writers,” Dasgupta brings an excerpt from Lahiri's novel *The Namesake*, suggesting that these few lines are the perfect example of how Lahiri looks at the representation of concept of home in her works: “In Calcutta, she will live with her brother's family...true to the meaning of her name, she will be without borders, without a home of her own, a resident everywhere and nowhere” (86). Additionally, Dasgupta explains that there is a desire to be included in the political process which is exclusively related to the masculine agenda, though female migrant writers regardless of whether they are housewives, nuclear scientists or teachers, are seen as looking for a sense of home in a micro-manifestation of everyday life. Dasgupta also argues that this very basic quest is not the concern of most male immigrant writers. Instead they are more engaged with macro concerns regarding imaginary homelands.

This study is not going to make any comparison between the conventional representations of “home” and “family” and their representation by Lahiri. Yet, it aims to show that Lahiri's writing and particularly the representation of home in *The Lowland* (2014) is more tended to be like what the male writers (Amitav Ghosh in “The Glass Palace (2000)” and Salman Rushdie in “Imaginary Homeland(2012)” that is a collection of essays for instance) try to explore. In this work of art, Lahiri left the basic quest for home which sometimes has the tendency to be mired in essentialism. She tried to deconstruct the aura around the concept of home as a place to be found. As it will be discussed in the third chapter, among the mentioned writers, Lahiri can be uniquely categorized among the immigrant writers dealing with “imaginary homeland.” She tries to focus on the constructiveness of home as one of the main concepts of immigrant literature rather than highlighting a search for a new home or finding the old one.

Furthermore, Indian-English novels in the era after the independence tended to concentrate on psychological aspects of immigrants' life. Lahiri in this sense highlights these aspects and shows how the psychological, historical and political effects are everlasting and the immigrants carry them to their new home wherever they go. She also focuses on how family is a construction under change. Therefore, though these works concentrate on the psychological dimensions, they do not ignore the effect of historical, political and social challenges which immigrants passed behind.

Thus, regarding the notion of home and immigration, this research will argue how Lahiri in *The Lowland* stops the quest for a new homeland, putting her characters in the situation of confronting with a loss of the past and the old home. This research attempts to determine how differently Lahiri's work and specifically *The Lowland* challenges the concept of home depicted by most of the writers of this genre.

The Lowland is a unique work of art among Lahiri's writings mostly because of the different and new outlook that it gives us towards the modern Indian family. In the present research, the notion of family transformation in Lahiri's second novel, *The Lowland*, is under investigation, through the ideas of “home” and “social imaginary” theorized by George (1996) and Appadurai (2000), respectively. To speak of what the family means in the collective Indian imagination, one would have to address both the structural constitution as well the discursive construction of the Indian family. Structurally speaking, the family in India is generally conceived in terms of a unit that is closely tied to a kinship network. The individual is grounded in this collectivity of family and kinship right from birth. The collectivity functions with practices that acknowledge and honor kinship bonds by communal participation in religious observances and life events like birth, death, and wedding as well as solidarity and support in times of crises like accident or illness.

The disintegration of the Indian family from the kinship network into the nuclear unit of the conjugal couple and its children has become a matter of public discourse in India in the second half of the twentieth century. Through this study, I will argue that while in various diasporic stories the representation of nuclear family is traditionally strengthened and preserved, Lahiri in *The Lowland* represents the transformation of four generations of a family by showing the ways they are disintegrated at the end of the story. I will also delineate the ways in which the characters of this novel reconstruct their new family bonds, find different familial models, and decenter the nuclear pattern.

Lahiri started her latest novel, *The Lowland*, with the epigraph suggesting that like her other works, she continued writing about immigration as she has been struggling with similar issues from the beginning of her life as an Indian immigrant in Britain and America. Introducing her new novel, Lahiri declares that the story of *The Lowland* is what she heard, since she was a little girl during her family's regular visit to Calcutta neighborhood, about a political activist being hanged while his family was forced to watch the scene. Lahiri, as she says, left the first sketches of the novel untouched for ten years while researching about the original story and the Maoist (Communist) political movement, namely Naxalite Movement (qtd. in Pius 103).

1.2 Problem statement

Concepts of "Family" and "Home" open a captivating area of investigation even though the importance of family and home in immigrant literature is not sufficiently examined. Family is presented as the source of main values of the past generations that are transferred to guarantee the growth and persistence. According to J. Nozipo Maraire, family is one of the main achievements of the so called The Third World:

The powerful northern countries measure us by the balance of trade, the gross national product, the percapital income, and the infant mortality rate. Our indicators of health care equity, education for all, the family, the drug-free schools, expenditure on services for the disabled and handicapped – these have no place in their economic ledgers. Yet these reflect our values and our achievements. (77)

Incidentally, it is highly important to notice that family is a mirror reflecting the social transformations and change, giving the opportunity to investigate the area of conflict and dislocation. Judith Caesar, in her reading of Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* refers to family as a system that preserve's migrant's identity by connecting him to his past (Caesar 53). Likewise, according to Stephanie

Merritt, Lahiri's last novel, *The Lowland*, "is a sweeping, ambitious story that examines in intimate detail the intersection of the political and the personal, encompassing nearly 50 years of Indian and American history through the lives of one family" (qtd. in Sarkar 43).

However, the disintegration of the family, which is known as a unit that is closely tied to a kinship network, has become a matter of discourse in India in second half of the twentieth century. The literary presentation of home and family in the area of immigrant literature has been insufficiently theorized although there is a global movement of people, which resulted in tremendous changes in family structure.

Regarding these notions and, as the present research benefits from Arjun Appadurai (2000) and Rosemary Marangoly George's (1996) theories of "home" and "social imaginary," no work of scholarship has explored the transformation of family and reconstruction of home in *The Lowland*. Thus, it is important to explore the structural transformation and disintegration of the family, resulting from the global movement of people, in Lahiri's *The Lowland*. Moreover, investigating the transformation of families is really significant due to the immigration crisis increasingly spreading worldwide.

Furthermore, Lahiri can be categorized among the immigrant writers dealing with "imaginary homeland." She tries to focus on the constructiveness of "home" as one of the main concepts of immigrant literature rather than emphasizing on the search for a new home or re-finding the old one. As discussed before, Sanjukta Dasgupta in "Locating home in a Liminal Space: Longing and Belonging in the Fiction of Bengali American Women Writers" (2007) categorized immigrant writers to compare them based on the way they search for home. In this regard, the second statement of the problem of this study refers to the issue that Dasgupta referred to female immigrant authors as questing for home as a secure, familiar space and this issue should be revised by analyzing the works written by female writers focusing on reconstructing the concept of home by the idea of "being at home" rather than "having a home," which suggests a more imaginary rather than physical space.

In sum, the present study investigates the concepts of family and home through Lahiri's *Lowland* to address the problem of transformation and disintegration of family as well as reconstruction of the concept of home. In other words, I consider transformation and reconstruction as the problems in which the meaning of family and home is redefined.

1.3 Research objective

This thesis aims at examining the ways Lahiri explore family transformation and home reconstruction resulted from immigration in *The Lowland*. As a part of immigrant literature, this novel is full of the challenges to define the ways the main character of the story experiences the transformation of the family after immigration to America, showing that the family as psychological belonging in a transnational space is under change. Family in the work of Lahiri is not so much a group related to one another by ties of blood, but rather a configuration of a relational identity. Moreover, this research aims at exploring the concept of “social imaginary” proposed by Appadurai (2000), which is defined as “set of values, institutions, laws and the symbols common to a particular social group and the corresponding society through which people imagine their social whole” (31).

Through the mentioned theories, the objectives of this research can be defined as following:

1. To analyze how the characters of *The Lowland* reconstruct “home” when they are away from India and reside in India in the novel.
2. To examine how *The Lowland* is not just “a basic quest for home as a secure and familiar place” as claimed by Sanjukta Dasgupta, but rather is Lahiri’s attempt to create characters who try to reconstruct their homes through their “social imaginary” with their connections in India as well as in America.
3. To explore the depiction of family disintegration and transformation in the novel.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This research will explore the ways Lahiri represents the changes in structure of families and home in immigration. Lahiri's works belong to what Rosemary Marangoly George (1996) calls “immigrant genre” as a kind of literary genre of “contemporary literary writing in which the politics and experience of location or rather of dislocation’ are the central narratives” (278). In her book *The Politics of home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-century Fiction*, George discusses that immigrant genre is distinct from other postcolonial literary writing and even the literature of exile, though it is closely associated with both of them. She explains that immigrant genre as in immigration comes from global colonization which tries to decolonize the discourse. On the other hand, she believes that immigrant genre is marked by a detached reading of the experience of “homelessness” that is made up for the extensive use of “luggage metaphor” in spiritual and material level. In other words, George believes in the disengagement of the experience of homelessness in immigrant literature as a central concept in postcolonial

genre. The absence of home or homesickness can lead to two ways: one is the desire for an authentic home either in past or future, and the other one is inauthenticity or the created aura around the concept of home (the latter is what Lahiri touches in *The Lowland*).

Marangoly says that the concept of home in the 20th century literature becomes “snug” not only in the fictions related to migration and travel but also in the stories of domestic life:

Home acquires meaning in the tales of characters who leave it, who migrate from Manchester to India or, by contrast, Amritsar to England. For these travelers, the concept of home serves as an incredibly powerful engine for creating and maintaining distinctions between peoples and places, a technology of representation that becomes especially productive, moreover, when one is not at home in a traditional, which is to say geographic, sense. (122)

George explains that the inauthenticity of “home” or “home” as a constructed concept is what the writers of immigrant genre tend to explore. She gives the examples of various novels especially *Gunny Sack* by M.G.Vassanji.

Pointing to *The Gunny Sack*, George asserts that the postcolonial idea of identity is more related to the baggage which one carries from home (figurative and literal) rather than to national affiliation. She suggests the term “home-country” as an alternative to the language of domesticity and nationalism to analyze the fictions which tell the stories of marginalized characters.

Another reason for discussing immigrant genre in this way is mentioned as the need to deconstruct the way this genre is perceived by westerners as associated with the Third World affiliation writers and, consequently, stuffed with nationalism. George discusses that her interest in immigrant's literatures derives from the fact that they embrace their marginality: “that those at the margin may read their marginality as a positive, even superior stance from which to experience the modern nation. Perhaps this is an instance of the 'strange empowering knowledge' that [Homi] Bhabha attributes to the immigrant” (189). But the significant matter George argues about is that, unlike the theorists of Western Marxism, “the fictions of the immigrant genre exhibit zero nostalgia for the nation-state. Their history replaces rather than replicates a national culture” (190). The third chapter of this thesis will argue the place of nostalgia for the “nation-state” in Lahiri's novel and the way her

characters employ nostalgia as a drive to reconstruct their home.

Social imaginary is another area to be explored in this dissertation. The concept of social imaginary in this thesis is obtained from the theories of two writers. This does not mean that two different theories have been used whose relationship needed to be clarified. To have a brief explanation, in this work in order to clarify the difference between immigrant literature and postcolonial literature and their point of view in relation with home, the ideas of George have been used. Then, it is explained that Jhumpa Lahiri is not categorized in Dasgupta's classification of those writers in a basic quest of home but instead is fallen in the category of writers who represents home as an unauthentic place with a created aura. When the ground in which Lahiri writes is clearly explored, it is the time to examine and study social imaginary.

The concept of social imaginary was first introduced by Charles Taylor as "the ways people imagine their social existence..." (100). Taylor who is admittedly influenced by Benedict Anderson defines a nation as "an imagined political community... nation-ness" (145), which is highly related with the representation of concept of home. On the other hand, John Thompson discusses "the creative and symbolic dimension of the social world, the dimension through which human beings create their ways of living together and their ways of representing their collective life" (6). Therefore, the relationship between "social imaginary" and "home" clearly comes from the way the collective life including "home" is defined through the imagination that is the basis for social imaginary. Social imaginary as a way to define collective life is also a way to define "home." In other words, the "home" as a constructed and created concept in *The Lowland* which is not authentic, is not a place in past or future, but is made through social imaginary.

The social imaginary in this research is divided into two levels which are the ways the characters in *The Lowland* "imagine" their life in connection with the people of the place they physically are living with (which can be whether India or America) and with the people they left behind in terms of time and place. Obviously, social imaginary has an important role in diasporic fiction as "a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility" (Appadurai 31). Imagination has a special place in all the forms of agency and can be seen as a social fact and also as a major element in global order.

Regarding the discussion of "imaginary," I will also discuss the idea of "ethnoscape," accompanied by other 4-scapes: "mediascapes," "financescapes," "ideascapes," and "technoscapes", which is defined by Appadurai, discussing that as we physically move, our world also moves:

The landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree. This is not to say that there are no relatively stable communities and networks of kinship, friendship, work, and leisure, as well as birth, residence, and other filial forms. But it is to say that the warp of these stabilities is everywhere shot through the woof of human motion as more persons deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move. (33-4)

The notion of ethnoscape is introduced by Appadurai in order to explore the fundamental disconnection of global cultural flows. To understand better *The Lowland*, this concept can be helpful as we try to show that how culture and its interconnected concepts including home is not a fixed and passive entity. Appadurai explains that our notions of space, community and, consequently home have been changing to be more complex rather than a single entity. On other words, ethnoscape which is defined as "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, migrants, exiles, guest workers and other moving groups ... who appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree," (Appadurai 6), can guide us to understand how the notion of home cannot be solely bound to the place where these individuals come from. In the Chapter of Analysis, it will be shown that how Lahiri in this novel depicts the concept of home in the web of social, political, and psychological structures which are almost impossible to be separated and studied independently.

To conclude the discussion of theory, it is necessary to mention that the theories of "home," "social imaginary," and "immigrant families" are all defined in the area of immigration literature. Therefore, the history and general theory of this genre will be discussed in the second chapter, though it is worth reminding that this area is so vast that all the narratives of the nations like America can be considered as stories from immigrants.

Postcolonialism



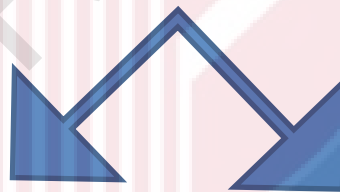
Immigrant Genre (George)



The Lowland (Jhumpa Lahiri)



Ethnoscape and Social Imaginary (Appadurai)



Reconstruction of Home

Disintigration of Family

1.5 Significance of research

Around the world, the structure of family is changing and this has been significantly reflected in literature. If we add immigration to the matrix of family, we find out that the conditions of staying in-between of two cultures when the family is the only present source of the ex-home culture, mostly trying to get preserved, while outside is full of new areas to be discovered, is the matter of great dilemmas and challenges. As it is shown in most of Lahiri's novels also, there are numerous signs including high rate of divorce and solo parents, suggesting that nuclear family has disintegrated and it is more dysfunctional since World War II. Over this time, people around the world experienced mass immigration in which we can see the failure of the contemporary family structure more than any time before.

Tracing the themes of family-in-decline and immigration, when it comes to diasporic fictions, the notion of dislocation will be reinforced. It is the cultural dislocation of the main character of *The Lowland* encountered as the representative of many people who have been experiencing the structural transformation of the family resulting from the global movement of people. Thus, it is important to examine the transformation of functional Indian family and the deconstruction of Home in *The Lowland*.

Correspondingly, this study is significant since there is no research work highlighting how Lahiri re-examines home and family as a reconstructed and re-created concept which is in contrast with her other stories. This study presents facts which prove that in this novel Lahiri counteracts Sanjukta Dasgupta's ideas regarding the female immigrant writers and their attempt for home.

1.6 Scope and limitation of the study

This study specifically focuses on the critical reading of *The Lowland*, the second novel of Lahiri, with the lenses of the theories of George and Appadurai related to the idea of "home" and "social imaginary." Although *The Lowland* is labeled as part of the postcolonial literature (that is part of the accepted speculation), this research specifically concentrates on the notion of social imaginary presented by Appadurai and family transformation through reconstructing home as defined by George in her famous theories about immigrant genre. Through critical reading of *The Lowland*, I will limit the concept of home to George's definition, as "the search for a location where one can feel at home, in spite of the obvious foreignness of the space that propels the discourse engendered by the experience of immigration" (*The Politics of Home* 285). I will specifically look at the question of to what extent Lahiri could manage to show his protagonist, Subhash, at home, when he is in America versus the time he goes back to India. Moreover, this research

aims at investigating the way Lahiri extends the concept of home by acting against Dasgupta's claim that Male authors of immigrant literature such as Ghosh and Rushdie tend to create "imaginary homelands" as compared to the authors including Jhumpa Lahiri who seems to emphasize on the search for "home" as "a secure, familiar space" (82).

1.7 Research methodology

This research work is based on the textual analysis and close scrutinization of Lahiri's *Lowland* analyzed through the theories of home and family in postcolonial concepts. In this dissertation, I aim at identifying the unique ways Lahiri shows family transformation resulted from immigration, in *The Lowland*. Basically this research consists of four chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the definition of "home" through the theories of Rosemary Marangoly George, which is connected to "Social Imaginary" or "imagination as social practice" defined by Appadurai. Furthermore, the idea of "ethnoscape" defined by Appadurai in his article "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" will be discussed in this chapter. In the second chapter, the focus is on the history of post-colonialism and immigrant genre and also a detailed explanation of critical works on Lahiri and *The Lowland*. The third and most important chapter is dedicated to Lahiri's novel and I intend to focus on how Lahiri extends the concept of "home" and "family" by showing her main character trying to create his "imaginary homeland" in America, while his beloved brother in India is fighting to reconstruct their homeland by joining Naxalite Movement, ended up being executed. Finally, the last chapter is devoted to the conclusion of the study; a summary of the findings and recommendation for further research.

The research process is mostly based on reading books, articles, dissertations, and analyzing them in order to have detailed comparison of theories and their applicability on the text. To meet the research objectives, the author uses different library databases in online and printed form for the primary source, which is *The Lowland* (2013), and the secondary sources including the reviews on the novel, Lahiri's interviews and, most importantly, the sources related to the theories of Appadurai and George.

In working on the general background and introduction section, I found the online interviews of Lahiri very useful. They reflected her novels and life based on her own observation, which helped to find the related themes and sub-themes. Moreover, to find the most applicable theory, a library-based research has been conducted through reading articles especially from Jstor and Project Muse and dissertations from ProQuest to find the gap.

1.8 Definition of the Key Terms

To have a better understanding of the terms used in this study, regard their definitions:

Post-colonial Theory - Postcolonial theory is a theoretical framework that developed during the last half century. Postcolonial theory has occasionally urged postcolonial authors write to resist rather than compromise with the established norms and values of colonial literature. In this research, Post-colonial theory has been used to refer to immigration due to post-colonial conditions.

Immigrant Genre - Immigrant Genre is a kind of literary genre of contemporary literary writing, introduced by Rosemary Marangoly George. In this genre, the politics and experience of location or rather of "dislocation" are the central narratives. In this study, I attribute it to Lahiri's works since they belong to this genre.

Social imaginary - Social imaginary is defined as the ways people imagine their social existence. In this research, work collective life including "home" is defined through the imagination that is the basis for social imaginary.

Ethnoscape - Ethnoscape is introduced by Arjun Appadurai in order to explore the fundamental disconnection of global cultural flows. In the present study it indicates how culture and its interconnected concepts, including home, is not a fixed and passive entity.

1.9 Conclusion

Lahiri's *The Lowland* is an attempt to deal with the contemporary concerns of a shattered Indian family. The notions of "family" and "home" are highly emphasized in her works, especially in *The Lowland*. The disintegration of the family has become a matter of discourse in India in second half of the twentieth century. This study attempts to highlight how Lahiri re-examines home and family as reconstructed and re-created concepts and as I will discuss in next chapters, this is in contrast with her other stories.

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