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Diasporic Formation and Dislocated Identities in Amy Tan's The Kitchen God's Wife and Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland: Educational Reflections on Identity Construction and Cultural Displacement in Diaspora Narratives

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how diasporic identity is formed and dislocated through narratives in The Kitchen God's Wife and The Lowland, using the lenses of postcolonial and diaspora studies. It emphasizes the educational significance of literature in fostering critical awareness of identity, hybridity, and adaptation across cultural contexts. The analysis highlights how literary texts can serve as pedagogical tools in helping students understand displacement, cultural negotiation, and the psychological impacts of migration. Drawing on Stuart Hall, Gayatri Gopinath, and James Clifford's theories, the study engages with character development across generations, while underscoring the value of diaspora literature in global education curricula.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of diaspora has become a central subject of interdisciplinary inquiry, especially in literature and cultural studies. Diaspora, defined as the dispersion of people from their homeland due to political, economic, or social factors, is often accompanied by experiences of displacement, identity fragmentation, and cultural dislocation. In literature, diaspora narratives serve not only as testimonies of migration and hybridity but also as powerful educational tools that allow readers (particularly students) to understand the psychological and cultural complexities of relocation. Amy Tan's The Kitchen God's Wife and Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland provide rich literary landscapes through which the intricate processes of diasporic identity construction can be explored in educational settings.

These novels depict dislocated individuals caught between cultural traditions and emerging identities, offering valuable insights into the hybrid nature of identity and the emotional challenges of migration. As characters like Winnie, Pearl, Subhash, and Gauri navigate transnational spaces, they reflect broader themes of cultural negotiation, loss, and resilience. Through these portrayals, the novels encourage reflective learning, intercultural understanding, and empathy, essential goals in globalized education. In this way, literature becomes a pedagogical bridge that connects personal narrative with collective historical consciousness. This paper investigates how the selected novels portray diasporic formation and identity dislocation across generations and gender lines, using frameworks. It further examines how hybridization, alienation, and adaptation shape each character's sense of belonging and selfhood. Beyond literary analysis, the study emphasizes how such texts can inform classroom discussions about migration, multiculturalism, and identity, fostering critical thinking and global literacy in students. The following research questions guide this study: (i) How do Amy Tan and Jhumpa Lahiri depict the formation of dislocated identities and their effect on belonging in a new land?; (ii) In what ways do the novels illustrate the complexities of diaspora and its impact on cultural identity?; and (iii) What educational insights can be drawn from the characters' challenges in adapting to new environments, and how might these inform multicultural and comparative literature pedagogy?

By engaging with postcolonial and diasporic theories alongside literary narratives, this study not only contributes to diaspora discourse but also proposes a curricular framework in which such narratives become central to critical education. Through character-driven storytelling, students can explore how power, history, and identity intersect, and how literature provides a reflective space for understanding both the self and the other in an increasingly interconnected world.

2. METHODS

This research employed a qualitative, text-based approach to examine how diasporic identity and dislocation are constructed in Amy Tan's The Kitchen God's Wife and Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland. The analysis focused on how the selected characters (Winnie, Pearl, Helen, Subhash, Gauri, and Bela) experience hybridity, alienation, and adaptation as markers of their diasporic conditions. The novels were selected purposefully due to their critical reputation, thematic richness, and relevance to educational discourses on migration, identity, and intercultural understanding. The study was grounded in interpretive literary analysis, guided by postcolonial and diaspora theories developed by Stuart Hall, Gayatri Gopinath, James Clifford, and Homi K. Bhabha. The interpretive framework focused on analyzing narrative structure, character development, and thematic representations of displacement, memory, and cultural negotiation. The characters' experiences were analyzed thematically to uncover how diaspora reshapes personal identity and affects their sense of belonging. This

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method enabled the researcher to examine how the characters' emotional and psychological journeys reflect the larger processes of dislocation and cultural transformation.

In addition to its literary emphasis, the study adopted an educational perspective by reflecting on the pedagogical implications of teaching diasporic literature. Through this lens, the analysis considered how the novels could be used in literature classrooms to enhance students' critical thinking, empathy, and global cultural awareness. The integration of literary interpretation and educational reflection provides a dual-layered analysis that contributes both to literary scholarship and to teaching strategies in multicultural education. This approach supports the development of what other researchers (Eisner, 2002) describe as "cognitive pluralism" through the arts, allowing learners to engage deeply with the complexities of human identity. All interpretations remained confined to textual evidence, with no primary fieldwork involved. The method prioritized close reading and thematic mapping while drawing theoretical connections to broader concepts of diaspora and identity. To ensure coherence and critical depth, the researcher triangulated textual interpretations with scholarly literature and theoretical perspectives discussed in the literature review.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Review of Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland

Correspondingly, Lahiri was born on 11th July 1967 in London. Though she was born in London, she moved with her family to the USA when she was three. She studied English Literature at Barnard College and afterward earned a master's degree in English Comprehensive Literature, creative writing, as well as a Ph.D. in Renaissance studies from Boston University and the Rhode Island School of Design. Lahiri's *The Lowland* has captured the critical eye of many scholars since its publication in 2013. The criticism given in the text is different due to the different theoretical perspectives of the scholars who want to understand it in their favor. Mostly, the criticism is on the issue of feminism, and others are analyzing it as a novel about exile, fate, and return. Savita Iyer - Ahrestani is one critic who, in the journal *Outcasts*, writes: *In a story about nice people, ready to sacrifice their future for the sake of others, who believe in family, togetherness, and being there for one another through good and bad, Gauri appears starkly egotistical. A Selfish and heartless woman, she seems to care little or not at all for those closest to her. Lahiri draws women so intent on making a life on her own, alone, that she's willing to break heart, shatter minds and screw up futures... fully aware of the intense pain her desire for independence causes those in her immediate entourage.*

Though literature has presented the character Gauri as a selfish, heartless woman, in the novel, Lahiri has shown that the novel leaves his responsible for the guardianship. She is haunted by Udayan's death, and it remains in her memory, which is why she leaves home. In *The Guardian,* James Laston [8] makes a significant study of *The Lowland.* He mainly focuses on the tragedy of modern life and political injustice shown by Lahiri in her text. He argues: *Shifting Shubhash's studious absorption in the estuaries and wildlife of Rhode Island, and Udayan's spiritedly engaged life back in India the first part of the book seems to be building towards a kind of building towards a kind of grand, pincer-movement confrontation with the double tragedy of modern life: political injustice and environmental degradation. The tempo is stately (Lahiri's art has always tended towards steady accretion rather than juxtapositional speed), but there is enough going on to keep the reader's attention. History lessons are interesting, and science plays to Lahiri's great strength as an observer of the physical world.*

Other researchers (Majumder, 2021) explore the representation of emotions and violence associated with the Naxalite movement as Lowland of Trauma, Marshland of Memory: A Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland.* Cultural trauma is discussed as the result of a

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collectivity feeling permanently marked by a dreadful event, which is then represented and reconstructed in cultural texts such as literature, films, and music. The Naxalite movement, a significant event in West Bengal in the 1970s, has had a lasting impact on the collective consciousness of the Bengali community, leading to its representation in numerous novels, short stories, and films. The paper analyzes how the emotions generated by the Naxalite movement and the associated violence are portrayed in *The Lowland,* providing insights into the wider societal experience of this traumatic event. By studying the representation of the Naxalite movement in the novel, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of cultural trauma and its effects on collective identity.

Michiko Kakutani, in his article "A Brother, Long Gone, is Painfully Present in Lahiri's new novel *The Lowland,*" published in *The New York Times,* writes: *Jhumpa Lahiri first made her name with quiet, meticulously observed stories about Indian immigrants trying to adjust to new lives in the United States, stories that had the husband intimacy of chamber music. The premise of her new novel, The Lowland, in contrast, is startlingly operatic. Udayan, an idealistic student in Calcutta in the 1960s, is drawn into Mao-inspired revolutionary politics. After his violent death (which happens fairly early in the novel), his devoted, dutiful brother, Shubhash, marries his pregnant widow, Gauri, and brings her to America in hopes of giving her a new start in a new country. Their marriage, though, will remain haunted by their memories of Udayan's and a terrible secret Gauri keeps to herself.*

The writer has captured beautifully the people who are involved in that Insurgency, the dreams seen by those students who were born in a middle-class family, pursued their education in university, and the tragic ending of those dreams. Other researchers essay about Nostalgia for Revolution in Calcutta: Violence and Spectrality in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland.* It focuses on the city of Calcutta in postcolonial Indian literature, examining how nostalgia for events in the city's past, which are not part of official narratives, is portrayed in literature to enhance the city's sense of identity. It highlights the significance of Calcutta in national image-making and the presence of contemporary Indian writers based in major cities. The paper specifically analyzes Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* to explore a nostalgic mode tied to violence, fragmentation, and the spectral, which still contributes to a positive urban identity. The essay argues that literary nostalgia offers an alternative framework to understand the city beyond its physical spaces and history.

The article (Stoican, 2020) regarding Layered Temporalities - Between Modernism and Postmodernism" in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* traces the author's positioning about modern and postmodern assumptions. The main character, Gauri, has a transnational trajectory, and her choices are influenced by her interests, like time, and her involvement in the Naxalite movement. The novel explores themes of time perception, identity formation, and the grand narrative of history. The analysis focuses on whether Lahiri's approach to these themes reflects a predominantly modern or postmodern outlook. The research paper provides insights into the layered temporalities in the novel, bridging the gap between modernist conceptions of cyclical time, modernity's celebration of reason and individualism, and postmodern visions of fragmentation. Furthermore, it highlights the multifaceted approach to identity and change, blending individualism, linear and circular time history, and an anti-foundational outlook. It also discusses Gauri's eventual capacity to confront the past and the future from the perspective of the gateway, indicating her healing passage into the realm beyond apparent plurality.

Some researchers reflect the character of Subhash and Gauri. After his violent death, his devoted, dutiful brother, Subhash, marries his pregnant widow, Gauri, and brings her to America in hopes of giving her a new start in a new country, but they are unable to understand

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each other. Gauri leaves him and does not know her father, and hates her mother. Their marriage remains haunted by their memories of Udayan and a terrible secret Gauri keeps to herself. In another article, "*Postmodern* Feminist Reading towards Gauri Character" in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland,* other researchers (Ahmad & Muhammad, 2020) analyze the novel using a postmodern feminist approach. The focus is on the unusual behavior of Gauri, the main female character, which challenges traditional assumptions. "Unfortunately, girls or women are still struggling for their identities in almost every sector" in their day-to-day lives in Nepal and across the world (Sherma, 2025). The research draws on postmodern feminist theories by scholars like Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler, which reject the idea of men as the standard for freedom and equality and question fixed meanings in a context.

3.2. Literary Studies

Literary studies on diaspora have increasingly recognized fiction as a pedagogical medium through which readers can access the emotional, psychological, and sociopolitical dimensions of displacement. Amy Tan's *The Kitchen God's Wife* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* have been widely examined for their treatment of gender, identity, and transnational conflict, providing significant value in classroom contexts that emphasize multicultural awareness and global citizenship through literature. Amy Tan's *The Kitchen God's Wife* has frequently been interpreted as a narrative of resistance and transformation. Winnie's journey from oppression under a patriarchal Chinese household to her emergence as an empowered matriarch in America reflects both personal and cultural resilience (Ramaswamy, 2014). The novel as a "China narrative," where traumatic personal memories mirror collective national suffering under Japanese invasion, forming a narrative shaped by silence and erasure (Yuan, 1999). The historical elements in Tan's novel also provide pedagogical opportunities to explore gendered trauma in wartime history and cultural transmission across generations (Adams, 2003).

The novel further emphasizes the evolving mother-daughter relationship as a channel for intergenerational healing, where silence is gradually replaced by empathy and mutual recognition (Ramaswamy, 2014). Several researchers (Bhattacharya & Neelakan, 2019) argue that Tan's narrative reclaims silenced Chinese women's experiences through feminist solidarity and the subversion of Confucian gender hierarchies. These elements are instructive in introducing students to transnational feminist discourse and reflective writing practices.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* similarly explores diaspora through themes of exile, political trauma, and disintegrating family structures. Gauri's rejection of conventional motherhood and embrace of philosophical solitude complicate stereotypical gender roles, offering rich material for classroom analysis of women's agency and non-conformity. Udayan's revolutionary death and its aftermath provide a powerful framework for understanding the personal cost of political conflict and the legacy of radical movements.

Majumder interprets *The Lowland* as a text of cultural trauma, arguing that the Naxalite movement's emotional aftermath is embedded in the psychological scars of the characters (Majumder, 2021). Sanyal extends this reading by showing how Lahiri constructs a nostalgic, fragmented memory of Calcutta, suggesting that even cities can embody diasporic longing. The novel's layered temporalities, where identity unfolds through time perception and existential questioning (Stoican, 2020). Gauri's actions challenge cultural scripts of womanhood and conformity (Ahmad & Muhammad, 2020). Together, these studies demonstrate that Tan's and Lahiri's novels present a rich tapestry of diasporic struggles (rootlessness, cultural hybridity, and identity crisis) while also revealing their potential as pedagogical tools. They enable students to examine how migration reshapes self-concept,

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memory, and cultural relationships, thus fostering critical literacy and intercultural competence in literature education.

3.3. Theoretical Framework

This study draws on key theoretical concepts from diaspora and postcolonial studies to examine the construction of dislocated identities in literary narratives. The central premise of diaspora theory is that migration, whether voluntary or forced, produces fractured and hybrid identities due to the constant negotiation between cultural origin and present environment. Diasporic identities are marked by a sense of displacement, cultural hybridity, and emotional attachment to the homeland, all of which are prevalent in both *The Kitchen God's Wife* and *The Lowland*. Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity is particularly central to this research. Hall argues that cultural identity is not fixed or essential, but rather a matter of "becoming" that is shaped by history, power, and ongoing transformation. Identity is constructed through narrative and is always in process, which aligns with the characters in both novels who struggle to reconcile inherited traditions with new cultural contexts. This view is especially useful in classroom discussions where identity is approached not as static but as fluid and constructed.

James Clifford also emphasizes that diasporic subjects exist in a condition of "dwelling-in-displacement," negotiating their sense of belonging across multiple locations. Diaspora is not simply about exile or nostalgia, but about creating cultural meaning in a space between rootedness and movement. The characters in both novels inhabit this "in-between" space, where identity is constantly renegotiated through memory, trauma, and adaptation.

Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity is also relevant, as it addresses how cultural difference creates new spaces of identity known as the "third space." In this space, meanings are ambivalent, and new cultural formations emerge through negotiation rather than assimilation. Bhabha's notion of the "beyond" reinforces the idea that diasporic subjects are not merely transitional but are actively constructing new forms of selfhood, which can be critically analyzed in literature classrooms to develop students' understanding of intercultural tension and coexistence. Gayatri Gopinath's intervention adds a gendered lens to diaspora theory by exploring how female diasporic subjects are often doubly marginalized through both cultural displacement and patriarchal structures. Her emphasis on the erotic and affective dimensions of diaspora helps to uncover how silence, memory, and the body become sites of resistance and expression, particularly in the lives of female characters such as Winnie and Gauri. The educational relevance of these theories lies in their capacity to help learners unpack complex questions of identity, belonging, and cultural conflict. Integrating these frameworks into literary analysis encourages students to read beyond surface narratives and engage with deeper questions of social location, power, and emotional inheritance. This theoretical grounding supports critical literacy practices that promote empathy, reflective inquiry, and global understanding in multicultural classrooms.

3.4. Theories About Diaspora

Amy Tan's *The Kitchen God's Wife* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* primarily explored the feelings and experiences of immigrant people in a new land. These texts reflect the diasporic formation of identity and cultural dislocation. From this standpoint researcher draws fundamental concepts from Diaspora. While doing this study will not exclude the significance of postcolonial studies but it will only comprehend some of the basic concepts partially. After all, this study has accomplished bringing textual evidence so that the argument stated could be proved. Thus, this chapter explores the theoretical standpoints and makes it clearer for further exploration of the text.

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First, how has the term diaspora been developed? The term 'diaspora' has been generally used as the naming of the 'other' in the academic circle. Tracing the origin of this term, Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur have pointed out that the etymological meaning of 'diaspora' is derived from the Greek term 'diasperian', in which 'dia' means 'across' and '-sperien' means 'to show or scatter seeds'. Hence, it highlights one of the major characteristics of diaspora marked by the sense of dispersal of human beings across the world. In this sense, diaspora seems to have some positive connotation as when human beings disperse or get dispersed across the world, several different variables such as culture, language, nationality, and so on associated with them come to form an amalgamation with the similar variables already existing in a foreign land. However, even in the process of migration or immigration, displacement or dislocation have been critiqued as the responsible factors in forming the diasporic identity of an individual.

In *The Location of Culture,* an Indian English scholar and critical theorist, Homi K Bhabha, explains that diasporic people's movement to a foreign land is not a new horizon for them. They can never leave their past life totally, nor can they accept a new location as a new horizon. Diasporic people always find their position in-between of two cultures, due to their existence in two cultures, their identity becomes complex. They find their position to be hybrid. Hybridity means the mixture of two different cultures in societies due to the influences of colonization, emigration, and commercialization. Bhabha explains the diasporic condition in this way: The 'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past. Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years, but in the fin de siècle, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond'; an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words au-dela- here and there, on all sides, fort/da, hither and thither, back and forth in 1998).

Diaspora is the movement of people from known location (their homeland to an unknown location. Hence, it creates a sense of dislocation and alienation because they would not adjust themselves to a new location and culture. Physically, they leave their nation voluntarily or forcefully, but they always have an emotional attachment. Once they feel dislocation, they start to raise questions about themselves: Who are we? What is our identity? According to time and space, they get a new identity. Immigrants' identity is not stable.

Diasporic people are emotionally attached to their homeland, which is the center for their culture and tradition. When they come into contact with different cultures in a foreign land, the diasporic situation becomes visible. Migration is a cultural factor and post-colonial discourse that intensifies hybridity and creates alienation and identity crisis. Migration breeds the state of cultural and geographical rootlessness, leading to alienation and estrangement. Thus, migration brings diasporic experience such as hybridity, dislocation, alienation, identity crisis, and so on. People in the diaspora are culturally displaced and forced into exile, accepting plural and partial identity. A sense of loss and rootlessness always haunts them, creating a feeling of dislocation. Therefore, an interesting reason why diaspora has been defined and interpreted in multiple ways has been identified to be its peculiar mode of formation. As there are various modes of formation, so are its definitions and interpretations. In this connection of idea, Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur have pointed out the difference between the diasporic identity and transnationalism in the following way: *While diaspora may be accurately described as transnationalist, it is not synonymous with transnationalism. Transnationalism may be defined as the flow of people, ideas, goods, and capital across national territories in a way that undermines nationality and nationalism as discrete*

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categories of identification, economic organization, and political constitution. We differentiate diaspora from transnationalism, however, in that diaspora refers specifically to the movement-forced or voluntary people from one or more nation-states to another.

This statement reveals the fact that diaspora is often confused with transnationalism. However, it also clarifies the confusion between them by stating the fact that diaspora particularly refers to the 'movement' of people from their native land to a foreign country. Making the distinction between diaspora and transnationalism clearer, Braziel and Mannur have further stated as follows: *Transnationalism speaks to larger, more impersonal forces-specifically, those of globalization and global capitalism. While diaspora addresses the migrations and displacements of subjects, transnationalism also includes the movements of information through cybernetics as well as the traffic in goods, products, and capital across geo-political terrains through multinational corporations. While diaspora may be regarded as concomitant with transnationalism or even in some cases consequent of transnational forces, it may not be reduced to such macroeconomic and technological flows. It remains, above all, a human phenomenon lived and experienced.*

This quotation further clarifies that diaspora particularly refers to the lived experience of people in two different cultural settings in terms of ethnicity, language, nationality, and nationalism, whereas transnationalism incorporates multiple forces in connection with the flow of non-human entities such as information technology, goods, products and capital across the national boundaries between and among the nation-states. For example, due to the civil war, Syrian refugees can be vulnerable to both transnationalism that shapes refugee movements and diaspora mirrors refugees' personal and lived experiences. Due to displacement, such refugees struggle to rebuild their lives in a new setting and the challenge of adapting to new economic as well as social expectations.

The crisis of identity is seen as a part of a wider process of change. It fragments the central structure and social process. In *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, cultural theorist argues that cultural identities are never fixed or complete in any sense. Identities are social and cultural formations and constructions essentially subject to the differences of time and place. Diaspora's identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference. Cultural identity is not just a matter of the past, a past which must be restored, but it is also a matter of the future. Cultural identities no longer signify an accomplished set of practices which is already there; they are subject to the 'play' of history, power, and culture. Hall considers the role of globalization to be crucial in bringing the crisis of identity. Hall says: *If we feel we have a unified identity, from birth to death, it is only because we construct a confronting story or "narrative of the self" about ourselves. The fully unified, completed and secure, and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the system of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with at least temporarily.*

Globalization suggests that global culture is brought about by a variety of social and cultural development. The role of globalization and the impact of migration create a situation of multicultural, multiracial, multiethnic, and so on. And it craves the way of the hybridity. Diasporic people feel the crisis of identity when people have been dispersed temporarily from their homelands and cultures are cut and assimilated into others.

Dislocation refers to the lack of fitness when one person moves from a known to an unknown location. It is the outcome of a willing or unwilling movement from a known to an unknown place. The phenomenon of dislocation in modern societies is the result of transportation from one country to another country by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion and settlement. Displacement is a crucial feature of post-colonial discourse. It is a society

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where no stable identity of an individual is possible. It is caused by the decline of old identities, which stabilizes the social world for so long. It gives rise to new identities and fragments modern subjects.

3.5. Discussion of Findings

The analysis of *The Kitchen God's Wife* and *The Lowland* reveals that both novels portray diasporic identity as a dynamic and often painful process marked by dislocation, hybridity, and psychological fragmentation. In Tan's narrative, Winnie's journey from war-torn China to the United States is both physical and emotional. Her trauma under Wen Fu and her eventual empowerment in America reflect a shift from cultural silence to agency, highlighting how diasporic subjects navigate oppressive traditions while seeking autonomy in new contexts (Ramaswamy, 2014). This transformation is also reflected in her relationship with her daughter Pearl, where storytelling becomes a means of cultural transmission and healing.

Similarly, Lahiri's *The Lowland* portrays the long-term impact of migration on identity and family. Gauri, in particular, embodies the complexities of female diasporic subjectivity. Her refusal to conform to normative roles of motherhood and marriage, and her intellectual withdrawal into philosophy, underscore the tension between personal autonomy and cultural expectation. While often criticized as selfish, her character challenges students and readers to re-evaluate traditional gender roles within diasporic narratives (Ahmad & Muhammad, 2020).

Both novels depict characters who are caught between two worlds, illustrating what Bhabha describes as the "third space" of hybridity—a zone where cultural negotiation rather than assimilation occurs. This is evident in how characters like Pearl and Bela inherit fragmented cultural identities, shaped not only by geography but also by historical trauma and unspoken family legacies. Tan and Lahiri use memory and silence as narrative devices to convey the emotional disorientation of diaspora, reaffirming Stuart Hall's idea that identity is continuously formed and transformed concerning cultural context and historical change.

From an educational standpoint, these novels offer rich opportunities for students to engage with literature as a space of reflection and inquiry. The emotional depth of the characters allows students to explore abstract concepts like alienation, cultural negotiation, and transgenerational trauma in tangible ways. Classroom discussions can be structured around questions such as: What does it mean to belong in more than one place? How do language, silence, and storytelling shape one's identity? How do gender and history intersect in the immigrant experience? Literature, in this case, becomes more than a text—it becomes a lens through which students can build empathy, practice critical thinking, and understand cultural complexity. The themes in these novels are particularly relevant for multicultural and postcolonial education, where students from diverse backgrounds may find resonant reflections of their own or others' diasporic realities. Through close reading and theory-informed interpretation, the literature classroom becomes a transformative space that bridges personal identity with global awareness.

4. CONCLUSION

The analysis of The Kitchen God's Wife and The Lowland demonstrates that diasporic identity is an ongoing and complex negotiation shaped by trauma, cultural memory, gender roles, and political dislocation. Both Amy Tan and Jhumpa Lahiri depict characters who embody the psychological and emotional fragmentation associated with displacement, while also showing how storytelling, silence, and personal agency become tools for reconstructing meaning and belonging. Through characters like Winnie, Pearl, Gauri, and Subhash, the novels highlight how diasporic individuals occupy hybrid spaces where cultural identity is constantly reshaped through history, gender, and location. From an educational perspective, these

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narratives offer rich resources for developing critical literacy, empathy, and intercultural awareness in literature classrooms. By examining how the characters navigate conflicting cultural expectations and repressed histories, students can engage deeply with themes of identity formation, alienation, and resilience. Literature, therefore, becomes not only a means of artistic expression but also a pedagogical tool for fostering reflective thinking and global consciousness.

Educators are encouraged to incorporate diasporic literature into multicultural curricula as a way of addressing global themes such as migration, belonging, gender equity, and cultural hybridity. These texts can support inclusive education initiatives by amplifying underrepresented voices and helping students explore diverse perspectives on displacement and integration. Aligning with SDG 4 (Quality Education), the teaching of diasporic narratives promotes inclusive and equitable learning that nurtures respect for diversity. Moreover, by highlighting gender-based marginalization and the agency of female characters, the novels support SDG 5 (Gender Equality). Finally, exploring themes of social and cultural exclusion contributes to the goals of SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by empowering learners to understand and challenge systemic barriers to identity and belonging. In conclusion, diasporic literature such as Tan's and Lahiri's not only enriches literary scholarship but also strengthens educational practice. It invites students and educators alike to reimagine the boundaries of identity, community, and cultural engagement in an increasingly interconnected world.

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