

# **Intimate Alienation: Immigrant Fiction and Translation**

**Jhumpa Lahiri**

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- Nilanjana Sudeshna "Jhumpa" Lahiri is an American author known for her short stories, novels and essays in English, and, more recently, in Italian.
- Born: 11 July 1967

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- This article was written by an Indian American writer, Jhumpa Lahiri. She won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Interpreter of Maladies*, her short stories collection in 2000. It was matter of great surprise and excitement for herself, her family and some Indian writers.

- The book was the product of her desire to be an independent professional writer and her thrills of writing fiction. After the book was published, she discovered that authorial freedom is limited to the process of writing itself, in the private sphere of creation. She had no intention of being labeled as Indian or American. But once the book was made public, readers, reviewers and critics categorized her variously.

- Her book was categorized as diaspora fiction by Indian academics and as immigrant fiction in the US. She had no objection to the various types of responses to her work. She says she has no desire or ability to control the reactions.
- She is a bilingual and bicultural writer and her literary creations are the product of this situation. She has acquired basic literacy in her native language Bengali. She started creative writing in English at school.

- In her twenties she chose India as a setting and theme to write about. She had favourable family atmosphere for creative writing.
- Her stories *A Real Durban* and *The Treatment of Bibi Haldar* have been attacked by Indian reviewers as having tunnel vision of India. What they mean to say is that she has written the stories on a very narrow ground. She realizes the fact that she has not explored the vast Indian life and culture. But she still says she has seen enough of life, enough details to write stories on Indian soil.

- She has been criticized for misinterpreting Indian life in order to please western audience. Even after she won the Pulitzer Prize, Indian press condemned her for not being loyal to India. She felt disappointed at this and decided not to write about India again because her translation of India was not accurate.
- She still has some readers and reviewers who appreciate her writing. The characters in her stories use some Bengali words and phrases because this language occupies some space in her mind.