

**Strike Their Roots: (Un)rootedness and Diasporic Impasse in Jhumpa Lahiri's
*Unaccustomed Earth***

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Abstract

Probing into the lives of second-generation immigrants, Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth* involves the picturing of the difficulties of filial responsibility, especially that which seizes the characters by their racial root as emphasized by the presence of their parents. Filial responsibility is crucial in the collection: characters of separate stories all expose dread when attempting to fulfill familial obligations. This apprehension magnifies the sense of haunted (un)rootedness among characters, thus complicates their belongingness in the American soil. The obstruction that results from such a dread is prevalent in the neoliberal society which enforces homogeneity and model minority, nevertheless underestimating the profound, aporetic condition of immigrants. I venture to call it a “diasporic impasse” – a perplexed situation caused by ethnic diaspora as well as the failure of retrieving homeland imagination. In this paper, I first investigate the influence of neoliberalism to first- and second-generation immigrants. The second part of this paper is devoted to connecting neoliberal impact to the struggle of diasporic impasse. Relevant issues regarding migrant communities will be discussed in the third part in order to shed light on the contemporary diasporic scene. Ultimately, drawing from Derridian concepts such as trace, identity, anachronism, and the impossibility of decision, I interpret *Unaccustomed Earth* as a collection which exemplifies the deconstruction of the root of belonging.

Keywords: Jhumpa Lahiri, *Unaccustomed Earth*, Jacques Derrida, neoliberalism, diasporic impasse, (un)rootedness