



The Quiet Strength: Exploring Femininity in Lahiri's Unaccustomed Earth

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Abstract— *Jhumpa Lahiri's Unaccustomed Earth intricately explores themes of femininity, identity, and resilience within the diasporic experience. This paper examines how Lahiri's female characters navigate the tensions between cultural expectations and personal aspirations, shedding light on their quiet but powerful strength. Through a feminist lens, the study analyses how these women negotiate spaces of autonomy within the constraints of patriarchal traditions and immigrant struggles. Lahiri's portrayal of femininity moves beyond conventional narratives of defiance and instead emphasizes subtle acts of resistance, emotional endurance, and self-assertion. This paper also considers how Lahiri's narratives reflect the complexities of immigrant womanhood, particularly in how cultural dislocation shapes their experiences. The intersection of gender and diaspora reveals the multifaceted challenges of assimilation, familial obligations, and personal fulfilment. By focusing on Lahiri's nuanced female characters, this study highlights the resilience embedded in their everyday struggles, illustrating that strength is not always loud or visible but often found in the ability to endure, adapt, and reclaim agency within restrictive frameworks. Ultimately, this feminist analysis of Unaccustomed Earth underscores how Lahiri reimagines femininity within immigrant narratives, portraying women who, despite being bound by tradition, find ways to assert their identities and reshape their destinies. Through this exploration, the paper contributes to broader discussions on gender, diaspora, and the evolving nature of female strength in literature.*



Keywords— *Jhumpa Lahiri, Unaccustomed Earth, femininity, diaspora, identity, feminism, cultural expectations, resilience, immigrant women, autonomy, tradition vs. modernity.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) offers a compelling exploration of the multifaceted emotional landscapes navigated by immigrant women and their descendants. Through a collection of interlinked short stories, Lahiri illuminates how female characters balance the invisible labor of cultural preservation with personal desires for autonomy and belonging. Authors such as Rama Islam (2017) identify Lahiri's protagonists as "complex, intelligent, and questioning women who are not happy with the status quo and turn rebels against the established order". These women endure dual subjugation—subject to patriarchal structures within

traditional Bengali norms and the demands of assimilation into American life.

Critical scholarship highlights that *Unaccustomed Earth* foregrounds the tension between first-generation immigrant mothers and their American-born daughters. Yogesh Kumar and Gunjan Sushil (2023) describe this dynamic as a negotiation between "identity, alienation, assimilation, and cultural displacement". Meanwhile, studies based on postcolonial theories, such as Khalil and Abbas (2024), emphasize the hybridity and emotional dislocation experienced by Lahiri's characters, who "integrate their cultural values with foreign cultural norms while maintaining their own ethnicity".

Core themes recurrently addressed in this study—such as silence, emotional sacrifice, resilience through restraint, intergenerational identity conflict, imperfect intimacy, subtle rebellion, and narrative subjectivity—are interwoven within Lahiri's emotionally nuanced depictions. By analyzing these dimensions, this paper examines how Lahiri's women manifest strength not through overt acts of defiance, but through quiet endurance, self-definition, and selective agency. In doing so, Lahiri contributes to feminist and diasporic literary conversations by centering women's interiority, exposing how cultural and emotional labor are performed in silence, and how personal autonomy is contested in diasporic contexts.

This paper proceeds by first exploring silent sacrifices and inherited silence, examining how domestic and emotional labor are transmitted and internalized. Next, it delves into emotional endurance and quiet rebellion, where restraint, forgiveness, and subtle acts of defiance become sites of empowerment. Subsequently, the analysis addresses dual cultural identities and the tension between belonging and alienation. The study also investigates intimacy affected by loss, highlighting emotional distance and unspoken yearning. Finally, it discusses Lahiri's narrative approach, third-person limited narration, which provides access to female subjectivity and the vulnerability-strength spectrum.

By centering these themes within Lahiri's corpus, this research bridges close literary analysis with critical dialogues in feminist, diasporic, and postcolonial studies. In doing so, it underscores Lahiri's contribution to depicting immigrant womanhood as a lived territory of everyday resilience—where silence, choice, and inner fortitude carry transformative subversive power.

1. Silent Plight: The Unspoken Labor of Women in Immigrant Households

In Jhumpa Lahiri's *"Unaccustomed Earth,"* the silent sacrifices of immigrant women are poignantly portrayed through the lives of Ruma and her mother, illustrating the emotional and cultural burdens they bear within immigrant households. Ruma's mother, a first-generation immigrant, embodies the traditional role of a Bengali wife and mother. She relinquishes her career to focus on domestic responsibilities, striving to preserve her cultural heritage by speaking Bengali at home and preparing traditional meals. Her life is marked by a quiet endurance, as she navigates the challenges of assimilation while maintaining her cultural identity.

Ruma, representing the second generation, initially aspires to forge a different path. She pursues a legal career, marries an American man, and attempts to

balance her professional ambitions with her personal life. However, following her mother's sudden death and the birth of her son, Akash, Ruma finds herself retreating from her career to assume the role of a stay-at-home mother. This decision mirrors her mother's sacrifices, despite Ruma's earlier intentions to diverge from that path. The narrative captures Ruma's internal conflict as she grapples with the expectations of her cultural heritage and her personal desires.

The story further delves into the generational shifts in familial roles and expectations. Ruma's father, after his wife's death, embarks on travels and forms a new romantic relationship, embracing a sense of freedom previously unavailable to him. His actions contrast with the traditional expectations placed upon Ruma, highlighting the evolving dynamics within immigrant families.

Through the lens of Ruma and her mother's experiences, Lahiri explores the nuanced realities of immigrant women's lives—their silent sacrifices, the weight of cultural preservation, and the complexities of identity across generations. The narrative underscores the enduring impact of these sacrifices, prompting reflection on the often-unacknowledged labor that sustains immigrant households.

2. Generational Femininity: Mothers, Daughters, and Inherited Silence

In *Unaccustomed Earth*, Jhumpa Lahiri vividly articulates a silent inheritance passed from mother to daughter—a heritage of subtle emotional restraint, unspoken understanding, and pragmatic expressions of love. This is powerfully encapsulated when Ruma recalls, "Her mother had never pressured her, never offered opinions, only presented facts as she saw them." This simple, factual interaction is anything but benign; it represents the emotional architecture of their relationship and of the broader cultural framework in which immigrant women often exist. For Ruma's mother—a first-generation immigrant—survival in America meant mastering adaptation without complaint or emotional upheaval, creating an environment where love is communicated not through affection or affirmation, but through dutiful acts and unsentimental gestures. In raising Ruma this way, she instilled a stoic resilience: affection was baked into the food she cooked, the laundry she washed, the routines she maintained. Though it lacks sentimentality, this approach was suffused with care—the kind that underpins respect and responsibility, rather than emotional flourish.

As Ruma grows up under this quiet tutelage, she internalizes these lessons, even as she yearns to break from them. Her mother's silence is not emptiness—it's

purposeful. In refusing to burden her with emotional advisements or overt expectations, she equips Ruma with autonomy, albeit a reserved one. Yet this autonomy is also a silent contract: to conform to unspoken norms of behavior that prize mere presence over vocal support, observant duty over expressive intimacy. Ruma recognizes this dynamic—hers is a childhood without overt critiques or encouragement, only implicit lessons learned through actions. Though her mother says nothing, the message is clear: love is shown through reliability and absence of drama. In pursuing a law career, Ruma attempts to assert a more visible agency, to embrace a life less constrained by silent codes. But the legacy remains.

The second-generation immigrant experience deepens this tension. Ruma, balancing professional ambition with domestic responsibility, confronts the same silent expectations in her own life. When her father visits post her mother's death, Ruma must interpret and channel these behavioral codes—she offers him a place in her home though culturally she questions her ability to sustain the kind of caretaking her mother did. She recalls the quiet, factual way her mother had managed the household—the cooking, the cultural continuity, the emotional labor—and measures her own inadequacy against that absence of displayed emotion. She sees how deeply embedded this pragmatism is, how it shaped not only her mother's actions but her very identity as a woman in the immigrant household.

This generational emotional legacy is not just familial—it is cultural. Lahiri subtly reveals that expression of affection through direct speech is not natural to these women; to them, language is functional, not emotional. Ruma reflects on her childhood: no prompts to pursue happiness, no gentle exhortations; only data. That silence, that absence of overt love, is a survival mechanism, one shaped by immigration's pressures. In a new land, where survival depends on discipline and assimilation, emotion becomes an inconvenient complication. The women of the family learn quickly: do what needs to be done, say little, preserve dignity. In this, Lahiri exposes how silence can be both preservation and suppression—an inheritance that supports while also constricting.

As Ruma becomes a mother herself, she finds the weight of that silence doubling. She now faces the delicate task of deciding what legacies to pass on to her son and her unborn child. Will she mimic her mother's emotional restraint, hoping that practical demonstrations of love suffice? Or will she deliberately break this pattern and speak emotionally, acknowledging the feelings she learned to suppress? This internal conflict illustrates how generational femininity is less a matter of genes than of language—or its absence. Lahiri shows us that restraint is

inherited as surely as traits like eye color; it is learned as much in the quiet of a kitchen as in the lively pulse of social gatherings. Ruma's struggle to define love—whether learned or unlearned—becomes the emotional core of her narrative.

Ultimately, Lahiri suggests that inherited silence is not irrevocable. Though Ruma's mother passed on a legacy steeped in quiet endurance, Ruma is positioned to choose—or refuse—that inheritance. The juxtaposition of generations—women who suppress voice versus women confronted by a need for emotional articulation—reveals the shifting landscape of femininity in immigrant families. In questioning whether she must repeat her mother's sacrifices and emotional economy, Ruma stands at a crossroads. Her inherited silence is both a burden and a resource: a template for resilience but a cage for emotional expression. Lahiri's nuanced portrayal of generational femininity thus highlights the invisible labor of cultural adaptation, revealing how silence can both sustain and stifle, and how the bonds between mothers and daughters are woven not just in shared words, but in shared quiet.

3. Resistance in Restraint: The Subtle Power of Emotional Endurance

In Jhumpa Lahiri's "Only Goodness," Sudha's quiet endurance in the face of familial trauma reveals a profound, understated resilience. When confronted with her brother Rahul's betrayal and uncontrolled alcoholism, Sudha doesn't react with tears or overt confrontation—"She did not cry, not then. She knew there was no use." This moment, though emotionally charged, is marked by its stillness: unspoken pain, deliberate silence, and the conscious choice to create emotional distance. Rather than succumbing to melodrama, she opts for self-preservation. Raised to prioritize responsibility and emotional composure, Sudha has absorbed the immigrant-woman ethos of silent strength. Her refusal to forgive Rahul for endangering her own child becomes a potent act of quiet rebellion.

The crisis peaks when Rahul, freshly sober, visits Sudha in London after years of estrangement, seeming to have rebuilt himself. All seems hopeful—until the day he drunkenly falls asleep while babysitting Sudha's infant son, forgetting the baby in a bathtub. This unthinkable lapse shatters any illusions she'd held about his recovery. Rather than confront him with anger, Sudha processes the incident inwardly, and that evening silently resolves to sever ties. It is not a televised argument or emotional scene, but an intimate moment of realization: that protecting her family requires emotional detachment. This decision crystallizes her autonomy—she "cuts him out of her

life permanently,” forming a new boundary born in quiet strength rather than rage.

This restraint is itself a form of resistance. While Rahul spirals into chaos, Sudha organizes her life around stability—her husband, Roger, and their son, Neel. Though guilt over her perceived role in Rahul's addiction haunts her, she refuses to let it dictate her present, or jeopardize her new family's well-being. The absence of overt forgiveness doesn't indicate hardness, but emotional survival. Her silent decision not to forgive becomes a shield: a refusal to reopen wounds, a refusal to enable further damage. There is power in that refusal—a refusal to perform ritualistic forgiveness, instead acknowledging that love cannot override the need for safety.

Lahiri's portrayal of Sudha highlights a broader theme: emotional endurance as a radical act of self-care. In immigrant households, where external displays of emotion can be suppressed in favor of social facades, internal resilience becomes essential. Sudha's silence isn't apathy—it's protection. It's the choice to endure quietly, to let painful decisions stand unspoken, and to assert strength through stillness. In a society that often equates strength with confrontation, Lahiri offers an alternative: that resistance can reside in the refusal to endure further harm, even without fanfare.

In this way, Sudha's emotional restraint becomes its own form of liberation. By deciding not to cry, not to explain, and not to forgive, she retains agency. She protects her family, her psyche, and her future. And in that silence, she finds a hard-won peace—a testament to the subtle power of enduring quietly, and the resilience that grows where words and tears fall short.

4. Navigating Dual Identities: Cultural Expectations and the Female Self

In *"Hell-Heaven,"* Jhumpa Lahiri portrays her female characters grappling with the competing demands of Indian cultural heritage and Western individualism, leading to a profound internal dissonance. Usha's mother, Aparna, embodies this struggle. Married to Usha's father in an arranged union, she relocates to the United States and finds herself bound by traditional marital roles, mourning the autonomy she never had. Lahiri's narrative subtly highlights her intellectual and emotional depth—education, political interests, poetry—yet it is largely expressed within the confines of her domestic existence. Aparna's life becomes a study in duality: her outward persona as dutiful wife and mother contrasts sharply with her inner world, rich with longing and unspoken dissatisfaction.

The arrival of Pranab Chakraborty acts as a catalyst for this tension. To Aparna, Pranab is more than a friend from

Calcutta; he represents the life she might have lived—intellectually stimulating, culturally resonant, and emotionally validating. His presence brings fleeting brightness to her American existence, symbolizing both escape and possibility. Yet when he embraces Western norms by marrying Deborah—an American woman—Aparna's stability fractures. She perceives his assimilation as cultural betrayal, a shift she labels starkly as “hell-heaven,” underscoring her sense of loss.

Aparna's response to Pranab's marriage and Usha's growing Americanization oscillates between protective maternal concern and self-destructive despair. She attempts to shield Usha, dissuading her from dances and dating, fearing Usha will experience the same heartbreak she did. This resistance to change peaks when she nearly sets herself on fire—an act symbolic of her despair as she feels she has lost both Pranab and her cultural anchor. Yet she survives, returning to the domestic sphere and maintaining appearances—she boils rice, carries on—demonstrating that, even in profound crisis, she remains tethered to traditional roles.

Meanwhile, Usha's perspective reflects the generational shift. As she matures within American society, she grows both attracted to and at odds with her mother's values. She embraces American freedoms—dating, self-expression—even as she senses her mother's confusion and pain. Usha's blossoming independence contrasts with Aparna's internal conflict, but with time, her mother begins to accept Usha's identity as “a child of America”—even recognizing that Usha can honor both Bengali heritage and American culture.

Lahiri's skillful narration situates both women at a cultural crossroads. Aparna's emotional self-expression is nearly invisible, hidden beneath the surface of her domestic life and unspoken grief, while Usha's Americanisation offers both hope and heartbreak. The duality is embodied in the story's title: “Hell-Heaven”—a metaphor for cultural rift and emotional divide. Aparna's silent sacrifice and simmering internal struggle contrast with Usha's outward assimilation and eventual empathy; only through years does Usha come to understand the depth of her mother's pain.

By centering both perspectives, Lahiri does not suggest any easy reconciliation—but rather illuminates the invisible ties that bind them. Aparna's cultural entrapment and Usha's bicultural fluidity reflect the complexities immigrant families face: when cultural preservation becomes both sanctuary and confinement, and Western independence offers liberation but at an emotional cost. In capturing this, Lahiri gives voice to the subtle yet powerful

emotional realities of female identity shaped by dual cultures, showing that navigating such a life requires balance not just between two worlds, but between silence and speech, tradition and autonomy.

5. Love, Loss, and Loneliness: The Feminine Experience of Intimacy

In "A Choice of Accommodations," Lahiri captures the nuanced ache of imperfect intimacy and the quiet loneliness that often accompanies love. Megan, married to Amit, confronts a profound moment of emotional isolation when "*she realized then that he had never told her that he loved her, not in so many words.*" This admission reveals not just a missing phrase, but an emotional distance—his steady presence falls short of verbal affirmation, leaving Megan grappling with a hunger neither reproach nor betrayal can fill. Their marriage, comfortable yet strained, highlights how love can exist alongside silent disappointment and how emotional connection can falter without overt expression.

Lahiri repeatedly portrays women who accept love in its imperfect form yet safeguard their dignity when intimacy fails to deliver the fulfillment they crave. Megan's strength is visible not in public confrontation but in an inner reckoning: she acknowledges the lack without dramatizing it, choosing instead to understand the gap between need and reality. This restraint mirrors broader thematic currents in Lahiri's work, where female characters—like Hema and Ruma—often find themselves navigating the spaces where affection and disappointment overlap. They adapt, they endure, and sometimes, they walk away—not out of weakness, but out of a commitment to self-respect.

This emotional terrain—where love arrives hand in hand with absence—is intrinsic to Lahiri's fictional world. Intimate relationships are often steeped in quiet misunderstandings or unspoken expectations, and for women, the path to resilience is paved through silent acceptance rather than dramatic outbursts. They learn to live with "less," to temper hope with pragmatism, and to find dignity in graceful withdrawal when intimacy becomes too demanding or too distant. Megan's realization—that love might not be freely spoken—serves as a poignant example of how emotional survival requires both honesty and self-containment.

Moreover, Lahiri's portrayal of female emotional resilience extends beyond one relationship, reflecting a universal pattern in her stories. Characters like Hema in "Going Ashore" or Sudha in "Only Goodness" also face intimacy entwined with loss—whether through unspoken love, betrayal, or grief—yet they endure with composed determination. The measure of their strength is not in dramatic gestures but in the quiet assertion of boundaries,

choosing where to invest emotional labor and where to withdraw before being diminished.

Ultimately, the feminine experience of intimacy in Lahiri's stories is not defined by passion but by presence: the decision to stay despite unfulfilled emotional needs, or to leave with quiet dignity when love proves insufficient. Through Megan's understated epiphany, Lahiri illuminates a larger truth: that love, loss, and loneliness intertwine in ways that often defy neat resolutions. This form of resilience—rooted in acknowledgment, self-protection, and silent courage—embodies Lahiri's vision of the feminine heart navigating the delicate geography of intimacy.

6. Quiet Defiance: Small Acts of Rebellion Against Patriarchy

While Lahiri's women may appear passive, their inner lives reveal acts of resistance — leaving relationships, choosing solitude, or simply refusing expectations.

"She had decided not to tell her parents. There was no need to worry them."
(Going Ashore)

In "Going Ashore," Jhumpa Lahiri masterfully presents Hema's subtle defiance, illustrating how acts of autonomy—no matter how quiet—can represent significant resistance against patriarchal and cultural expectations. Hema's decision to conceal her affair from her parents is itself an act of quiet rebellion: "She had decided not to tell her parents. There was no need to worry them." By withholding disclosure, Hema asserts control over her narrative, choosing self-determination over submission to cultural norms that prioritize obedience and conformity. What may appear as concealment is, in fact, an assertion of personal sovereignty—an intentional refusal to let tradition dictate her romantic life.

This defiance gains further weight in Hema's ultimate choice to end the relationship with Kaushik—not after dramatic confrontation, but through serene resolve. Despite the deep emotional connection she feels in Rome, she decides to stay committed to her arranged marriage to Navin and return to India. She acknowledges the gravity of what she relinquishes: "She had denied herself the pleasure of openly sharing life with the person she loved"—yet her decision is unwavering. Here, Lahiri captures the paradox of resistance: Hema's departure is bound by cultural expectation, yet fundamentally driven by her own sense of autonomy and the desire for stability on her own terms.

Hema's rebellion is not loud or defiant but contained within decisions made silently, with dignity. By choosing not to uproot her life for Kaushik—even when he ardently invites her to join him, a proposal that might ignite envy in

others—she exhibits strength through restraint. Despite the heat of passion, she resists being swept into spontaneity or upheaval. Her inner dialogue resists the romantic ideal in favor of sober self-preservation: a decision born not of weakness, but of clarity and emotional intelligence.

Ultimately, her quiet defiance speaks more powerfully than visible confrontation ever could. Hema rejects passivity not by asserting overt power, but by privileging her own agenda. In choosing silence over explanation—by protecting her emotional life from familial intrusion—she charts a map of selfhood beyond patriarchal dictates. Lahiri emphasizes that rebellion need not cast shadows or break taboos; sometimes, it is the refusal to capitulate to expected narratives—choosing solitude, stability, or self-prioritization instead.

Thus, in Hema's choices we see a form of radical self-possession: she neither shouts her intentions nor stages dramatic gestures. Rather, she quietly defines her path—keeping love private, ending relationships on her own terms, and ultimately, choosing a life shaped by her own convictions. In these unspoken decisions, Lahiri affirms that the subtlest acts of defiance—choosing not to tell, choosing to walk away—carry immense potency. Hema's quiet rebellion is a testament to the nuanced strength of women who resist not by loud protest, but by inner resolve and deliberate choice.

7. Narrative Voice and Female Subjectivity

Jhumpa Lahiri's use of third-person limited narration in *Unaccustomed Earth* subtly yet powerfully immerses readers in the interior worlds of her female protagonists, allowing an intimate glimpse into their hopes, regrets, and longing. Take, for instance, Ruma's moment of tentative anticipation: "In spite of everything, she had expected him to call. Even now, her heart stirred at the sound of the phone." This line, nestled within the narrative's close attention to her internal reactions, builds a layer of emotional resonance that might have been lost under third-person omniscience. It places us squarely inside Ruma's vulnerable psyche—her lingering hope, tempered by realism, pulses through the simple act of listening for a phone's ring. Through this narrative intimacy, Lahiri reveals that Ruma's resilience is intertwined with persistent emotional fragility.

The choice to maintain this perspective throughout the story reinforces the complexity of Ruma's character. We understand her through her internal dialogue rather than external action alone—her silence, her hesitation, her guilt. This narrative stance presents Ruma not as a figure seen from the outside, but as a self-analyzing individual grappling with dual burdens of cultural expectation and personal desire. We witness her internal bargaining: part of

her hankers for independence, but another part clings to tradition and relational obligations—the heart-stirring moment capturing that tension perfectly.

Moreover, this technique allows Lahiri to explore how Ruma's internal life is shaped by memory and inherited silence. We sense her mother's presence in her unresolved emotional landscape, always just beneath the surface of her current choices about career, family, and identity. The narrative lens gives the subtle weight of Ruma's grief and the tender ache for maternal guidance—muted by the brevity of third-person narration, yet deeply felt.

By limiting the narration to Ruma's perspective, Lahiri also intensifies the reader's empathy. We do not merely perceive Ruma's choices; we feel the emotional gravity behind them. The narration captures fleeting sensations—the stirrings of the heart, the echo of the phone—that evoke universal experiences of longing. In doing so, Lahiri crafts a portrait of modern womanhood marked not by dramatic gestures, but by quiet emotional currents.

In sum, Lahiri's third-person limited voice grants readers access to the interior self of her female characters—layered, reflective, and emotionally nuanced. It is a narrative strategy that celebrates the strength found in vulnerability, making the invisible landscapes of the feminine heart visible in just a few resonant lines.

II. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has examined how Jhumpa Lahiri's storytelling in *Unaccustomed Earth*, *Only Goodness*, *Hell-Heaven*, and other works illuminates the nuanced emotional labor, inherited silence, and resilient defiance of immigrant women. By closely analyzing themes such as silent sacrifices, intergenerational femininity, emotional endurance, dual cultural identity, intimacy under loss, quiet rebellion, and subjective narrative intimacy, we have traced how Lahiri constructs a literary space wherein familial heritage and personal agency coexist in quiet tension.

This research has demonstrated that Lahiri's female characters express strength not through overt confrontation but through internal acts—choosing when to speak or remain silent, when to stay and when to walk away. Their decisions—becoming stay-at-home mothers, withholding forgiveness, or concealing relationships—are subtle yet powerful assertions of agency. Through third-person limited narration, Lahiri grants readers intimate access to these inner landscapes of love, grief, belonging, and self-definition.

The significance of these findings lies in how they expand our understanding of immigrant womanhood in

literature: resistance is reframed not as loud defiance, but as composed speechlessness, self-possession, and emotional labor. This reframing enriches critical dialogues in feminist and postcolonial scholarship by foregrounding the internal mechanisms of empowerment that challenge traditional patriarchal dynamics.

Despite the depth of this analysis, avenues remain for further exploration. Future research might investigate how Lahiri's narrative strategies compare with other transnational writers, or how these themes evolve across her later works. Quantitative reader-response studies could also illuminate how diverse audiences interpret the interplay of silence and agency in her portrayal of women. Additionally, an interdisciplinary approach engaging psychological insights into emotional restraint could deepen our comprehension of these characters' resilience.

Ultimately, this paper underscores that Lahiri's contribution goes beyond storytelling—it offers a profound inquiry into how immigrant women navigate cultural inheritance and shape their own identities through quiet endurance. As we continue to explore the complexities of gender, culture, and narrative voice, Lahiri's work stands as a rich source of insight into the delicate power of silence, choice, and emotional survival.

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