



Stained Calcutta: Revolutionary Violence, Memory, and the Weight of History in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*

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Abstract

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* (2013) is one of the most historically ambitious works of South Asian diasporic fiction produced in the twenty-first century. Set between the waterlogged lanes of Tollygunge in south Calcutta and the academic corridors of Rhode Island, the novel weaves together the catastrophic political violence of the Naxalite movement of the late 1960s with the private histories of loss, guilt, exile, and inherited trauma that extend across three generations of a Bengali family. This paper offers a sustained multi-theoretical analysis of *The Lowland* under the central theme of revolutionary violence, memory, and the weight of history. Drawing on trauma theory, postcolonial criticism, feminist and gender theory, Marxist and political philosophy, psychoanalytic frameworks, postmemory studies, New Historicism, narratology, and the ethics of witnessing, the paper argues that Lahiri's novel stages a profound interrogation of the relationship between political idealism and personal devastation, between collective history and private grief, and between the land one leaves and the self one becomes in exile. The lowland of the title - a literal, waterlogged field in Tollygunge - functions as the novel's central symbolic and epistemological space: a site of revolutionary burial, ancestral memory, and irreversible historical staining that no distance, geographical or temporal, can fully cleanse.

Keywords: Trauma, Naxalite, Violence, Postcolonial.