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[July 13, 2019]

Immigrants and hardships

# Introduction

The current international system circles around different nation-states in the world. At present, there are around 204 nations states in toto. Every nation-state has its own territory, population, customs, and independent government systems. People in each and every nation-state are unified in their unique structures. Every country and every society within have their own cultural patterns which dominate their lives. In this way, every country has its own population which follows the dominant culture and its patterns in their lives. people are always happy and content when they live in their own territories and with their own normative pattern. Nevertheless, this perfect state of harmony becomes an elusive dream for some of the people when they are caught under strict circumstances of life. The austerity of life makes them live their countries and settle in some foreign lands where they have an entirely new way of life. this is what happens with immigrants. They are forced to leave their homelands when the internal conditions of their country are deplorable and they have to choose either their survival or their homeland. Such drastic events make them abandon their homelands and settle in other lands as immigrants. This is where the tough journey of immigrants starts when they are stuck between two extremes. They are not welcomed in foreign lands and they are treated as outsiders. This was the theme of the Vanessa Hua when she wrote For What They Shared. Immigrants and their struggle never end, and this becomes the theme of the next story by Jhumpa Lahiri. In her story The Boundary she highlighted that natives get envious by the unique lifestyles of immigrants. Both stories discuss immigrants and their families in foreign lands and the kind of pressure they experience every single day. What they shared discusses a girl Aileen in American society, whereas the boundary by Jhumpa Lahiri portrays a family that goes on a vacation in another country. Both stories share the theme that being immigrant is a fate no one wants even when it is for some days as they face stereotypes, experience identity crisis, becomes a source of envy for native people, and remain a constant target for the permanent inhabitants in the land.

# Discussion

The life on this planet is not so simple for most of the people and so is the case with immigrants. Life offers a promising picture only in those societies where there is more focus on human development, social justice, economic justice, and equal opportunities. This scenario is common in First world countries and somehow in second world countries. Nevertheless, those living in poor states hardly enjoy a quality life or adequate amount of happiness in their lives. This is quite clear when one observes conflict-stricken lands such as Mexico, or the region of the Middle East in general where people run away from their lands to save their lives and children. Even at present, several ongoing conflicts are forcing people to travel to other countries as immigrants and begin their new lives. So, being an immigrant is a tough job as one has to deal with contrasting aspects of life (Green). Hence, life is not simple for immigrants in other countries.

Immigrants experience huge stereotypes in foreign lands. This is often stigmatized for their color, race, and origin. Settlers in foreign lands are differentiated and discriminated because they are unlike the other people in society. The girl in the story For What They Shared experiences the same social situation where she is stereotyped for being Chinese in outlook. She was stigmatized and Everyone notices her facial features in an insulting manner. Her Boyfriends leave her one after another for the same reason as the quote suggests in the story, "You're too Chinese," one observed, soon before he dumped her. (Too Polite? Too inscrutable? She never knew.) Three years ago, she had decided that finding a Chinese-American, with the same upbringing, would be the best for all concerned, but after a few months, each relationship collapsed under the weight of expectations “(Hua, 8). This happens with everybody in foreign lands who are stigmatized for their origins as it is highlighted by (Stephan et al.) where Stephen argues that immigrants face a huge level of prejudice in every public activity their perform. This is the sad reality of their lives as foreigners in foreign lands. No one tries to understand their set of circumstances as in the case Aileen in American society where she is labeled as being too Chinese too often. Thus, the story of Aileen and of the other immigrants reveal that stereotypes are a regular part of lives for immigrants.

Furthermore, the native people in their own countries do not meet and greet outsiders happily. They are often jealous and view these outsiders with suspicion. This is not something unusual, and every society treats immigrants with suspicions and doubts. This social situation is represented in the story of Jhumpa Lahiri where expands the same idea. Her short story The Boundary explains the situation that an immigrant family comes to spend some time in a foreign land. They enjoy themselves according to their cultural patterns and their own preferences. Nevertheless, their source of happiness was not the same for the inhabitants that surrounded the immigrant family. Their native neighbors always try to inquire and investigate their activities and their routine. It is reflected in the story where the author narrates, "I pretend not to watch them, to be discreet. I do the housework and water the garden, but I can't help noticing how happy and excited they are. I hear the girls' voices as they run across the lawn, I learn their names. Since the guests usually leave the sliding door open, I overhear what the parents say to each other as they settle into the house, as they unpack their suitcases and decide what to have for lunch." (Lahiri, 2). This quote shows that immigrants remain under constant observation of the natives. This observation and surveillance are not as good as it breeds animosity in society. This is explained by Esses and Jackson in (Esses et al.). This hampers the social fabric and further compounds the distress for immigrant families. Natives do not feel empathetic towards them and this is the reason that immigrant is treated differently. Henceforth, it becomes obvious that native people or the real inhabitants do not welcome people and remain suspicious of the immigrants.

“No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.” It is a famous quote of Warsen Shire who tried to explain the severity of life for immigrants. She highlights the same theme as in these two stories such as The Boundary and the For What They Shared where immigrant are not welcomed wholeheartedly. So Warren Shire illuminates the struggle of being an outsider in a new land where one faces a huge amount of trouble in handling new realities of life. To be an immigrant is a tough choice but life often creates that kind of bitter situations that home becomes a mouth of a shark, and the only rescue is leaving your home. Hence, when home becomes ominous, people have no choice but to leave their lands.

Moreover, the life of an immigrant becomes a quandary in a foreign land. The people who come to foreign lands with a hope to begin a new life remain hopeless and disillusioned. This is common for settlers as they experience new and unique kind of problems in other terrorists. They move to save themselves from adverse situations in their own lands. Nevertheless, this becomes an elusive dream as they are engulfed in a new series of problems. Their life is changed dramatically and drastically as they have to cope with new ways of life. an immigrant person becomes a Marginal Man in society as their own lifestyle gets changed. This is the same thing the Aileen in For What They Shared experiences. She is the girl who has contrasting experiences in American society. Venessa Hua mentions this in a quote, "White people who were more Chinese parents' idea of getting back to that she made Aileen feel guilty." (Hua, 3). This is the thing that people from foreign lands are often under continuous social pressure to align with the dominant culture of the society that they neglect their own cultural patterns. However, this guilt remains and they face a huge identity crisis in other societies. This identity crisis hampers their prospects of social success and personal satisfaction. This is the thing which is much ominous for immigrants in foreign countries as they are stuck between their old cultural patterns and new normative behavior. They are never certain about what to follow and what not to. This is not a good sign for personality development at all as it cripples and harms the development of self in a person. Hence, Aileen remained in limbo for a long time and this enigmatic life is part and parcel for immigrants.

Lastly, native people often consider immigrants as their potential targets. The vulnerability of immigrants compounds when there is no adequate defense mechanism for them. This concept is highlighted in For What They Shared in the quote, “From reading the local Chinese newspaper, she knew her Chinese newspaper, she knew her people were targets in America “(Hua, 6). The immigrants are single out and they are victims of stabbings, lootings, and killings. This is highlighted in (Maynard et al.) that immigrants are more prone to bullying and victimization. This is the negative aspect of societies where they unnecessarily target other people who are living with them in the same society. This picture hurts social solidarity as one group becomes dominant and hurts others just for the sake that they are immigrants. Thus, this vulnerability of immigrants to become easy targets for native people is an alarming sign.

# Conclusion

In a nutshell, it can be stated that immigrant life is full of turmoil and hardship. Immigrants face a different kind of troubling experiences in other countries as they become marginal men in those territories and face an identity crisis. The also experience stereotypes and become easy targets for native in the land. Immigrants remain under constant surveillance of the natives as they are considered suspicious. Both short stories for what they shared and The Boundary reveal the tragic side of being an immigrant. Their writing has really focused on the light of foreigners as they are considered outsiders and never assimilated wholeheartedly in society. In this way, it becomes obvious that people migrate only when the internal situation of the country is turbulent enough. It is not a pleasing experience as people are now divided into nation states which is the key feature of their modern international system.

**Works Cited:**

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