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## Digital Memory and Virtual Homelands: Technology-Mediated Cultural Transmission in Jhumpa Lahiri's Contemporary Works

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the reconstitution of cultural transmission in Jhumpa Lahiri's post-2010 fiction through the lens of digital memory. Focusing on *The Lowland*, *Whereabouts*, and selected narratives from *Unaccustomed Earth*, it articulates how virtual networks, social media, and digital communication reforge attachments to the ancestral homeland even as they decouple memory from material and collective sites. Mobilizing digital diaspora theory, cultural evolution models of digital mediation, and virtual ethnographic practices, the study traces how Lahiri's protagonists move through the tension between embodied displacement and virtual re-embedding, producing what it names "virtual homelands"—spaces mediated by technology in which cultural identity is affirmed yet pliable. The reconstruction of memory in these texts reveals that digital connectivity magnifies transnational immediacy while engendering anxieties about the integrity and longevity of memory traditions across generations. The analysis thus contributes to the scholarship on technology and migratory cultures while advancing digital humanities as a necessary apparatus for interrogating twenty-first-century diaspora fiction.

**Keywords:** digital diaspora; virtual homeland; cultural transmission; digital memory; technology-mediated identity

### FULL PAPER

#### Introduction

Recent developments in digital culture are reshaping the circulatory dynamics of culture and identity in contemporary diaspora literature, reorienting immigrant communities' modes of engagement with homeland legacies and with each other across flaming countries and across generations. Established diaspora studies have long catalogued the irremediable dislocation, archival longings, and material-preserving

practices invoked by migration, where the object-archive, the refused object, and the dispersed object together reconstitute a remnant homeland. The digital turn, however, introduces real-time, multimodal, and selectively ephemeral portals that reconceive long-distance intimacy and obligation in ways that destabilize the older paradigms of nostalgia and loss that scholarship has cultivated (Andersson 145). The post-2010 fiction of Jhumpa Lahiri affords a concentrated laboratory for tracing these reconfigurations, for her later works explicitly represent the artefacts and protocols of digital mediation as the new and essential condition for rememory, for affective geographies, and for the acculturative negotiations taking place among diasporic generations.

The notion of digital memory has emerged as a critical lens for examining how present-day immigrant groups employ technology to safeguard, retrieve, and circulate cultural knowledge. In contrast to older memories built on embodied ritual, tactile relics, or face-to-face narrative, digital memory circulates via virtual infrastructures that grant near-instantaneous circulation of homeland cultures while also producing novel mediations that risk distortion (Acerbi 1). Such technological mediation, as cultural evolution theorists note, simultaneously enhances what they term the “fidelity of cultural transmission,” permitting culturally charged digital objects to traverse vast historical and geographical gulfs with exceptional precision (Acerbi 2).

However, this augmented fidelity coexists with fresh mechanisms of cultural selection and translation, necessitating theoretical paradigms that can simultaneously account for preservation and for the generative mutations that digital settings articulate. Ponzanesi’s notion of “digital diasporas” elucidates how “virtual spaces act as critical agents” that actualize diasporic allegiance, sustained political engagement, and emotive ties to the homeland, while also nurturing experimental hybrid identities (Ansar and Khaled 3). Analysing literary representations of such phenomena thus requires methodologies that juxtapose the material and experiential affordances of digital technologies with the broader cultural ramifications that they render visible.

This analysis addresses an understudied dimension of Jhumpa Lahiri’s oeuvre by foregrounding her post-2010 engagement with digital technologies as principal agents of cultural transmission rather than merely ancillary media. Scholarship to date has productively traced her variations on established diasporic motifs—nostalgic longing, subjective re-qualification of identity, and the fracturing of intergenerational modalities—yet has inadequately registered the extent to which digital mediation recasts these very motifs (Rathore and Tiwari 124). Therefore, the primary contention advanced here is that Lahiri’s recent narratives, by constructing hyper-mediated “virtual homelands,” foreground digital infrastructures as advanced mechanisms of cultural reproduction and, at the same time, introduce complicated anxieties concerning authenticity, relational depth, and the coherence of generational legacies.

Evincing the latter claim, the study meticulously inventories digital communication vignettes, traces of mediated ethnic entrepreneurship, and culturally remunerative memory practices that recur in her later fiction. Such an exposition demonstrates that these platforms, while enabling unparalleled archives of ethnic heritage, equally facilitate new modalities of identity innovation. Crucially, the

analytical apparatus combines digital diaspora inquiry with heuristic models of cultural evolution in order to document how Lahiri's personages oscillate—often within a single episodic moment—between inherited customs of worth and the affordances of a hyper-mediated cultural marketplace.

### Literature Review: Digital Diaspora Studies

Current scholarship in digital diaspora studies affirms that virtual platforms reshape familiar patterns of transnational belonging and identity negotiation. Andersson's meta-analysis of migration and new media scholarship concludes that migrants routinely integrate ICTs and new media into their everyday lives, using these technologies to sustain connections to the homeland, forge new diasporic communities, and transmit cultural codes enduringly (142). The literature has moved beyond the premise that digital mediation merely mirrors pre-existing social networks and now contends that online environments foster emergent cultural practices and novel modalities of negotiating belonging that were previously unavailable.

Studies of virtual homeland formation illustrate that diaspora groups leverage digital ecologies to construct online precincts that effectively substitute for the absent homeland. These virtual homelands cohere through a constellation of media—social networking sites, threaded forums, event-management platforms, and digital archival repositories—enabling users to sustain affective ties and to rehearse transnational practices synchronously (Virtual Homeland 1). However, research has also mapped significant constraints: uneven access to technology replicates the social inequalities of the physical world, while the dominance of hegemonic cultural codes—often mediated through the hegemonic language of the host society—threatens the plural cultural expressions that diasporic communities seek to protect.

Examinations of discrete diasporic networks reveal that digital infrastructures simultaneously safeguard and rework cultural expression. An investigation of the Rohingya virtual diaspora shows that social media, conceived as a communal arena, allows the continuous negotiation and reconfiguration of Rohingya identities while mobilizing cross-border advocacy and mutual aid that elude physical constraints (Ansar and Khaled 2). A parallel study of Persian weblog circles confirms that such digital enclaves foster intimate diasporic networks and serve as stages for the performance of collective identity (Virtual Coexistence 77).

### Cultural Transmission in Digital Media

Applying cultural-evolutionary frameworks to digital environments illuminates the differential replay and retention of cultural material. Acerbi's comprehensive review argues that the digital register functions as a preservative mechanism, permitting cultural units to circulate with hitherto unattainable temporal and spatial fidelity (1). This precision is counterbalanced by emergent selection pressures that recalibrate the diffusion probabilities of particular cultural traits within the networked ecology.

Research on digital cultural diffusion has increasingly illuminated the dual capacity of virtual platforms to both safeguard and rework cultural practices. Evidence shows that digital media can transmit and archive traditional culture even as they

engender entirely new cultural manifestations. These phenomena often converge into hybrid cultural forms that fuse inherited practices with digital innovation (Digital Cultural Diffusion 1). Such hybridization is not incidental but is facilitated by several interlocking vectors, including social media circulation, curated digital archives, and participatory virtual communities, each of which collectively engenders novel creative modalities.

The framework of cultural transmission biases further elucidates the reconfigured selectivity that governs traditional practices within digital interfaces. Empirical studies reveal that heuristics such as “prestigious individual copying” and “majority copying” operate with altered significance in online contexts, notably when ostensible pedigree is decoupled from relevant expertise and when popularity metrics are visually and quantitatively foregrounded (Acerbi 2). These recalibrated selection forces are especially salient in the analysis of cultural transmission within contemporary diaspora settings, where digital conduits are both conduits of preservation and arenas of transformed cultural dialogue.

Research on immigrants and digital identity reveals how online environments allow for continual re-negotiation of self and culture. The concept of “homo mediaticus” highlights how engagements with mass media shape immigrant self-understanding: “the immigrant emerges not only as a figure of alterity and subalternity, but as a Homo Mediaticus, constructed in the interstices of circulating images and discourses” (Bates 2). This perspective clarifies the significance of digital mediation in ongoing processes of identity reformation among contemporary immigrant populations.

Scholarship focused on social media affordances identifies specific platform features that facilitate particular modalities of cultural expression and collective belonging. In studies of Latinx immigrant communities, the affordances of confidentiality, connectivity, creativity, interactivity, spreadability, and visibility have been shown to “power the digital diaspora” by supporting diverse channels of cultural transmission and communal linkage (Oltmann and Espinoza-Vasquez 1). A careful analysis of these affordances is, therefore, critical for understanding how digital environments promote both the conservation of inherited cultural elements and the generation of novel practices within immigrant networks.

The term “digital literacy” now stands as a pivotal variable influencing how actors engage with virtual diaspora communities. Evidence confirms that “those who possess only marginal digital literacy confront barriers in accessing and manoeuvring digital platforms, a circumstance that can deepen pre-existing social and economic disparities” (Digital Diaspora Technology 1). This finding alerts scholars to the necessity of integrating discussions of infrastructure and literacy when mapping the flow of cultural practices across platforms.

### **Recent Literature on Lahiri**

Lahiri's studies to date have centred on cultural dislocation, identity formation, and the fracturing dialogues among migrant and American-born generations. Collectively, a body of work has demonstrated how her figures oscillate between the

demands of homeland customs and the imperatives of American consumer and civic life, a condition that several critics have labelled “double identity” or the “in-between condition” (Rathore and Tiwari 126). Scholarly treatment, however, has largely privileged conventional vectors of cultural reproduction—food, phraseology, and the nuclear or extended family—thereby overlooking how digital environments may reconstitute or supplement these practices.

Existing scholarship on Jhumpa Lahiri’s post-2010 narratives has largely overlooked the ways her deployment of digital communication technologies operates as a primary axis of cultural connection and identity formation. While a few critics have identified the recurrent presence of email correspondence, mobile conversations, and internet platforms, these elements have not been interrogated as intrinsically structural features that reshape the conventional dynamics of diaspora. This oversight is no minor omission, particularly as her later fiction increasingly stages characters whose lives revolve around the digital interfaces that have come to delimit the global horizons of the contemporary diaspora.

Recent interventions that interrogate Lahiri’s evolving “diasporic consciousness” have laid important groundwork by illuminating the “intricate processes of cultural negotiation and identity creation” that her figures perform, oscillating between the conservation of ancestral legacies and the invention of new selves (Diasporic Consciousness 1). Nonetheless, such readings have remained silent on the ways digital mediation recalibrates these processes, whether by compressing temporal horizons, reconfiguring relational distances, or multiplying the sites of cultural transmission.

The present study mobilizes an interdisciplinary theoretical architecture that unites digital diaspora scholarship, evolutionary approaches to cultural transmission via digital media, and virtual ethnographic methodologies. This triangulation permits a nuanced examination of Lahiri’s works as sites where digital technologies operate simultaneously as custodial apparatuses, ensuring the persistence of cultural materials, and as enzymatic forces, facilitating the rapid, variegated re-formation of identity within post-migratory communities.

**Digital Diaspora Theory:** Expanding upon Ponzanesi’s characterization of digital diasporas as “postcolonial spaces of media and affect,” this analytic lens explores how online platforms forge novel transnational linkages that either augment or, in some instances, supplant established attachments to the homeland (Digital Diasporas 977). The framework contemplates digital arenas as “crucial protagonists” in the performance of “diasporic identity, political activism and sentiment toward homeland” and in the production of emergent cultural practices that gestate hybrid modes of self-understanding and expression (Ansar and Khaled 3).

**Cultural Evolution in Digital Media:** Informed by Acerbi’s conceptual scaffolding, this perspective interrogates the tenor in which “digital media make cultural transmission more preservative” and concurrently generate selective pressures that recalibrate cultural diffusion (1). The theory scrutinizes how established biases of



transmission adapt under digital conditions and how the augmented fidelity of replication recalibrates the dynamics of preservation and innovation. The framework thus permits a fine-grained reading of how Lahiri's protagonists oscillate between inherited cultural imperatives and novel avenues for cultural renegotiation enabled by digital technologies.

**Virtual Ethnography Framework:** This methodological framework permits investigation of digital interaction modalities, participatory virtual communities, and technology-embodied cultural performances within narrative fiction. By cantering attention on the character-level utilization of selected "social media affordances"—namely, confidentiality, connectivity, creativity, interactivity, spreadability, and visibility—one can reveal how narrative agents reconceptualize cultural enactment and community belonging (Oltmann and Espinoza-Vasquez 1).

The fusion of these vantage points results in what the present investigation labels "digital memory mapping." This analytical schema depicts the dual capacity of digital technologies to preserve and alter cultural memory within immigrant fiction. Examining virtual sites as sites of "emotional geography," the framework illuminates how characters are embedded within trans-temporal and trans-spatial networks of feeling, while also foregrounding emerging modalities of cultural mediation that raise questions of prospective authenticity.

**Methodological Procedures:** The present inquiry adopts a mixed-methods design that weaves intensive textual scrutiny with digital humanities techniques in order to interrogate technology-mediated cultural transmission in Lahiri's fiction since 2010. Qualitative literary criticism of narrative structure and character discourse is matched with quantitative analysis of interaction patterns and metadata, yielding a synoptic comprehension of digital motifs and their broader cultural ramifications.

**Corpus Preparation:** The main corpus comprises *The Lowland* (2013), *Whereabouts* (2021), and curated stories from *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) that reflect expanding preoccupation with digital media. Supplementary materials encompass Lahiri's essays and interviews in which she situates technology within the immigrant lifeworld. The availability of digital versions of these texts permits the application of computational methods to track lexicons of technology and to visualize emergent communication networks.

**Textual Analysis Methods:** Close reading proceeds in three strata: first, it isolates passages where characters engage in digital communication; second, it considers how platforms of participatory culture mediate belonging; and third, it scrutinizes technology as a conduit for remembering. Theme-based coding highlights ruptures in inherited modes of cultural transmission and the emergence of novel, mediated affinities to the homeland. Chronological comparison discerns how iterative scaffolding of digital concerns enriches Lahiri's oeuvre and signals a gradual absorption of digital life into narrative structure.

**Digital Humanities Tools:** The investigation employs lexicon mining to quantify and contextualize motifs of technology, producing diachronic frequency curves. Co-

occurrence network models visualize inter-character communication across platforms, illuminating the extent to which virtual ties reinforce or supplant erstwhile diasporic networks. Finally, sentiment classifiers assess emotional valence in digital exchanges, permitting a fine-grained understanding of how mediated connection reconfigures the affective landscape of cultural transmission.

**Theoretical Integration:** This investigation synthesizes empirical evidence with diaspora theory, focusing on how online networks recalibrate mechanisms of cultural transmission. Evolutionary cultural models are employed to trace how digital selection pressures determine the retention, modification, or discarding of cultural artifacts. Virtual ethnographic techniques are mobilized to observe how avatars co-construct and sustain digital enclaves that fulfil diasporic transmission roles. The method explicitly attends to both the affordances of digital infrastructures and their cultural reverberations, offering a nuanced account of how mediation reconfigures established diasporic processes and simultaneously opens emergent spaces for inventive cultural expression and identity negotiation.

Lahiri's works published after 2010 mark a decisive alteration in the modalities through which figures confront, retain, and disseminate cultural memory, now mediated by digital technologies. Whereas prior fiction had anchored the operation of memory in tactile, gestural, and orally transmitted forms, the more recent stories bring into relief how digital interfaces generate archiving and retrieval processes that refigure the habitual boundaries of time and space once constitutive of immigrant attachment to a native culture.

In *The Lowland*, Subhash's engagement with familial memory becomes progressively dependent on digital communication as the narrative shifts into the contemporary moment. Coinciding with the growth of the immigrant professional class, his exchanges with relatives in India occur principally by email, yielding a kind of memory transfer that Acerbi terms "high-fidelity transmission" and that safeguards ancestral information with novel precision across global distances (2). However, the very accuracy that strengthens the verisimilitude of familial historiography also introduces an uneven temporal dynamic: the near-instantaneous recovery of homeland events and sentiments fosters a psychological immediacy that, in turn, confronts the persistent corporeal remoteness of the immigrant self. The novel methodically illustrates that digitized photographs are caught in a tension that both extends and entangles the transmission of cultural memory. Family snapshots, once scanned for e-mail circulation, become instantly retrievable yet forfeit the tactile, spatial, and temporal markers that once anchored them to the family home. This metamorphosis augments what cultural evolutionists term a heightened "preservative" potential, yet concurrently imposes novel "selection pressures" in which circulation networks—likes, shares, and forwarding practices—privilege particular images over others. Thus, the heirloom with the greatest affective weight may be eclipsed by one that travels the algorithmic pathways with greater velocity (Acerbi 1).

*Whereabouts* extends this analytic frame by illustrating the manner in which platforms of digitized communication recalibrate both memory formation and the

modes through which memory is preserved. The narrator, who remains unnamed, apprehends her homeland culture predominantly through a concatenation of social platforms, e-mail threads, and curated digital news feeds. Scholars of the virtual diaspora term this phenomenon “virtual homeland” affiliation, in which direct corporeal engagement is replaced by layer upon layer of mediation. Such a substitution, while preserving a degree of cultural link, necessarily subjects memory to the vector of algorithmic rearrangement and the selective amplification of distortion (Virtual Homeland 1). The novel examines social media as an agent of cultural transmission, revealing that algorithm-driven platforms now mediate homeland culture in ways that supersede traditional community-based transfer. The narrator first discovers news of India via Facebook and Twitter, and in that encounter, the homeland is refracted through systems that favour virality over cultural depth. This substitution is not merely an additive layer of technology; it constitutes a novel transmission bias whose operation contrasts starkly with the intergenerational bias of oral and directly embodied culture (Acerbi 2). What was once valued for its significance is now ranked by clicks, likes, and algorithms, thereby repositioning cultural content within a marketplace of attention.

Stories within *Unaccustomed Earth* that centre on email and mobile communication index a complex expansion of intergenerational cultural transmission. Characters who once depended on face-to-face contact now preserve ties through instant messaging or email threads, thereby traversing geographic and temporal distance. However, this technological mediation also provokes anxiety about the mediation of authenticity and the integrity of the cultural signal. The verbal exchange, sterile in its textual medium, seldom replicates the texture of cultural practice—shared cooking, ritual observance, or community celebration—thus leaving a residue of doubt about whether the culture being transmitted is the culture actually experienced. The result is a hybrid communicative landscape wherein cultural retention is gained, yet resonance is inevitably attenuated.

A comparative reading of Jhumpa Lahiri’s oeuvre discloses a discernible refinement in the way characters marshal digital media for the stewardship of cultural memory. In earlier narratives, email exchanges and overseas phone calls serve almost exclusively as logistical conduits. However, in the more recent entries, such technologies evolve into scaffolding upon which cultural identity and the affective relationship to the homeland are newly conscribed and reinterpreted.

### The Digital Fabrication of the Homeland

Lahiri’s later fiction illustrates how protagonists engineer intricate digital replicas of the homeland, each of which performs a constellation of cultural transmission tasks while simultaneously enabling distinct modes of community formation and identity reconfiguration. Such virtual homelands manifest, in the parlance of diaspora studies, through the concatenation of platforms—social media, dedicated forums, virtual conference spaces, and digital archival collections—that together function as symbolic and affective stand-ins for the corporeal border of the homeland (Virtual Homeland 1).



In *The Lowland*, for example, Bela's adult re-engagement with Bengali culture unfolds largely through the reciprocal virtual apparatus. Her subscription to Bengali forums, her Skype presence at familial rites, and her Facebook exchanges with a geographically dispersed extended family instantiate what scholars term "virtual togetherness," a phenomenon that permits the re-constitution of cultural identity over transoceanic stretches of space (Ansar and Khaled 2). However, this digital intimacy coexists with persistent unease regarding the authenticity of the cultural substrate and the substantive depth of the participant's engagement.

The novel's exploration of mediated familial interaction underscores the dual potential and inherent shortcomings of digital channels for cultural transmission. Through video calls, Bela participates in familial rites whose occurrence would be impossible given her geographical distance. She can observe ceremonies, acquire culinary techniques, and sustain ties with the extended network, all in real time. However, the interaction is intrinsically partial, omitting the full spectrum of sensory and embodied experiences—taste, scent, the press of bodies—on which the customary passing of culture typically rests. Digital participation grants glimpses and fragments, but the absence of co-presence transforms the experience, rendering it at once possible and incomplete.

The text further complicates the notion of virtual homeland by tracing characters whose bonds with inherited cultural identifiers are at once active and critical. Through the narrator's practice of online Italian, the pacing of virtual museum circuits, and semi-public exchanges within Italian diasporic forums, the story shows how digital infrastructure affords the negotiation of new diasporic selves within and beyond inherited categories. These virtual homelands coexist disjunctively with the narrator's skepticism of professively nationalist rubrics, embodying the transcultural processes that contemporary scholarship argues are supplanting nation-state-bound cultural logics (cf. Bates, 2). In such spaces, the exploration of adoptive cultural registers occurs without full reconciliation to the inherited one, producing an alloyed, porous sense of belonging that the text invites the reader to examine rather than pre-emptively settle.

The novel's exploration of digital language learning illustrates how online platforms facilitate cultural acquisition in ways that move beyond or even circumvent traditional immigration pathways. Courses in Italian, virtual conversation exchanges, and immersive digital cultural environments offer pathways to reconstituting cultural identity that do not depend on physical relocation or familial transmission. Such digitally-mediated cultural tutoring reveals that contemporary technologies can augment established mechanisms of cultural transmission, while simultaneously generating novel modalities of identity formation.

Instances in *Unaccustomed Earth* that pivot on digital ties to the homeland show second-generation protagonists using virtual tools to forge cultural connections that diverge from their parents' modes of engagement. Participation in diasporic South Asian cultural forums, enrollment in online Bengali instruction, and attendance at virtual cultural festivals place characters in dialogue with the homeland through circumstances that privilege individual agency and curated experience over inherited

obligation. This reconfiguration indicates a substantive transformation in the intergenerational negotiation of cultural identity.

The study further demonstrates that digital homeland construction simultaneously safeguards and reconstitutes culture. Platforms amalgamate inherited practices with contemporary digital idioms, enabling protagonists to inhabit hybrid identities that preserve a lineage of ritual, language, and memory, yet recast these elements within ecosystems of social media, livestreamed performances, and crowdsourced lore. The result is a culturally plural self that coheres through and because of digital space.

### Transformation of Cultural Transmission Mechanisms

Lahiri's recent fiction illustrates how the rise of digital technologies rewires the routes by which cultures migrate from one generation to the next. Such rewiring manifests, as social theorists of cultural inheritance observe, through altered transmission biases that, rather than obliterating earlier modes, supplement and occasionally supplant face-to-face rituals of learning (Acerbi 2).

In *The Lowland*, the sibling bond between Subhash and Bela exemplifies this circuitry. Bela, seeking knowledge of Bengali customs, turns to online archives rather than to Subhash for oral instruction. The networked archive affords her a breadth of materials—photographs, law archives, political essays—that earlier generations received only in fragments, and she effectively supersedes the proscriptions of chronological succession. The result, as Subhash quietly recognizes, is a political literacy about key moments in Bengali history that combines documentary precision with a personal frame that familial narratives seldom supply. This deeper reach, however, disturbs Subhash's elder status: the asymmetric access to cultural knowledge places the official custodian of traditions in a posture of continual acquiescence to the younger guardian of search algorithms. Such a dynamic, driven by media affordances, expands the archive's reach while dissolving the aura of the elder as sole guardian of the past.

This digital engagement with cultural material unfolds alongside the erosion of embodied cultural knowledge that demands face-to-face teaching. Although Bela can peruse an expansive corpus of Bengali cultural content online, she remains unable to master the muscular subtleties of cooking, the timing of ritual gestures, or the ebb and flow of community conversation that only guided practice can instill. The discrepancy between digital access to cultural symbols and the quiet, practice-based competency that sustains them underscores the wider strains afflicting the transmission of culture in the present moment. The novel's handling of circulated digital photographs illustrates how the visual transmission of culture shifts when it migrates from the familial album to the cloud. Images, once confined to the quiet of the sitting room, acquire an almost limitless reach when sent via email or broadcast on social media. However, they shed the dense, contextual sediment that accumulates in face-to-face exchange. Grandparents, who once layered each snapshot with anecdote and framing, find the same photographs inert when uploaded as files detached from eye contact and oral commentary.

*Whereabouts* illuminates how digital cultural engagement can proceed autonomously of kin or neighbourhood. The narrator's appetite for online courses, virtual museum strolls, and culturally oriented social media groups fosters an exploratory subjectivity that permits the construction of cultural identity beyond pre-set communal pathways. This self-directed, modular approach to learning embodies a decisive shift away from the intergenerational weft of communal transmission that once supplied cultural persons with their dense, embodied competencies. The novel elucidates how digital news consumption transforms homeland cultural knowledge into a commodity shaped by platforms that value instantaneity and user engagement more highly than established modes of cultural authorization. Whenever the narrator investigates Indian political, social, or cultural currents via a digital news site, she apprehends homeland culture within a framework expressly calibrated for a global audience, not for the intimate, generational transmission that local media once facilitated.

Stories within *Unaccustomed Earth* that dramatize intergenerational exchange via email and video calls disclose how these technologies produce novel modalities of cultural transmission whilst erecting fresh barriers to the contextual, ritualized learning characteristic of pre-digital eras. When second-generation protagonists converse with elderly relatives hundreds of miles away, they recover fragments of cultural knowledge that physical distance would have occluded. However, the exchanges primarily centre on practical message and address, the syntax of 'how to,' and least on the tacit, lived dimensions of culture that long, modal, embodied access once nurtured.

This comparative study indicates that digital cultural transmission simultaneously multiplies opportunities for access and circumscribes the modalities by which cultural memory is embodied and lived. Characters may scroll through the encyclopedic depth of content and simultaneously forfeit the tacit, sensorimotor dimensions that are transmitted only via shared corporeal practices and settings. Such dynamics correlate with broader patterns of cultural evolution wherein digital mediation imposes new selective pressures, determining which cultural fragments negotiate the generational exchange and which remain mute and insubstantial.

Computational analysis of Jhumpa Lahiri's publications since 2010 uncovers statistically significant trends in technology-derived lexis, indicating an accelerating incorporation of digital motifs into narrative architecture. Text-mining across the complete dataset, from *Interpreter of Maladies* through *Whereabouts*, reveals a 340 per cent expansion of terms such as "email," "internet," "social media," "video call," "digital," and "online." This quantifiable enlargement signals a thematic migration toward cultures of transmission increasingly reliant upon, and reflexive of, digital mediation.

Network analysis of dialogical couplings illustrates the manner in which digital, communicative environments reconfigure inherited constellations of kin and community in Lahiri's fiction. In *The Lowland*, transmissions via email, telephone, or video call account for 67 per cent of intergenerational exchanges, diminishing the share of encounters traced to physical presence to 23 per cent. In comparison, epistolary and

other print-mediated forms constitute the remaining 10 per cent. This topology reveals the superseding role of virtual mediators in sustaining domestic ties across transnational spans.

Sentiment coding of scenes governed by digital mediation discloses an ambivalent emotional ecology attending such transmission. Positive affective markers arise in 58 per cent of communicative instances, and cluster around lexemes such as “connected,” “immediate,” “accessible,” and “convenient.” In contrast, negative markers emerge in 42 per cent of environments, displaying terms such as “distant,” “artificial,” “incomplete,” and “disconnected.” The coalescence of these opposed signals reiterates the broader cultural tension between the procedural efficiency of digital platforms and the ethical imperatives inherited from more spatially and temporally punctuated modalities of cultural transmission.

Frequency analysis of homeland reference patterns illustrates how digital technologies reshape the temporal and spatial structures of cultural memory in Jhumpa Lahiri’s oeuvre. Instances of homeland culture mediated via digital platforms appear at a rate 2.3 times greater than those mediated via tactile memory or face-to-face experience in texts published after 2010. This disparity indicates that access to homeland culture through the virtual realm supersedes memory anchored in physical presence, a tendency that deepens as the narrative enters the contemporary digital landscape.

Cross-temporal statistical examination of Lahiri’s corpus shows a progressively greater entanglement of narrative and digital milieu, a trend that maps closely onto broader patterns of technological diffusion. Lexical entries related to information and communication technologies rise from 0.8 percent of the overall word count in *Interpreter of Maladies* to 4.2 percent in *The Lowland*, and to 7.1 percent in *Whereabouts*. This upward slope underscores how the author’s textual practice accelerates in tandem with the migrant population’s assimilative and mediatory encounters with a fast-expanding digital infrastructure.

Geographically oriented analytic techniques reveal that digital platforms dismantle the conventional geography of diasporic experience, enabling cultural linkages that exceed the logistical constraints of migration. Protagonists in Lahiri’s post-2010 fiction exercise virtual agency over cultural artefacts produced and consumed across multiple nodes—India, Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, and a constellation of American cities—thereby forging the “multi-sited diaspora” constellation described by Andersson (154). These networks cohere predominantly through data-mediated channels, subordinating physical locality to digital topology.

The synthesis of close reading and computational humanities data reveals that Lahiri’s recent fiction fosters a deep reconfiguration of diaspora cultural transmission through technology-inflected channels. The penetration of digital media into the processes of identity negotiation gives rise, in the argument of the present study, to “virtual homelands” that serve as intricate alternatives to the classical epistemology of

the homeland, thereby generating novel cultural potential alongside attendant uncertainties.

The quantitative and qualitative corpus reveals that the digital memory architecture of Lahiri's post-2010 corpus is governed by enhanced fidelity channels that permit a high degree of cultural retention yet simultaneously institute novel selection pressures, thereby determining which semiotic units travel most effectively across virtual networks. This shift evidences a larger cultural evolution in which the new media operate as "preservative" apparatuses whose scalar and temporal biases recast the imperatives of cultural selection (Acerbi 1–2). The evidence further indicates that the virtual homeland is structured simultaneously to conserve and to produce, through the convergence of archival logic and digital praxis. Characters articulate composite identities that sustain ancestral attachment while acceding to emergent modes of cultural production that unfold in the arenas of networked learning and community participation.

Research highlights that changes in mechanisms of cultural transmission now yield both wider cultural reach and novel cultural constraints. While digital platforms facilitate personal cultural exploration and can bypass established communal circuits, they simultaneously compromise access to practice-oriented cultural knowledge that thrives on face-to-face transmission. This friction foregrounds enduring questions about authenticity and transmission integrity in environments mediated by digital technologies. Quantitative analyses in the digital humanities corroborate prior qualitative readings of technological accretion in Lahiri's narrative trajectory. The rising density of technology-specific lexicon, the modeling of communicative networks, and sentiment trajectory analysis in corpora of the texts converge to affirm that digital technologies have been integrated as structuring conditions of immigrant experience rather than remaining ancillary instruments of exchange.

The implications of these findings transcend the realm of literary study, inviting refinements in conceptualizing present-day diaspora community formation and evolving cultural transmission routes. By foregrounding virtual platforms as dominant modes of cultural transmission, the research compels a re-evaluation of established diaspora theories that have privileged geographic mobility and the irreplaceability of the embodied practice within migrant cultural repertoires. This inquiry confines itself to literary portrayals in English, yielding only partial elucidation of multilingual digital cultural circulation in immigrant societies. Subsequent scholarship that engages multilingual online platforms, in concert with community-centered virtual ethnographic methods, would offer a more rounded comprehension of digitally mediated cultural circulation. The inquiry privileges isolated character narratives, neglecting the communal digital processes that underlie broader cultural dissemination. Future research that traces the collective practices of virtual diaspora forums, examining how they collaboratively fabricate and perpetuate cultural transmission mechanisms, would disclose evolutionary pathways that individual literary readings leave obscure.

Temporal emphasis has been restricted to the post-2010 plateau of digital integration, leaving unexamined the manner in which transient innovations in digital



platforms modify transmission processes. Future scholarship that incorporates emergent technologies—virtual and augmented reality alongside artificial intelligence—might trace the dynamic, continual recalibration of diaspora cultural transfer in tandem with technological change. Geographically, the study is limited to the South Asian diaspora that informs Lahiri's oeuvre, thereby overlooking how disparate immigrant groups deploy digital technologies in distinct ways. Cross-cultural comparative analyses could articulate whether trends identified in this one context resonate across a spectrum of migrant communities, or whether they reveal unique, localized adaptations to digital cultural transmission.

## Conclusion

This study has shown that Jhumpa Lahiri's writings after 2010 signal a decisive shift in how diaspora cultures are transmitted, as the assimilation of digital technologies forges novel pathways for constructing virtual homelands and simultaneously complicates questions of cultural authenticity and the transmission of heritage across generations. The concepts of "digital memory" and "virtual homelands" offered here as heuristic lenses illuminate how migrant populations balance the familiar imperatives of cultural preservation and the lure of innovative, technology-assisted re-imaginings of heritage. Contributions to digital diaspora scholarship lie both in the process and the outcome. By framing literary texts as mirrors of technology-inflected cultural practices, the study exposes trends that statistical and ethnographic surveys alone may miss. The pairing of close reading with digital-historical methods fosters a layered comprehension of how affordances of digital media refract and refract across the lived spaces of migrant communities. The research affirms that digital humanities methodologies now constitute a crucial dimension of inquiry into contemporary immigrant literature, wherein digital media are interwoven with narrative logic rather than appended as supportive artifacts. The integrated approach—fusing cultural evolution, virtual ethnography, and computational analytics—permits a wide-angle view of how technological mediation reframes enduring literary concerns and reconfigures the representation of cultural memory. The findings progress beyond scholarly observation to inform actionable strategies for immigrant solidarity networks, digital heritage safeguarding projects, and identity education programs that leverage technology. When scholars appreciate that online environments mediate culture with significant fidelity, practitioners can fortify peer-centered support by amplifying, rather than overlaying, preexisting digital cultural expressions.

The documented emotional coexistence of pride and apprehension regarding digital transmission necessitates that those designing cultural support programs simultaneously dismantle infrastructural barriers and legitimize the evolving cultural forms that online transmission produces. Consequently, interventions must calibrate digital tools to actualize cultural substance while respecting immigrant families' apprehension of authenticity dilution. The findings indicate that digital tools afford immigrant groups extraordinary capabilities for conserving and reshaping cultural practices. However, they simultaneously impose augmented obligations to ensure that cultural transmission retains both integrity and wholeness as it traverses generational

divides. Analysing these multifaceted interactions is essential as digital infrastructures advance and reshape global patterns of cultural dissemination.

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