

Cultures, Civilizations, and Ideas Presents:

From Global Connectivities to Alternative Citizenships: Jhumpa Lahiri's "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine."

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Jhumpa Lahiri's fiction explores the lives of immigrants and U.S. Americans who cross borders both literal and metaphorical: border-crossings rendered elegantly by Lahiri's well-crafted literary style. Yet because Lahiri has not publicly aligned herself with political or activist canons and traditions, her relationship to the ethnic American or Asian-American literary canon has gone largely unexplored in scholarship on her work. I argue that Lahiri's work reflects richly on the racial identity and cultural politics of some of its characters, particularly the young protagonist, Lilia, from the short story, "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine." Lahiri examines questions of identity and cultural politics by illuminating how Lilia navigates competing national narratives, official and unofficial, and envisions an alternative account of citizenship, allegiance, and belonging for second generation characters.