Chapter V

Confrontation of Cultures

This chapter deals with the theme of migrant problems in the select novels of Bapsi Sidhwa. Through her migrant characters, she reflects the issues of cultural differences and its resultant conflicts between them during the process of migration. Her works cover some migrant tribulations like cultural displacement, ethnic anxiety, assimilation, nostalgia, cultural shock and cultural hybridization. And this chapter focuses on these migrant problems as portrayed by Sidhwa in two of her novels: An American Brat and The Pakistani Bride.

As this chapter deals with the confrontation between cultures, it is appropriate to refer the role of culture and its relation with human life. In a broad sense, culture is defined as a society’s distinctive beliefs, ideas, knowledge and values. It is the platform that moulds the identity, behavior and philosophy of human life. It comprises tradition, customs, religion, rituals, myths, folklore, philosophy and language and makes a community. Culture is something, which applies to a distinct group of people and involves those habits which are distinct from the habit of the other people. And the cultural ethos is used to describe the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterize a community, nation or ideology.

Culture is not a product related with a lone individual but involves a society. Culture has a serious impact in human life; it adds meaning to their life and moulds them in a moral way. Culture and literature are mutually related, because apparently literature is the reflection of human life. Hence literature
replicates the cultural aspects of the society and its impacts in human life. Resultantly migration and its related cultural issues get reciprocated in the literary works of the Diasporic writers. Because of the continuous ongoing movement between cultures in the case of migration, cultural hybridization among migrants became popular. It leads to cultural degradation and there arise the cultural conflicts due to cultural diversity, where the migrants obviously get struck with the phase of cultural assimilation or otherwise with the strife of nostalgia. As Randhir Pratap Singh rightly mentions:

Cultural diversity adds colour and variety to the human world but at the same time it divides people into numerous groups and subgroups having little in common with one another, and thus proves a great barrier to human relationships. Bapsi Sidhwa in all her novels has taken up the issue of the cultural difference and the problems arising out of it. (59)

The migrants face the uncertainty and insecurity to negotiate with a new territory, milieu and culture, which makes survival miserable. Their struggle to retain their identity, culture and language develops the sense of despair, identity crisis, homelessness and alienation. This chapter mainly emphasizes the cultural conflicts faced by the migrant characters in the novels of Sidhwa. Cultural conflicts is the clash between two cultures and the testimony of painful experiences imbibed by the migrants, who encountered several problems as global, social, psychological and economical in the alien land.

Lucidly up-rooted from a familiar native context and thrown into a hostile world, the migrants faced emotional trauma in the process of re-rooting
in the foreign context. Rootlessness and identity crisis are the main significant issues which naturally lead to the cultural clashes and ethnic anxiety in the migrant psyche. The culture shock and cultural hybridization terrify the migrants, who cannot break their native consciousness and cultural ethos around them, resulted in ethnic anxiety.

When the migrants migrate, they not only cross the geographical boundaries but also the socio-cultural boundaries. Their psychological movement from one state of mind to another regarding the changed cultural surroundings causes cultural dilemmas which include isolation and nostalgia. Sidhwa efficiently accentuates these cultural chaos faced by her migrant characters in most of her works. She typifies the experiences of nostalgia faced by the migrant protagonist Zaitoon in the novel, *The Pakistani Bride*. She highlights Zaitoon’s agony of longing endured by her migration to the Kohistani hills.

In depicting the aspect of cultural dilemmas, Sidhwa also represents the phase of assimilation meted out by the migrants through her migrant protagonist Feroza in her novel *An American Brat*. Sidhwa realistically exhibits the phase of cultural assimilation during Feroza’s migration from Pakistan to America. And this novel, *An American Brat* is partially a record of the novelist’s own experiences as an migrant from Pakistan to America. It is evident from her words in an Article for *Houston Chronicle*:

“It’s my story.” Sidhwa says…. I was settled in my life there, afraid to move. Coming from a Muslim country, with a certain amount of segregation between the sexes, I had to adjust to a
different milieu. I was taken aback by the way women talk to men.... “Shortly after moving here, my daughter told me, ‘Everybody thinks you are arrogant because you don’t look them in the eyes and smile.’ I had been taught it was proper to keep your eyes straight ahead. When I learned to look at people and smile, I thought, ‘This is wonderful.’ It made me feel welcome and more confident.”... “But later, when I returned to Pakistan, people looked at me uncomfortably.” (Evans)

In the novel, *An American Brat*, Sidhwa brilliantly weaved the theme of migration and its consequences around the migrant protagonist Feroza. In order to change her conservative attitude, her parents Cyrus Ginwalla and Zareen, decides to send her to America to make her modern in her outlook. It is revealed by Sidhwa through the following conversation between her parents as “‘I went to bring Feroza from school today...In the car she said: ‘Mummy, please don’t come to school dressed like that.’ She objected to my sleeveless sari-blouse!’” (*AAB* 10).

They are worried about her narrow-minded attitude because of her growing in the Pakistani context which followed the General Zia. Being a Parsi family, they cannot bear the puritanic marital law of the General Zia in Pakistan. Zareen fear much about her daughter’s conservativeness, which makes her not even to answer the phone in their home. The following lines towards Cyrus, vividly expose Zareen’s concern for her daughter and also reveal the martial laws in the Pakistani society:
Could you imagine Feroza cycling to school now? She’d be a freak! Those goondas would make vulgar noise and bump into her, and the mullahs would tell her to cover her head. Instead of moving forward, we are moving backward. What I could do in ’59 and ’60, my daughter can’t do in 1978! Our Parsee children in Lahore won’t know how to mix with Parsee kids in Karachi or Bombay. (AAB 11).

Through the above lines Sidhwa points out the strict norms prevailed in the Pakistani society during the General Zia rule. Zareen’s strong decision in packing Feroza to uncle Manek, who resides as an MIT student in the United States, is denoted as, “‘I think Feroza must get away’…‘Just for three or four months. Manek can look after her. Travel will broaden her outlook; get this puritanical rubbish out of her head.”’ (AAB 14).

Sidhwa intensely exhibits the migrant experiences, through Feroza at the initial step for migration from Pakistan to America. Feroza’s heart feels a tumult of nostalgia which is described Sidhwa as “It was her city. A beautiful, lushly green and luminous city and she would miss it…She would miss Lahore, and her family.” (AAB 47). Sidhwa narrates the minute fears of the migrants in their voyage: “Feroza hugged the adventure of her travel to America to herself throughout the flight. As she hurtled through the space, she became conscious also of the gravitational pull of the country she was leaving behind.” (AAB 52).

The cultural consciousness of the migrants and their emotions for their native was profoundly figured out by Sidhwa as “Her sense of self, enlarged
by the osmosis of identity with her community and with her group of school friends, stayed with her like a permanence – like the support that ocean basins provide the wind and moon-generated vagaries of its waters.” (AAB 52). These lines expose the sense of loss in the native identity of the migrants, who flee from their land leaving their own identity and are made to search for it in a foreign land. These aspects of despair and dismay of the migrants are revealed by the author through Feroza’s emotional phase during her departure from Lahore. As Sidhwa mentions:

Sudden tears welled in Feroza’s eyes. She brushed them away impatiently. It wouldn’t do to have a pink nose and swollen eyes before all the people coming to see her off at the airport. She looked out the window to divert her attention, and all at once it struck her that she was going far from Lahore, from the sights, the sounds, and the fragrances that were dear to her, from the people she loved and had taken for granted. Her vision grew inward and, in a strange dreamlike way, expanded to accommodate a kaleidoscope of images of the entire city and its surrounding green fields. (AAB 47).

Through the migration of Feroza, the novelist reveals the expatriate experiences of the migrants. Sidhwa describes the new feeling of Feroza with her taste of freedom in a foreign land. During her arrival in the Kennedy airport, she feels the newly bounded freedom around her, at the moment when she asks help from a foreign young man to get a cart. It is narrated by Sidhwa as “That was it: the word she was seeking to define her new experience. He was unself-conscious.” (AAB 58). Feroza also feels the casual environment
prevailed in America, where she is not stared for speaking with a man. As Sidhwa writes: “And, busy with their own concerns, none of the people moving about them had even bothered to glance their way or stare at her, as they would have in Pakistan.” (AAB 58)

Through these words, Sidhwa conveys the difference felt by the migrant Feroza between the liberal American society and the conservative Pakistani society. Feroza’s delight for the liberal attitudes of the people around her and her taste of freedom for the first time in her life are craftily signified by Sidhwa through this incident. It is evident from the lines as follows: “…a strange awareness seeped into Feroza: she knew no one, and no one knew her! It was a heady feeling to be suddenly so free – for the moment, at least – of the thousand constraints that governed her life.” (AAB 58).

Sidhwa portrays the delightful new happiness of the protagonist; alongside she also exhibits the humiliation faced by the migrants in a foreign country through the following incident. It comprises the insult and humiliation faced by Feroza during her secondary inspection. The migration officer’s way of interrogation with Feroza is humiliating and it exposes the disrespectful aspects passed by the migrants in the alien land. Sidhwa describes the doubtful behaviour of the officer towards Feroza: “The officer had placed a trim, booted feet on the counter; her green passport was open on his knee. His soft-boiled, lashless eyes were looking at Feroza with such humiliating mistrust.” (AAB 60).

The officer’s hard handling with Feroza is rendered and he makes her to enter into a sacred state, with his threatening words. It is patent with the
lines: “If you give false testimony in this proceeding, you may be prosecuted for perjury. If you are convicted of perjury, you can be fined two thousand dollars or imprisoned for not more than five years…” (AAB 60). And the following interrogation between the migrant officer and Feroza undoubtedly exemplifies the anonymities faced by the migrants in general:

“Where will you reside in the United States?” the officer appeared edgy, provoked by her haughty air.

“With my uncle,” Feroza said.

“Where will you stay . . . What is the address?”

The officer spoke with exaggerated patience, as if asking the question for the tenth time of an idiot.

“I don’t know.” Feroza answered, her offended expression concealing how stupid she felt, how intimidated.

“You don’t know?” The man appeared to be suddenly in a rage.

“You should know!” (AAB 61).

The outburst of an expatriate under racial pressure has been dynamically recited by Sidhwa with the protagonist in this novel, An American Brat. When the officers in the migrant office, make a harassing comment on Feroza’s undergarment from her bag, “…a lacy pink nightie he had fished out of the bag.” (AAB 64), Feroza’s patience gets tested. She cannot stand the foreigners’ vulgar mortification anymore and thus her anger bursts out in a sudden rage. Sidhwa elaborates it as “Feroza,…felt a crimson rush of blood blur her vision. Her tears, reached by her rage, dried up…she snatched her
mother’s nightgown from the Hispanic’s stubby, desecrating fingers and said, “To hell with you and your damn country. I’ll go back!” (AAB 64).

Sidhwa emphasizes the initial bafflements and the cultural dilemmas of Feroza with the alien culture during her phase of cultural adaptation. The isolation of the migrants in a foreign country is reciprocated by Sidhwa through Feroza’s initial bewilderments in the western American context. Though she stays with her maternal uncle, she cannot get acclimatised with the new surroundings around her, in her early days in America. Sidhwa writes: “Outside their room, the night was full of unfamiliar smells and alien sounds that kept Feroza’s eyes wide awake and her breath tentative.” (AAB 68). It justifies the unfamiliarity meted out by the migrant protagonist in the alien host atmosphere.

With the Third World tag, the migrant protagonist faces much discrimination in the initial stage of her migration. Even her own uncle Manek, who himself a migrant, labels Feroza as a Third World native. His light criticism also affects her and it is evident from his words towards Feroza as “That’s the trouble with you desis (natives). You don’t even know what a deodorant is, and you want to make an atom bomb!” (AAB 74). Manek’s way of teasing was used to Feroza right from their childhood days in Lahore, but she cannot accept the inferior tag in the foreign land, with the denotation of Third World native.

Feroza once again reflects her anger towards him, when Manek compares her with the Americans as, “They are Americans. They will not waste their time on usss. Only illiterate natives like you, from Third World
countries, waste time…” (AAB 77). With the words of determination she marches towards Manek: “‘you Third World native yourself! It’s my time, and my life, and I’m answerable to no one but my parents and my God!’” (AAB 77). Sidhwa sketches the bitter experiences of Feroza in America, when she gets lost accidently in a stairway. Without Manek, she is not able to overcome the terrific situation, where she gets locked in the stair.

The dark and cold night frightened her in depth, where she is unable to find any rescue in the alien context. With the lines: “Feroza felt disoriented, confused for a moment about where she was…Feroza stood still, blinking, trying to accustom her eyes to the darkness and adjust them to the weak cone of light from a bulb hanging over the landing.” (AAB 88), Sidhwa depicts the migrant homesick of Feroza in the terrible night of America. Feroza cannot even recognize that in which stair she has been locked in that gigantic building. The aspect of danger of an expatriate in a foreign land is efficiently represented by Sidhwa through this incident. Sidhwa mentions the pitiful stage of Feroza as, “Feroza screamed. She screamed like a siren – like an instrument fashioned to scream.” (AAB 93). Sidhwa accentuates the fears of Feroza in the following passage:

Feroza suddenly found it difficult to breath. The wave of fear she had managed to bank so far broke through her defenses. She slammed the door…”Can anybody hear me?...Open the door....Somebody, please, open the door!”…Feroza stood trembling at the periphery of the pale light, hemmed in by darkness....She would not able to struggle out of it by reciting the Kemha Mazda prayer as she usually did....When she
opened her eyes, her world had unaccountably shrunk, as if nothing existed outside the stairwell. America assumed a ruthless, hollow, cylindrical shape without beginning or end, without sunlight, an unfathomable concrete tube inhabited by her fear. (AAB 90).

In order to make Feroza forget all her bitter experiences and humiliations meted out in America, Manek takes her to a tour to New York. Her admiration for the city of skyscrapers is the first step in her way of assimilation in this novel, An American Brat. Sidhwa describes: “It was like entering a surreal world…The subtle lighting enhanced the plush shimmer of wool and leather and the glowing colors of the silk. Feroza felt she had never seen such luxuriant textures or known the vibrant gloss of true colors.” (AAB 73). He takes Feroza to museums and shows the bright face of the city. At the same time, he takes her to the Eighth Avenue also, to reveal the darker side of America, where Feroza visualises the filthy segments of the first world.

As a migrant she is shocked to witness the dusky aspects of the American society which comprises some illegal sexual activities like drug abuse and prostitution. She is not able to come across the angle of poverty prevailing in the United States, which she often popularly hears as a classy country. And it is evident with the lines: ‘The smells disturbed her psyche: it seemed to her they personified the callous heart of the rich country that allowed such savage neglect to occur.” (AAB 81). She is stunned rather than shocked to envisage people spreading scores of flattened cardboard boxes to sleep in the bus terminal.
She is shocked at the sight of the homeless people in the rich American society. It is conveyed by the novelist as “She sensed the terminal was the infested hub of poverty from which the homeless and the discarded spiraled all over the shadier sidewalks of New York.” (AAB 80). And Feroza also encounters a drug dealer in the Forty-second street of the Eighth Avenue. She is warned by her uncle, when she unconsciously gasps at the young man’s mysterious activity. With these lines of warning Manek instructs Feroza in the dangerous atmosphere as “‘I told you, don’t stare at people! Especially if they’re doing something funny – it’s an invitation to attack. They feel you’re snooping, or violating their privacy...That fellow was a drug dealer – very dangerous.’” (AAB 80).

Sidhwa exhibits the experiences of cultural shock of the migrants when they countered some unexpected things in the alien culture through Manek’s words of reality towards Feroza: “‘So, you’ve seen now, America is not all saks and skyscrapers.’” (AAB 81). The culture shock and the cultural dilemmas of the migrants are expressed by Sidhwa in her words, when she talks about the migrant theme of her novel, An American Brat, in an interview with Naila Hussain:

Naturally, the book with the subject of the ‘Culture Shock’ young people from the sub- delineates the clashes the divergent cultures generate between the families ‘back home’ and continent have to contend with when they choose to study abroad. It also delineates the clashes the divergent cultures generate between the families ‘back home’ and their
transformed and transgressing progeny bravely groping their way in the New World. (3)

Through Manek’s initial past experiences of humiliation and hard way of cultural re-rooting in the foreign environment in the novel, Sidhwa strongly depicts the cultural displacement and identity crisis faced by the migrants in the alien land. The endured pain makes him to teach Feroza, all the required things to face the cultural shock, imposed by the American culture on the expatriates. As Sidhwa narrates: “He’d taken the knocks, learned his lessons the hard way, and here she was, being spoon-fed the beneficent fruit of his experiences,…” (AAB 100). He prepares her to think in the way of American psyche, in order to adapt the host culture.

With the following words, he initiates Feroza to understand the consciousness of the Americans, in case of interruption as ““As I was saying, if there’s one thing Americans won’t stand, it’s being interrupted. It’s impolite…you’ve got to learn to listen. You can’t cut into a conversation just as you like. You’ll be humiliated.” (AAB 101). He also illustrates to her about the humiliating experiences, which he underwent with his professors “as they looked away whenever he tried to correct someone who was giving wrong answers in class. How icily they had looked down their noses at him afterwards.” (AAB 100).

The bitter experiences of Manek make him intensely involved in re-rooting Feroza in the host country, in order to safeguard her migrant heart from the discriminations prevailing in the American context. Hence he even tries to modify her native behaviour of eating food with fingers. It was evident
with the lines: “Manek observed Feroza licking the rice off her fingers in an Indian restaurant. He looked at her until she became aware of his gaze. “You’ve got to stop eating with your fingers…” (AAB 145).

Sidhwa reveals the identity crisis experienced by the migrants through this incident, where Manek insist Feroza to hide their own native identity in the western culture. It is aptly conveyed through his words as “It’s all very nice and cozy to be ‘ethnic’ when we’re together, but those people won’t find it ‘ethnic’, they’ll just puke.” (AAB 145). The following passage underscores the words of impact uttered by Manek towards Feroza in her way of learning the host culture:

The first lesson you learn in life is to be humble. If you weren’t so proud, you wouldn’t fell so humiliated…“You’ve got to skim what you can off the system, otherwise the system will skin you. I learned this the hard way said Manek the Sage….It taught me many things. It’s lucky for you I’ve taken the knocks and you’re reaping the rewards. I’m giving you a crash course. It’s the best way to get over culture shock. Pampering only prolongs the agony. I didn’t have anyone to take my hand and guide me and say, ‘Look, sweetie, this is how you open a wrapper, and this is how you open a jar!’ but you’re young, you can be molded. You’ll do all right if you learn humility.” (AAB 144).

With Manek’s emphasizes on the segments of humiliating migratory experiences, Feroza realizes his pain and survival, in the process of getting re-
rooted in an alien culture. She thinks that the cultural adaptation, which he learnt in a hard way in the host country, makes him to teach her things with minute details. Sidhwa explains: “And Manek’s tone of voice and choice of words finally declared to Feroza all the pent-up hurt within him and the pressures he had been subjected to, not only since she’d arrived from Pakistan, but since Manek had arrived in America.” (AAB 101).

With the experiences of these two migrants, Sidhwa represents the agony of the identity crisis faced by the migrants all over the world. Through Feroza’s sympathy for Manek, the novelist recites the migrant’s despair in the lines that, “She could only guess at how he had been taught American ways, American manners. He must have endured countless humiliations. And his experiences…. changed him not on the surface but fundamentally.” (AAB 102). The lines: “It became clear to Feroza that to be this far from home, to have to cope with strangers and mysterious rites, was itself a test.” (AAB 116) exemplify the cultural shock and her determination to get adapt with the alien culture.

Sidhwa sketches the migrant protagonist’s total assimilation with the incidents in her life, after she enrolls as a student in a junior college in Twin Falls, Idaho. Manek, who makes Feroza enrolled in Twin Falls thinks it as the best way to make Feroza’s acculturation in America. It is evident in his words: “You’ll have to cope with all sorts of unexpected situations… You’ll see, you’ll gain confidence. You can’t rely on anyone but yourself if you want to live in this country – not even me!” (AAB 135). The novelist also emphasises the racism and homelessness faced by the migrants through Feroza’s experiences in the Twin Falls College.
Sidhwa mentions: “At about this time, she also became aware of her different color and the reaction it appeared to have on strangers…and on some of her classmates….A few tended to avoid her, and these she disregarded.” (AAB 152). For being an expatriate, she is distinguished as an odd out for her brown skin, which is viewed as a foreignness among her classmates. Sidhwa renders it in the lines as “Dismayed by her own brown skin, the emblem of her foreignness, she felt it was inferior to the gleaming white skin in the washrooms and the roseate faces in the classrooms.” (AAB 153). These racial attitudes of the native people around her make her to feel alienated in the host country. And it is expressed as, “she sensed she was not accepted as one of them.” (AAB 153).

The agony of a migrant, who endured the pain of homelessness, is also exhibited by the novelist through Feroza’s longing for his family in the alien land. Her feeling of homesick is profoundly exposed by Sidhwa as “Feroza sat glumly in front of the TV nursing her broken heart and her empty lap and thinking about home.” (AAB 162). Sidhwa describes the terrible yearning experienced by the expatriates in their re-rooting in the foreign context. She features how the migrant people will miss their family and their native land with Feroza’s alienation. Sidhwa recites Feroza’s despair of homesick: “she missed her grandmothers, her parents, their friends, her friends, her laugh, the incessant chatter of her cousins, and even the raucous chorus of the Main Market mullahs [Muslim clergy] on Friday afternoons. She became unbearably homesick and found it impossible to work on her term papers.” (AAB 162).
Sidhwa conveys the migrant’s passion for their native language, which is made as a distant object from them in the foreign context, through Manek’s love to speak Gujarati language in America. It is evidently illustrated by Sidhwa with Manek’s excitement in the Gujarati conversation with his niece Feroza, after her arrival. Apart from his assimilation in the American environment, his native ethos gets revealed by Sidhwa, through his ecstasy with his native company. It is formulated in the lines as “Manek had not spoken Gujarati in so long. He relished each word and enjoyed the sound of his voice uttering the funny little phrase…” (AAB 68).

Sidhwa also captures the countless humiliations meted out by the migrants among the foreigners. With the following incident where Feroza got insulted by a foreign saleswoman named Sally, in a drug store. Without any complete awareness about the usage of the foreign language, Feroza uses some polite phrases in her conversation with the saleswoman. It makes the saleswoman to misunderstand her politeness as an appeal in a harsh manner as follows:

“Can I have a look at some of those hair sprays, please?”

Sally looked her up and down suspiciously as if measuring the degree of her “foreignness”. She got off the stool behind her register,…plonked three brands of hair spray on the glass shelf before Feroza, and climbed back to her busy seat.

Feroza read the labels on each and, holding the can she had selected timidly forth, nervously adjusting the shawl that had slid off her shoulder, ventured, “May I have this, please?”
“You may not. You’ll have to pay for it. This isn’t the Salvation Army, y’know; it’s a drug store.” (AAB 150).

The above cited exchange makes Feroza speechless with hurt, but the abrasive saleswoman is bravely tackled by Feroza’s American roommate Jo. As Sidhwa denotes: “‘Stop pickin’ on her just because she’s a foreigner! Here, lemme handle this,’” Jo said, pushing Feroza aside.” (AAB 150).

Feroza’s assimilation in the alien culture happens in a slow but steady manner. The novelist portrays the reality with the migrants, who get totally assimilated with the foreign culture in their cultural adaptation. Sidhwa explores the path of migration in Feroza’s life and how she became a cultural hybrid. Sidhwa highlights Feroza’s roommate Jo, as the strong impact factor in Feroza’s assimilation rather than the teachings of Manek. The prior incident of humiliation in Feroza’s life makes Jo to modernize Feroza, to suit with the American culture.

Feroza’s complete transformation is narrated by the novelist with Jo’s teachings of Americanism with Feroza. Jo taught Feroza, English in the American way, where she replaces Feroza’s polite expressions like “please” and “may”. Sidhwa writes: “Jo spent the next Sunday afternoon improving Feroza’s pronunciations and taught her to say mayonnaise as “may-nayze”…she made Feroza practice saying, “Gimme a lemonade….and cured her of saying, “May I have this – may I have that?” (AAB 154). Sidhwa deliberately focuses Feroza’s phase of assimilation, where Feroza soon picked the American way of English. It is apparent with the lines, “Pretty soon Feroza was saying, “Hey you goin’ to the laundry? Gitme a coke!” (AAB 154).
Along with the language, Feroza’s dressing also get changed. Jo’s realise that, “Used to Feroza’s mode of dress and more accustomed by now to her manner of speaking and asking for things, she felt Sally had been unpardonably ill-mannered and bullying.” (AAB 150). Hence she took charge of Feroza’s Americanization. Sidhwa denotes the gradual transfiguration of the firm and conventional Feroza into a self-assertive and flexible girl. Her traditional Pakistani dresses get replaced by jeans and T-shirts. And her long earrings, which represented her native identity, are also locked in her bags and made unused by Jo’s influence. These cultural changeovers are described by the novelist with the following passage:

Feroza’s Pakistani outfits and outrageously dangling earrings were banished to her suitcase and her wardrobe replenished by another pair of jeans to supplement the pair she had purchased at Bloomingdale’s and some T-shirts, sweaters, and blouses. But no matter what Jo said, Feroza could not bring herself to wear skirts. Instead she bought a pair of pleated woolen slacks for more formal occasions. (AAB 151).

With the above mentioned passage, Sidhwa dynamically underscored the cultural adaptation by the migrant protagonist Feroza, which was not an overnight change. Sidhwa underlines the cultural shock and cultural dispute of the migrants during their cultural assimilation in an alien land.

Through Feroza’s inner conflicts, Sidhwa showcases the cultural clashes between the native and host culture during her migration. Feroza, who at first cannot break her native Pakistani ethos, which formed as a
conservative wall around her, enters into a gradual transformation in her phase of assimilation. The cultural encounters between the conventional east and the modernized west in Feroza’s life represent the cultural conflicts and native dilemmas of the expatriates during their migration. During her cultural transfiguration, Feroza learns to smoke, drink and even to flirt with boys, which things were strictly prohibited in her native culture.

These evil transformations are mentioned by Sidhwa in narrating Feroza’s assimilation with an American way of life. In the beginning, Feroza is not able to cope up with the immoral activities of Jo which involves drinking and enjoying the company of boys. It is evident in the lines: “Jo picked up strange young men from stores, restaurants, movie theaters; construction sites, and places where she worked with an ease and lack of discrimination that shocked Feroza” (AAB 159). Jo also makes a bad influence on Feroza with her immoral words of guiding as “‘you aren’t used to boys. So, okay – get used to them,’”… “You gotta learn to sometime. You gotta stick with it.’” (AAB 163).

But Feroza suffers a lot to mingle with the company of boys, because of her native consciousness. Hailing from a conservative Pakistani society, in a sudden she cannot enter into the attractive modern world. Her embarrassments and cultural dilemmas are rendered by Sidhwa as “Feroza had no experience with socializing with boys; there is no such thing as dating in Pakistan. It was excruciatingly painful for her to be among so many young people and not know how to respond or behave.” (AAB 162).
The cultural adaptation of Feroza is realistically revealed by Sidhwa with the words: “something within Feroza must have changed imperceptibly… one spring evening Feroza discovered that the boys were…making a concerted effort to encourage her out of her painful shell.” (AAB 163). In order to overcome her foreignness and to tackle her identity crisis, she also wants to mingle in order to get identified as one among them. It is reflected in the lines, “She felt their genuine interest. It occurred to her that they liked and accepted her.” (AAB 163).

Sidhwa reciprocates Feroza’s immoral endurances in her assimilation, where she has inculcated the habit of drinking in the parties. Sidhwa exposes: “Feroza graduated to two glasses of wine, and she actually started to enjoy the excursion that she had found such a painful ordeal before.” (AAB 163). At times, Feroza gets haunted by the feeling of guilt, thinking of her orthodox family and their reaction to her immoral ordeals, if they come to knew about them. But soon she would forget her guilty with the company of her independent American friends. Sidhwa sketches the inner dilemmas of Feroza as follows:

Feroza never quite got over her feelings of guilt. Every time she went out with Jo and flirted modestly with strange young men…she wondered what her family would have to say of her conduct if they knew…. At the same time, she felt she was being initiated into some esoteric rites that governed the astonishingly independent and unsupervised lives of young people in America. Often, as she sat among them, Feroza thought she had taken a phenomenal leap in perceiving the
world from a wider, bolder and happier angle…. Feroza felt she was growing the wings Father Fibs had talked about, which, even at this incipient stage, would have been ruthlessly clipped in Pakistan. (AAB 164)

Through Feroza’s assimilation, Sidhwa scrutinises the taste of freedom enjoyed by the young migrants in a liberal climate. Feroza’s compares the American society’s free spirit in case of women, with the dominating conventional Pakistani society. As Sidhwa mentions: “Feroza felt that living with Jo helped to understand Americans and their exotic culture – how much an abstract word like “freedom” could encompass and how many rights the individuals had… that those rights were active, not, as in Pakistan, given by a constitution but otherwise comatose.” (AAB 171). After her transformation, the strict conventions which are followed by the fundamentalists in the Pakistani society appear to her as much brutal. It is reproduced by the novelist as “…particularly women, determining how they should dress, whether they could play hockey in school or not, how they should conduct themselves within the four walls of their homes.” (AAB 171)

The taste of freedom and the state of being away from family’s warning eye, make Feroza to contaminate herself in ways against her morals. “Within the heady climate of her freedom in America, she felt able to do anything.” (AAB 217) and hence she takes some odd jobs as waitress, sells tickets at amusement parks and even in a bar. In order to commensurate with her expanded social commitments, she works apart from her studies. Migrated from an orthodox family, she enjoys worked in a bar. And Sidhwa renders this bad influence of her assimilation phase: “Feroza enjoyed the convivial, dusky
atmosphere, the strangers who spoke to her so readily and her fleeting contact with them. She delighted in serving the colorful drinks with fancy names like pina colada, screwdriver, margarita and strawberry daiquiri.’’ (AAB 216).

Sidhwa also exposes the flirtatious attitude of Feroza with an Indian student Shashi, whom she met in the University of Denver. It is evident through Sidhwa’s narration as “…Feroza’s relationship with him was airy, flirtatious, fun. It was easy for Feroza to be with Shashi precisely because he was so at ease with her. (AAB 218). With Feroza’s relationship with Shashi, the novelist denotes cultural hybridization among the migrants, which obviously turns them as immoral cultural hybrids. Feroza completely breaks down her fire wall of native ethos around her and Sidhwa clearly depicts the cultural transfiguration.

Feroza, who once hesitate to talk with guys in Lahore, but now discovers that there are no restrictions around her obviously in the American culture, where sexual relationships are casual to enter. Their relationship of sexual temperament is recited by Sidhwa as “He kissed when they were alone and indulged in light and playful petting. But Feroza never felt as though she might be swept away by a grand passion, or that Shashi might want her to be.” (AAB 230).

With the following incident, the novelist expresses the cultural clash arising with the migrants when their ethnic anxiety gets challenged. Though she is assimilated in the western air, Feroza cannot able to comprehend the guilt which arouses within her, when she smokes in the company of her American friends. According to her Zoroastrian faith, smoking is considered
as a cardinal sin, because the Zoroastrians considered fire as the symbolic representation of their God, Ahura Mazda. As a Parsi girl, she is not permitted to pollute the holy fire by the contact with her unclean mouth.

Sidhwa renders: “Late one evening, Feroza committed the cardinal sin. She took a few puffs from a cigarette at Jo’s guitarist boyfriend’s insistence.” (AAB 164). Even Jo tries to stop her from smoking, because of her knowledge about her Zoroastrian faith. Feroza by drinking to the unconscious level commits the sin. It is reflected in the lines as “Jo had tried to protect her friend. “Lay off. It’s against her religion to smoke. She worships fire.” But Feroza was a bit drunk on wine...drew on the cigarette held between the guitarist’s fingers.” (AAB 164).

Sidhwa exemplifies the western culture’s critical impacts with the migrant protagonist, who stood against her native Parsi faith and its traditions, with the lines: “Feroza choked on the smoke, coughed to the intense amusement of the company, and thoroughly enjoyed her role as an ingénue.” (AAB 164). Sidhwa elaborates the feeling of guilt undergone by Feroza in the following passage, which makes her to pray at that night in seeking forgiveness from her God, Ahura Mazda, for straining her ethnic identity with her cultural adaptation:

That night Feroza hunted out her kusti [sacred thread] and sudra [religious undergarment of Zoroastrians] between her hands as prescribed, said the Hormazd Khoda-ay (“Ahura Mazda is God”) prayer. She whipped the air with its tasseled ends when she came to the part that said, “May the Evil one be
vanquished!” and then, winding the kusti times round her waist, knotting it at the front and the back to the accompaniment of the appropriate prayers, symbolically girded her loins to serve the Lord. After performing the kusti ritual, Feroza bowed her penitent’s head to beg divine forgiveness for desecrating the holy fire – the symbol of Ahura Mazda—by permitting it such intimate contact with her unclean mouth. (AAB 165).

With the following incident, Sidhwa emphasises the migrant’s homelessness and effect of cultural degradation, when Feroza gives back to Lahore for a vacation. During her vacation, she feels misfit with her native surroundings after her cultural assimilation due to migration. It is evidently explained by Sidhwa as “Feroza was disconcerted to discover that she was a misfit in a country in which she had once fitted so well.” (AAB 239). Also the vacation makes her to realize how her life has changed and taken a different direction from her friends’ lifestyle in Pakistan. Their concern with the clothes, family and servants do not make Feroza to get interested.

Sidhwa exhibits these changes as the outcome of her cultural transformation. Sidhwa writes: “They talked about babies, husbands and sisters-in-law and took her unawares by their gossip about people Feroza didn’t know and their interest in issues she couldn’t follow.” (AAB 238). Sidhwa mentions about the identity crisis of the migrants who could lose their ethnic identity because of their cultural assimilation. Sidhwa’s exposes it in the lines as “Feroza felt she had grown in different ways. Her consciousness included many things they had no concept of and were not in the least bit interested in.” (AAB 238).
On the other hand, Sidhwa showcases the phase of nostalgia and alienation meted out by Manek’s newly married wife Aban, in the United States. Her isolation as a housewife in an alien environment across miles from her native land is displayed by her words of complaint about Manek, with Feroza: “He always says I talk nonstop. Who else can I talk to? The walls? I’m alone all day. I didn’t know I was going to be bored and lonely in America.” (AAB 262). Through Aban’s experiences, as an expatriate housewife to a culturally assimilated migrant husband in a foreign country, the novelist represents the homelessness of the migrants. Her yearning for her native is conveyed by Sidhwa, in the following words about how she misses the care of her big Parsi family during her pregnancy, in her isolated state in a foreign country:

Feroza knew how she must feel. Poor Aban had missed out on the seventh and ninth month pregnancy and the gifts and clothes and family jokes that went with them, and now she would be deprived of her baby’s “Sitting” and “First Step” ceremonies. What a fuss and stir little Dilshad would have caused in Lahore or Karachi, the grandparents vying to look after her and the aunts competing for her attention, everybody lavishing gifts….Aban said, “I thought coming to America was such a big deal, so wonderful – my Prince Charming carrying me off to the castle of my dreams. Everybody back home thinks I’m so lucky, but I’m tired of coping, tried of doing everything on my own. When Dilly cries so much, there’s no one I can turn to for advice. I know my mother and aunts would have
known exactly what to do, but I don’t….Oh, I miss home. ‘I’m longing to see my family and my friends and longing to talk to them. Just sit and talk to them. Sometimes I wish I’d never come here.” (AAB 314-315).

Also Manek’s modernised way in following the American laws does not suit Aban; instead it makes her to enter into the state of anxiety, which is narrated by the novelist through the following incident. It hurts Aban, when Manek playfully mentions about divorce, during their arrival at their new three bedroom house in America. It is recited by the Sidhwa as: ““Look. If we get a divorce, you’ll get half the house by American law. You might as well contribute to it so there will be no hard feelings later.”” (AAB 259).

Sidhwa expresses: “That night Aban couldn’t sleep. After reflecting on Manek’s remarks further, she wept and prayed for three days.” (AAB 259). She cannot take Manek’s words in a cool manner, like an American wife. It is because, according to her native culture, marriage meant a lot to a woman in her life. She is taught about the traditional meaning for marriage, which plays a significant role in her own culture. It is reciprocated by Sidhwa as “A marriage as far as she knew – as far as her ancestors had believed for five thousand years – was for keeps. Aban had heard ever since she could remember that a wife only left her husband’s house feet first, in her coffin.” (AAB 259).

In this case, according to a traditional Pakistani wife with native consciousness like her, “The mention of divorce was not only insensitive, diabolical, and cruel, but an affront to all that was auspicious and lucky.”
Sidhwa conveys the ethnic anxiety of the migrants, where they wish their ethnic identity to be preserved from the foreign culture. The novelist also delineates the cultural shock of the migrant Aban, in the lines: “If this was what being in America meant, Aban wanted to have nothing to do with America. She would insist they go back to Karachi or Lahore.” (AAB 259).

Not only the ethnic anxiety and alienation is focused by Sidhwa, but she also features the cultural hybridization of the migrants in this novel, An American Brat. It is highlighted when Feroza’s uncle Manek changes his ancestral name from Manek Junglewalla to Mike Junglevala. This thing lucidly reveals the strong impacts of cultural degradation among the migrants which make them to alter their native identities, even their name. It is elaborated by Sidhwa through the following conversation between Manek’s family and Feroza, about his name change:

She looked at the card with an appropriately admiring smile and tried valiantly to maintain it as she realized, with a jolt, that he had changed his name from Manek Junglewalla to Mike Junglevala.

She couldn’t help it. “Mike?” she asked,…”You’ve become a Mike?”

Manek remained clam. “The people I have to deal with at work find it hard to remember Manek. It’s too foreign, it makes them uneasy. But I’m one of the guys if I’m Mike.”
“In America, be —” and Aban added her voice to Feroza’s as they both chorused, “American!” (AAB 260).

Sidhwa also portrays the changing mind of Feroza when she falls in love with a Jewish young man. The novelist emphasises the Zoroastrian religious norms, which will not allow inter-faith marriages. But Feroza, out of her love for David, wants to marry a non-Parsi even without considering her religion and family. With this aspect, Sidhwa scrutinizes the cultural clashes between the Parsi ethos and Jewish ethos. Feroza’s strong passion for David makes her to rebel against her traditional family and also with her Zoroastrian faith.

Her love for David was reflected with the lines: “She felt David’s heartbeat against hers, sounding loudly in her ears, and she wanted that sturdy heart to beat and beat forever like that, close to her . . . just as the oceanic depths of his eyes were when she found herself swimming in them like a fish.” (AAB 252). She shares David’s room and it is moreover like a live-in relationship. Through this, Sidhwa exposes the cultural degradation among the migrants in a foreign atmosphere, which makes them to cross their native cultural barriers. It is evident with the lines: “Once when she was sneaking back into her room at three o’clock in the morning with her shoes in her hand, she wondered if she was the same girl who had live in Lahore and gone to the convent of the Sacred Heart.” (AAB 264).

The aspects of multiculturalism and confrontations between cultural ethos are vividly portrayed by the novelist, with reference to the clash between the Jewish ethos and Parsi ethos. It is depicted by Sidhwa during Feroza’s visit
to David’s home for the Sabbath meal with David’s parents, Abe Press and Adina Press. She realises the differences between their cultures and it is reproduced by Sidhwa as “It was the first time that Feroza had been seriously confronted with the fact that David’s religion was different from hers. So far, she had refused to think about it.” (AAB 257). But her cultural hybridization broadly makes her to draw similarities between the Jewish cultural rituals and her own Parsi cultural rituals, in the ways of prayer. It is articulated by Sidhwa in the following passage, where the Jewish tradition and culture was revealed through the Sabbath meal:

Feroza’s mind dwelt on the Sabbath meal. David’s father and David had worn a yarmulke: she had never seen David wear the cap before....Adina had covered her head with a lace scarf, lit the candles, lightly covered her face with the palms of her hand, and silently prayed. Her gestures and the ritual were very like those performed by her mother and grandmother when they prayed before the atash....Then Abe held up the Kiddush cup filled with wine and said a short prayer. He passed the cup around so that each of them could take a sip of the sweet wine, uncovered a loaf of golden, braided bread, broke it, and passed it around too....Breaking bread, sharing salt — these concepts curled in her thoughts with comforting familiarity — they belonged also to the Parsee, Christian, And Muslim traditions in Pakistan. (AAB 256-257).

The novelist sketches the cultural transformation and assimilation, which was flagrant with Feroza but at the same time, Sidhwa represents
Feroza’s family to stand as the symbol of ethnic anxiety. It conveys how cultural conflicts make things complicated in the migration process. In case of migrants, their strong native ethos will not allow them to modify their norms and give space for cultural hybridization. Sidhwa expresses the features of the ethnic anxiety through the character of Zareen. It is evident with the following shocking incident, which makes vibrant ways in Feroza’s family in Lahore, when they receive Feroza’s letter seeking permission for her mixed marriage along with the photographs of her foreign boyfriend David Press.

The family’s fear to protect their ethnic identity from cultural contamination is reflected in their serious discussion in order to stop Feroza from polluting their faith, in the name of inter-faith marriage. Sidhwa mentions: “For the subject was much larger than just Feroza’s marriage to an American. Mixed marriages concerned the entire Parsee community and affected its very survival.” (AAB 268). There arouse a heated dispute between the youngsters and the elders in the big Parsi family where the youngsters: “…politely informed their parents that times had changed. They urged their uncles and aunts to enlarge their narrow minds…” (AAB 268). And also they highlight the impacts of migration, which obviously make them to get diluted in the foreign culture.

It is evident with Sidhwa’s narration: “…times that were already sending them to study in the New World, to mingle with strangers in strange lands where mixed marriages were inevitable.” (AAB 268). With this conversation between the older and younger generation of the family, Sidhwa indirectly exhibits the clash between tradition and modernity due to cultural hybridization. The argument between Bunny, a fifteen-year-old girl with her
mother Jeroo lucidly reflected the conflicts between the generations. It is when Bunny exclaimed: “For God’s sake! You’re carrying on as if Feroza’s dead! She’s only getting married, for God’s sake!” (AAB 268). But she gets a reaction of opposition from her outrageous mother as, “Don’t you dare talk like that! One more peep out of you, and I’ll slap your face!” (AAB 269). Sidhwa narrates Zareen’s emotions which exemplify the helplessness to safeguard her traditional family’s ethnic identity in the passage as follows:

As it was, holding the letter in her inert fingers, the obscene photograph having already fluttered to the bedroom floor, Zareen found it hard to breathe….Surely she must be aware of the assault on their parental sensibility. A subliminal cloud of nebulous conjectures and a terrible fear entered Zareen’s mind. She grasped the basic premise – that Feroza was preparing Cyrus and herself for a change – but a change of this magnitude? She was confronting the “unknown,” and she felt helpless in the face of it…And then the sentences ballooned up disembodied, the words individually magnified, until they popped before her blurring sight. She felt a dizzying rush of blood to her head and was as close to fainting as she’d ever be.

(AAB 265).

The cold clashes between the Parsi and American ethos are cleverly featured by the novelist after Zareen’s journey to America, in order to protect her daughter from marrying a non-Parsi. Zareen is advised by her family members as “‘If you can’t knock him out with sugar, slug him with honey.’” (AAB 272). Sidhwa delineates the conflicts between the Parsi culture and the
American culture through the representation of Zareen and Feroza respectively. Sidhwa effectively exhilarates the migrant’s psyche, which is always in a conflict with their native and host culture. It paves way for restlessness and ethnic anxiety, where they wander between the native eastern ethos and modern western ethos.

It is brought out well through one of the disputes between Feroza and Zareen, where Feroza mentions her inter-faith marriage as the civil marriage and refers to herself and David as ‘Unitarians’. Her cultural degradation because of modernization in an alien culture is expressed as “‘We’re having a civil marriage in any case; a judge will marry us,”…“That way I can keep my religion, if it matters so much to you. Of course you know David and I are Unitarians.’” (AAB 278). But Zareen, who is unable to break her native ethos around her in a just-like-that manner, like her daughter, pleaded with Feroza: “‘Unitarians!’ Zareen wrinkled her nose disparagingly…”My dear, your judge’s marriage will make no difference to the priests. They won’t allow you into any of our places of worship, agyari or Atash Behram [Parsi Fire temples].”” (AAB 278).

The novelist expresses the evil impacts caused by the cultural adaptation on the migrants and also the ethnic anxiety, which plays a crucial role with the human emotions. With the following lines Zareen exposes the importance of culture and its unique relation with the human life. It is rendered in her words of anger towards Feroza: “‘And you’ll have to look at it our way. It’s not your culture! You can’t just toss your heritage away like that, ‘t’s in your bones!’” (AAB 279). Also she regrets for sending Feroza to the United States, which paves way for her cultural degradation. She thinks that migration
has made her a rebellion, who tries to pollute her own faith. Sidhwa narrates:

“I should have listened. I should never have let you go so far away. Look what it’s done to you – you’ve become an American Brat!” (AAB 279).

Not only is the ethnic anxiety of the migrants reflected through Zareen’s character, but also Sidhwa highlights the cultural dilemma through Zareen, who is caught between the native and host cultures. Though Zareen’s stay in America is very short, she too gradually gets diluted in the western context which makes her even to forget the purpose of her visit to America. The novelist highlights Zareen’s assimilation and her cultural dilemma in the following passage, which drives her to even question against her native Zoroastrian religion and its norms against conversion:

Zareen found herself seriously questioning the ban on interfaith marriages for the first time. She had often opined how unfair it was that while a Parsee man who married a “non” could keep his faith and bring up his children as Zoroastrians, a Parsee woman couldn’t. And it didn’t make sense that the “non” non was not permitted to become Zoroastrian; one could hardly expect their children to practice a faith denied to their mother….She had accepted the conventional wisdom and gone along with the opinion of the community because she had grown up with these percepts. She had never doubted that she would marry a Parsee. Till now these issues had not affected her. Nut with Feroza’s happiness at stake and her strengthening affection for David, Zareen wondered about it. How could a religion whose prophet urged his followers to spread the Truth
of his message in the holy *Gathas* – the songs of Zarathustra—prohibit conversion and throw her daughter put of the faith? (AAB 286-287).

From the above cited passage, it is evident that, Zareen gets impressed with David, when he accompanies Zareen and Feroza for the outings in Denver. Her cultural dilemma is effectively conveyed by the novelist with the lines as “At such moments, Zareen wished David was a Parsee – or that the Zoroastrians would permit selective conversion to their faith.” (AAB 287).

She enjoys the western climate in her life, cultural dilemmas which strain her inner cultural consciousness. In the shape of pamphlets received from Parsee priest’s association, Bombay, there is a NOTICE explaining the strict bans against inter-faith marriage in the Zoroastrian faith. These things make inner clashes within Zareen’s mind, where she decides to protect her daughter depriving from their Parsi faith at any cost. Though she likes David, she cannot help their mixed marriage and her inner conflicts were declared by the author in the following passage:

Zareen’s sleep became restless. Her dreams were crowded with the presence of outraged kin pointing long, rebuking fingers. As if prodded by an ominous finger, she bolted upright in bed one night, her pulse pounding. She looked at the watch on the side table; it was three o’clock….Tying her scarf round her head, she began to pray….Zareen knew what she must do. However admirable and appealing David was, however natural to the stimulating and carefree environment, he would deprive
her daughter of her faith, her heritage, her family, and her community. She would be branded an adulteress and her children pronounced illegitimate. She would be accused of committing the most heinous sacrileges. Cut off from her culture and her surrounding like a fish in shallow waters, her child would eventually shrivel up. And her dread for Feroza altered her opinion of David. (AAB 289).

In this novel, Sidhwa insists that when two different cultures meet, naturally conflicts arise and hence migrants face a lot of cultural clashes between their native culture and foreign culture. Sidhwa represents the cultural clash between the Parsi ethos and the Jewish ethos when Zareen and David converse about their own faiths respectively. In order to prevent their inter-faith marriage, Zareen acts in a wise manner and pretends by giving consent for their marriage but on one condition that, it should be a proper arranged wedding. It is recited by the novelist as “‘Get married properly,’ Zareen said. ‘The judge’s bit of paper won’t make you feel married. Have a regular wedding. Don’t deprive us of everything!’” (AAB 296).

And she elaborates David about their grand traditional rituals in a Zoroastrian marriage, which makes David to get irritated. Her cunningness is expressed in the lines towards David: “We’ll give your family clothes – suit-lengths and shirts for the men, sari sets for the women. A gold chain for your mother, a pocket watch for your father. Look here, if your parents don’t want to do the same, we’ll understand. But we’ll fulfill our traditional obligations.” (AAB 298).
Inducing him through communal way, Zareen gets succeeded when David out of an indirect humiliation, explains about his Jewish marriage rituals. Feroza cannot able to help the communal dispute between them and stands helpless. David’s reference to his Jewish culture is exposed in the lines: “We have Jewish customs, you know. My family will miss my getting married under a canopy by our rabbi...David stopped to catch his breath and looked angrily at Zareen. “I too belong to an old tradition, too.”” (AAB 298).

Sidhwa along with the cultural conflicts also underscores the phase of assimilation which makes Feroza to stay in the United States, even after the break in the love affair with David, because of their ethnic differences. Sidhwa narrates: “The very thing that had attracted him to Feroza, her exoticism, now frightened David. Zareen had made him feel that he and Feroza had been too cavalier and callow in dismissing the dissimilarities in their backgrounds.” (AAB 309). And Sidhwa also sketches the migrant protagonist Feroza as a strengthened independent woman, who never wants to give up the taste of freedom, which she has in America.

Her cultural degradation and regarding conflicts due to her migration from Lahore to America are posthumously accumulated by the author as: “Her life that had bloomed in such unexpected ways had just as unexpectedly fallen apart. She must put it together again, heal her lacerated sensibility. But she could only do the healing right here, in America.” (AAB 311). These lines reveal the agony endured by the migrants, who are caught between two different worlds of culture. Feroza decides to stay in her host culture, because of her conflicts in re-rooting back in Lahore, and it is denoted by Sidhwa as follows:
It wouldn’t matter if he was a Parsee or of another faith. She would be more sure of herself, and she wouldn’t let anyone interfere. It really wouldn’t matter; weren’t they all children of the same Adam and Eve? As for her religion, no one could take it away from her; she carried its fire in her heart. If the priests in Lahore and Karachi did not let her enter the fire temple, she would go to one in Bombay where there were so many Parsees that no one would know if she was married to a Parsee or a non….There would be no going back for her, but she could go back at will….Maybe one day she’d soar to that self-contained place from which there was no falling, if there was such a place. (*AAB* 317).

On the other hand, the author also deals with the theme of nostalgia experienced out by the migrant characters in her another novel, *The Pakistani Bride*. In this novel, Sidhwa explores about the theme of migrations and its resultant conflicts with the migrants due to cultural differences within the Indian subcontinent during the time of partition. With this novel Sidhwa displays the identity crisis and the strife of nostalgia undergone by her migrant characters. It is represented by the migrant protagonist Zaitoon, who is forcibly uprooted from her gentler life in Lahore into a hard tribal culture of the Kohistani hills, in the name of marriage.

She also juxtaposes the migrant protagonist’s life with Carol, an American woman, who hails from America to Pakistan under marital relationship. She expresses the cultural clash met out by the migrant characters due to their displacement. The novelist exposes the trauma of nostalgia
endured by the migrants, through the character Qasim, Zaitoon’s father, who has adapted the orphaned girl during the partition riots. During the pre-partition days, a Kohistani tribal by birth, has left the mountain after the unfortunate death of his entire family caused by an epidemic disease in the hills. Sidhwa exemplifies the pride of Qasim as a native tribesman, when he loves his security job in the National and Grindlays Bank of Jullundur. He considers his double-barreled gun as a symbol of his tribal pride. Because according to the tribal culture, the gun is a part of the Kohistani’s attire. It is revealed by Sidhwa in the passage as follows:

The work suited Qasim perfectly. He stood all day, resplendent in a khaki uniform and crisp turban, guarding the bank entrance. The double-barreled gun that he stood beside him and the bullet-crammed bandolier swathing his chest gladdened his heart ad gratified his pride, for a gun is part of the tribal attire. It shows his readiness to face his enemy and protect his family’s honour. (TPB 20).

Through Qasim’s migration from the mountains to the plains, the author reveals the theme of isolation and the process of transplantation in an alien context. Qasim feels alienated in the plains, where his clinging of nostalgia is narrated by the author through his feeling of homelessness in the alien atmosphere. His mind wanders for his native tribal life and his longings for his mountains are recited by Sidhwa as “In the evenings,…Qasim perched atop the backrests of park benches, seeking with his mind’s eye the heights and valleys of the land he had left.” (TPB 20). Sidhwa also denotes the language barrier which is one of the major problems faced by the migrations.
This language difference also makes him to feel alienated and it is evident with the lines: “The language posed a problem. Although he spoke Hindko, a distorted mixture of Punjabi and Pushto, Qasim was able to follow only very little of the zestful Punjabi spoken in Jullundur.” (TPB 20). Sidhwa also portrays the cultural shock undergone by Qasim during his migration from the Kohistani Mountains to the developed plains. He admires each tiny development in his new land and his astonishment is described by the novelist in the lines as “Touchy and bewildered…Each common object he saw was to him a miracle. Torches, safety-pins, electric lights, cinemas and cars whirled magically before his senses.” (TPB 20).

Sidhwa also exhibits the difference in the lifestyle of people with the change in Qasim’s food habits in the plains. And she also compares about the strict norms imposed especially on women with the liberated lifestyle of women in the plains through Qasim’s eyes. In the following passage, Sidhwa recites about the cultural differences recognized by Qasim with the hard tribal climate and the host liberal climate prevailing in the plains:

The difference was greatest in the really basic values. The men of the plains appeared strangely effeminate. Women roamed the streets in brazen proximity. These people were soft, their lines easy. Where he came from, men – as in the Stone Age – walked thirty days over the lonely, almost trackless mountains to secure salt for their tribes. (TPB 20-21).

The confrontation between the cultures is lucidly featured by the author, through Qasim’s attempt of murder with the bank clerk, Girdharilal.
With the following incident, Sidhwa reveals the importance given by a tribal man to his tribal pride, which he considers as one of the essential features of his native tribe. The bank clerk humiliates Qasim in public, because of his uncultured tribal ways, with the words of insult: “you filthy son of a Muslim mountain hog!” (TPB 22). Qasim cannot stand with his tribal pride insulted: “…face darkened lifting the slightly-built man he passed him against a wall, and with his hands around the clerk’s neck, he started to choke him.” (TPB 22-23).

Here the novelist indirectly reciprocates the clash between the tribal culture and the host culture. And also she highlights the native consciousness of Qasim, who killed the bank clerk in order to take revenge for his insulted pride. It is a revenge for his insulted pride. It is because, in the tribal society, people consider pride superior than their lives. Hence Qasim killed the bank clerk because, “death was the price for daring such an insult to his tribe, his blood, his religion.” (TPB 23). In this novel, The Pakistani Bride, Sidhwa clearly expresses that Qasim’s extreme nostalgia leads to Zaitoon’s cultural displacement.

Though Qasim lives a content life with his adopted daughter Zaitoon, in the city of Lahore for a long time, he grows nostalgic for his tribal world. Sidhwa displays his homelessness and longing for the mountains in a sensible manner. He considers his daughter as the connecting force to his tribal culture, which was his distant dream. Hence he wishes to give Zaitoon in marriage with one of his native clansmen from the Kohistani hills. This extreme nostalgia makes him to teach Zaitoon always about the daring beauty of the hills and also about the heroism of the tribesmen in their land. He reminds her
that the mountains are her real home and in this way he inculcates his native consciousness into the young mind of Zaitoon. Soon Zaitoon’s psyche views the fantasies of the mountains in the following passage:

Qasim, nostalgic for the cool mountains, wove such fascination into reminiscences of his life among them that Zaitoon longed to see what she considered her native land. Her young, romantic imagination flowered into fantasies of her region where men were heroic, proud, and incorruptible, ruled by a code of honour that banned all injustice and evil. These men, tall and light-skinned, free to roam the mountains as their fancies led. Their women, beautiful as houris, and their bright, rosy-cheeked children, lived beside crystal torrents of melted snow. (*TPB 90*)

With opposition of Qasim’s friend Nikka and his wife Miriam, the novelist indicates the glimpse of warning for Qasim’s decision in sending Zaitoon into the tribal culture, in the name of marriage. Miriam, who is very fond of Zaitoon, pleads with Qasim to drop his decision in Zaitoon’s marriage with a tribe. She explains him about the hardships which Zaitoon have to undergo, if she gets married to the mountains. And she also emphasises that the marriage would give inconvenience for the young girl, who has been brought up in the city culture, in adopting the hard tribal culture.

It is evident with the lines: “‘Brother Qasim’... ‘How can a girl, brought up in Lahore, educated – how can she be happy in the mountains? Tribal ways are different... they are savages...she will be miserable among
them.” (TPB 93). But Qasim is too stubborn with his decision, because as a tribe he should keep his word. And he symbolises his world as the tribal honour in the finalized decision towards Miriam as, “It is my word – the word of a Kohistani!” (TPB 94)

Sidhwa exhibits the theme of displacement with her migrant protagonist Zaitoon’s marriage with a tribe. After a long phase of alienation, Qasim like a homing bird takes his daughter to his ancestral home in the Kohistani Mountains. Where Qasim admires his native mountains and eyes glow with pride he reflects his happiness for his author in the lines as, “…his wan cheeks twitched in a jubilant dance…’Munni, this is my land – do you wonder I love it so?’ Tears threatened to start down his cheeks. We are here at last,’ he sighed, revealing the agony he had suffered in years of separation.” (TPB 148).

Zaitoon’s strife of nostalgia is sensitively revealed by the author after her marriage with the tribe named Sakhi. When Qasim leaves Zaitoon in the mountains, after the wedding ceremony, she cries for her sudden cultural displacement. And it is narrated by the author in the lines: “‘Father’ she screamed,… ‘I’m coming with you. Take me, Abba,’” (TPB 167). “Qasim had an unreasoning impulse to take her back with him on some pretext or other” (TPB 166), but with a helpless wrenched heart he leaves her in the tribal mountains.

Sidhwa exemplifies how the cultural displacement resulted in the confrontation between the native and alien culture. The facet of nostalgia grows with Zaitoon after a few days of her married life in the mountains. And
Sidhwa exposes her inability to survive in the rustic mountains. She is not able to adapt the hard tribal lifestyle and it is reciprocated in Sidhwa’s words:

“A new wakeful fear crystallised…She sensed the savagery of the people…She knew poverty and the harshness of their fight for survival made them the way they were, and her mind revolted at the certainty that to share their lives she would have to become like them.” (TPB 156).

Their brutal ways of existence and the hard lifestyle which get contrasted with her peaceful life in Lahore. These brutal ways of existence and the hard lifestyle which get contrasted with her peaceful life in Lahore. These cultural conflicts are poignantly rendered by Sidhwa in the following passage:

Her existence in those few days mirrored the grim drudgery of the mountain people. Subsisting on baked maize and water, supplemented occasionally by a little rice, she laboured all day, chaffing, kneading, washing, and tending the animals and the young green rice-shoots and the sprouting maize. She collected animal droppings and, patting them into neat discs with her hands, plastered them to the hut….Gradually, in her quest for firewood, Zaitoon became familiar with the terrain….she also grew immune to the tyrannical, animal-trainer treatment meted out by Sakhi….she no longer thought of marriage with any sense of romance….Zaitoon’s instinct for self-preservation alone kept her going. At night she lay awake, her stupor lifting awhile as she indulged her fancies. She longed for Qasim’s
love, for Miriam’s companionship, for the protective aura of Nikka’s status. In the plains, she had not even been aware of these securities. Now she longingly lived for her promised visit to Lahore... *(TPB 174-175).*

Sidhwa also sketches the theme of alienation and cultural clash with her another character Carol, an American woman, who gets migrated from America to Lahore, in marriage with an army soldier, Farukh. The author places Carol in a parallel line with the nostalgic experiences of Zaitoon and juxtaposes both brides’ cultural encounters in an alien land. For carol, Farukh seems to be the only answer to the drudgery associated with her sales assistant job in San Jose. But her expectations vanished, when she cannot cope up with the Pakistani society. It is exposed by Sidhwa in the lines as, “A year after coming to Lahore it had slowly dawned on carol that the repressed erotic climate was beginning to affect her. In the states, what she had thought was a unique attraction for Farukh had in fact been her fascination with the exotic...” *(TPB 176).*

The author draws some similarities with Carol and Zaitoon in their cultural displacement such as: homelessness, identity crisis and the phase of nostalgia. This aspect of similarity is mentioned by the author in the following lines when carol comes across Zaitoon in her life: “I’ve often thought of the girl, you know I felt I understood her...Her life is so different from mine, and yet I feel a real bond, an understanding on some deep level.” *(TPB 180).* Carol’s rootlessness and cultural conflicts with the host culture are lucidly exhibited by Sidhwa in the passage as follows:
She could no more survive among them than amidst a pride of lions. Even if she survived the privation, the filth and vermin and swarm of germs carrying alien diseases, her independent attitudes would get her killed! So much for her naïve co-ed fantasy! She could study them, observe every detail of their life, maybe even understand them, but become one of them, never! She wasn’t programmed to fit. She’d need an inherited memory of ancient rites, taboos and responses: inherited immunities: a different set of genes . . . (TPB 227).

The author emphasises Carol’s decision to get back to America because of her inconsistency with the alien environment, where she thinks that her independent attitude would not be get encouraged in a fundamentalist culture of Pakistan. It is evident through her words with her husband Farukh: “I think I’m finally beginning to realize something . . . your civilization is too ancient . . . too different . . . and it has ways that can hurt me . . . really hurt me . . . I’m going home.” (TPB 229). And her sense of alienation and cultural displacement are sensibly recited by Sidhwa: “Whoever said people the world over are the same was wrong. The more she travelled, the more she realized only the differences.” (TPB 226).

Like Carol, Zaitoon also finds her way in a dynamic escapism from the brutal life of the mountains. After nine days of gross sufferings she reaches the bridge and it was exposed in the lines: “Zaitoon noticed a faint, incongruous line stretched across a distant mountain as if someone with a brush – stroke had tried to mark the centre of the mountains. Zaitoon’s pulse quickened. It had to be the road on which she had travelled.” (TPB 182).
Sidhwa puts on the same boat, the independent and privileged Carol and the naïve migrant protagonist Zaitoon. Both share the same aspects of cultural displacement in the alien land and strife of nostalgia for their home. Carol’s decision to go back to America and Zaitoon’s rebel act of escape from the Kohistani mountains to the plains, both suggest a single thing that it is very difficult to surmount the cultural barriers during migration.

Hence through these two novels, *An American Brat* and *The Pakistani Bride*, Bapsi Sidhwa dynamically portrays the various aspects of confrontations between the cultures, during the process of migration. She accentuates the crucial role of culture in the migrant’s life with some of her migrant characters from these select novels. The direct and indirect conflicts, which result in the phase of nostalgia and in the phase of assimilation, are emphasized respectively by the author through her works.