CHAPTER - V

EXPATRIATE SENTIMENTS
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5.1. GENERAL

Jhumpa Lahiri, through her first book ‘Interpreter of Maladies’, emphasizes on the stories of Indians, in what for them, is a strange land, America. The influence of frequent childhood visits to India, parents who are still a part of the Indian world, despite their immigration to America thirty years ago, and her personal upbringing, to name a few, seem, to have contributed to the expression of expatriate sentiments in the collection of stories. The loneliness, the deep sense of remorse and emotional isolation that some of her characters go through are general in nature throughout the world. It is the natural experience of individuals who are forced to live away from their native land and culture. This collection is a revelation of her endeavor to interpret the maladies of mind that people suffer in such situations.

Christine Gomez in her informative essay ‘The Ongoing Quest of Bharti Mukherjee from Expatriation to Immigration’ describes the term ‘Expatriation’ (Indian Women Novelists, ed. R.K.Dhawan, 1995, Vol. 7) as below:
"Expatriation is actually a complex state of mind and emotion which includes a wishful longing for the past, often symbolized by the ancestral home, the pain of exile and homelessness, the struggle to maintain the difference between oneself and the new, unfriendly surroundings, an assumption to moral or cultural superiority over the host country and a refusal to accept the identity forced on one by the environment. The expatriate builds a cocoon around herself/himself as a refuge from cultural dilemmas and from the experienced hostility or unfriendliness in the new country".

In this collection, the reason for the expression of Expatriate sentiments is to be delved into. Indians migrate to other nations, especially to The United States with some purpose and Lahiri has used a few reasons for such migration. These include

1. Domestic Commitment such as marriages
2. Education
3. Ancestral migration
4. Career
Stories of Lahiri can be categorized on the basis of the above mentioned goals of the protagonists figuring in the story.

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Some of the Characters who express Expatriate sentiments are

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The stories whisper and scream traces of India through the details of characters and events that are testaments to the complex and conflict prone world of Indian immigrants in the United States. These stories can be dealt under five heads which express the expatriate sentiments. These are:

I. Instances of exile, estrangement, displacement and marginality, both cultural and emotional.
II. Significance of rituals and routines.
III. Expressions of Indian culture.
IV. Expression through Identity.
V. Food as talisman of homeland.

5.2. Instances of Exile, Estrangement, Displacement and Marginality

Lahiri has used several examples in her stories to bring out the above. These have been expressed through the use of objects, feelings, thinking, actions and expressions. Moreover, traces of Exile, Estrangement, Displacement and Marginality are also found in various stories.

5.2.1. Use of objects

But now the trenches were widening. (5)

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In January when he stopped working at his carrel in the library, he set up his desk there deliberately, partly because it was a place Shoba avoided. (8)

Now he had to struggle to say something that interested her, something that made her look up from her plate or from her proof reading files. (12)

*The three bedroom house and the library are used as objects of estrangement in the above examples.*

She turned to him, looking not at his face, but at his shoes—old moccasins he wore. They had been through enough. She needed some time alone. (21)

*In the above the trenches and the shoes are the objects used to show the rift of estrangement between the husband and the wife on the surface level. She feels a longing for India to save her marriage from disaster in 'A Temporary Matter'*

Shoba had decided on which of the three brothers she was going to ask to feed the child, its first taste of solid food. (11)

*Her pining for Indian customs and thoughts is well brought out in the above lines.*
He dreaded the possibility of a lost letter, the photograph never reaching him hovering somewhere in Orissa, close but ultimately unattainable. (56)

*This object of exile is noticed in 'Interpreter of Maladies' wherein Kapasi pines for a letter to reach him.*

They ate pickled mangos with their meals, ate rice every night for supper with their hands. (27)

He unlaced his shoes and lined them against the baseboard. (28)

*The object of nostalgia of Indian custom is expressed here.*

“The rice was cooked in rose water. The Mayor was invited. Everyone washed their fingers in pewter bowls”......Mustard prawns were steamed in banana leaves...(71)

*The object of identity along with lingering memories of India is well brought out through this example in 'A Real Durwan'.*

“What is the Taj like?” She asked.

Laxmi “An everlasting monument of love”. (92)

*Reminiscences of India’s greatness is explained through this object of identity in ‘Sexy’.*
She flung open the drawers of the bureau and the door of the closet filled with saris of every unimaginable texture and shade brocaded with gold and silver threads. (125)

_The bureau and sari of the typical Indian woman are used to reveal the association of Mrs. Sen with the custom in India._

But as they unpacked their boxes, and hung up their winter clothes and the silk paintings of elephant procession bought on their honeymoon in Jaipur, Twinkle, much to her dismay, could not find a thing. (139).

_The object of India's rich cultural heritage is picturized and association with marriage life is revealed in the story 'This Blessed House'. _

One tree on the lawn was still full of leaves, red and orange, like the tent in which he had married Twinkle. (147)

_Indian marriage scene and cultural background is shown in 'This Blessed House'. _

“Great house, Great rice”. Sunil, an anesthesiologist walked in spooning food from his paper plate into his mouth. (153)
Again objects are included to show association with Indian food items even in America in the story this Blessed House.

“We are not Christians”, Sanjeev said. (137)

*Obsession with dominating Hindu religion in India.*

Instead he thought of how he and Shoba had become experts at avoiding each other in their three bedroom house, spending as much time on separate floors as possible. (4)

He thought of how long it had been since she looked into his eyes and smiled, or whispered his name on those rare occasions they still reached for each other’s bodies before sleeping. (5)

*The house is the object used to reveal the pangs of separation of the couple.*

5.2.2. Feelings

Each week Mr. Pirzada wrote letters to his wife and sent comic books to each of his seven daughters, but the postal system, along with most everything in Dacca had collapsed and he had not heard a word of them in over six months. (24)
His daughters are missing. “As soon as I said it, I wish I had not. I felt that Mr.Pirzada’s daughters really were missing and that he would never see them”.

All were well having survived the events of the past year at an estate belonging to his wife’s grandparents in the mountains of Shillong.

(42)

Though I had not seen him for months, it was only then that I felt Mr.Pirzada’s absence. (42)

The feeling of exile on the one hand and that of comfort and happiness on the other seems predominant in the above examples as found in ‘When Mr.Pirzada came to Dine’.

As a result of spending all her time in college with Raj, she continued, she did not make any close friends. There was no one to confide about him at the end of a difficult day, or to share a passing thought or a wrong. (63)

Feeling of marginality prevalent in the story, ‘Interpreter of Maladies’

“At home that is all you have to do. Not everybody has a telephone. But just raise your voice a bit, or express grief or joy of any kind and
one whole neighborhood and half of another has come to share the news to help with arrangements”. (116)

*Expression of Identity with Indian social life as found in ‘Mrs. Sen’s’.*

Another day she played a cassette of people talking in her language. As the succession of voices laughed and said their bit, Mrs. Sen identified each speaker. .........She turned off the tape. “These are things that happened the day I left India”. (128)

*Expression of nostalgia of reminiscences again of Indian Social life.*

It wasn’t until after his father died, in his last year of college that the country began to interest him, and he studied its history from course books as if it were any other subject. (1)

*A feeling of Patriotism and inquisitiveness about Indian society exposed even though in a foreign land in ‘A Temporary Matter’.*

“Whenever there is a wedding in the family”, she told Eliot one day, “or a large celebration of any kind, my mother sends out word in the evening for all the neighborhood women to bring blades just like this one, and then they sit in an enormous circle on the roof of our
building, laughing and gossiping and slicing fifty kilos of vegetables through the night”. (115)

Collective Social Activities and thoughts of mother land prevalent as in ‘Mrs.Sen’s’.

5.2.3. Actions

Instead he thought of how he and Shoba had become experts at avoiding each other in their three bedroom house, spending as much time on separate floors as possible. (4)

He thought of how long it had been since she looked into his eyes and smiled, or whispered his name on those rare occasions they still reached for each other’s bodies before sleeping. (5)

The feeling of estrangement brings the thoughts of mother land in ‘A Temporary Matter’.

She did not hold the girl’s hand as they had walked to the rest room. (43)

Mr. and Mrs.Das behaved like an older brother and sister, not parents. It seemed that they were in charge of children only for the day. (49)

The Indian family from the U.S. on a visit to India show signs of estrangement. It also reveals their estrangement with Indian life in ‘Interpreter of Maladies’.
5.2.4. Expressions

A sense of isolation governs each story coupled with ideas of identity and representation, issues surely experienced by all immigrants trying to adapt to a new culture.

Since September their only guest had been Shoba's mother. She was a religious woman. She set up a small shrine, a framed picture of a lavender faced goddess and a plate of marigold petals, on the bedside table in the guest room and prayed twice a day for healthy grandchildren in the future. (9)

Instance of identity with Indian culture and expression of Indian sentiment in 'A Temporary Matter'.

"It's like India", Shoba said, watching him tend his makeshift candelabra.

"Sometimes the current disappears for hours at a stretch. I once had to attend an entire rice ceremony in the dark. The baby just cried and cried. It must have been so hot". (11)

Indian culture and expression of nostalgia with motherland identified with a typical custom in 'A Temporary Matter'.
But I could no longer eat. I could only steal glances at Mr. Pirzada, sitting beside me in his olive green jacket, calmly creating a well in his rice to make room for a second helping of lentils. (31)

Expression of a particular custom of eating with the hands in India in *When Mr. Pirzada cam to Dine*.

"The wheel are supposed to symbolize the wheel of life" Mr. Das said. They depict the cycle of creation, preservation and achievement of realization (57).

*Indian religious belief and custom of worship expressed in ‘Interpreter of Maladies’*

Mr. Kapasi found it strange that Mr. Das should refer to his wife by her first name......... (45)

*Indian Custom of address exposed in ‘Interpreter of Maladies’.*

Of all the people who lived in that particular flat-building, Boori ma was the only one who stood by the collapsible gate and wished them a safe journey. (80)

*Custom of bidding adieu in India as in ‘A Real Durwan’.*
5.3. **Rituals and Routines**

He imagined himself gripping the wheel as Shoba turned around to hand the children juice boxes. (3)

She was a religious woman. She set up a small shrine, a framed picture of a lavender faced goddess and a plate of marigold petals on the bedside table in the guest room and prayed twice a day for healthy grandchildren in the future. (9)

“You make a jack-o-lantern”, I said grinning ferociously. (35)

For Halloween I was a witch Dora, my trick-or-treating partner was a witch too.

We wore black capes fashioned from dyed pillow cases and conical hats with wide cardboard brains...............(37)

*Adherence to Indian ritual and expression of Indian ceremony as found in ‘When Mr.Pirzada came to dine’.*

*The routine and ritual mentioned add significance to the story since it brings about the affection between the characters, Pirzada and Lilia later.*

He---gave up eating meat on Fridays in order to appease his household God. (166)

*Indian rituals for welfare of relatives and friends.*
---for six weeks she had worn an iron bangle on her wrist and applied vermilion powder to the part in her hair, to signify to the world that she was a bride. (189)

---I wondered if Mrs. Croft had ever seen a woman in sari with a dot painted on her forehead and bracelets stacked on her wrists, I wondered if she could see the red dye still vivid on Mala’s feet. (195)

Every day ritual of a married Indian woman.

5.3.1. Routine

So the morning before the third night, she shook the mites out of her bedding. (70)

Instance and Indian habit found in 'A Real Durwan'.

Dev took a nap for twelve minutes. Miranda had never known an adult who took naps, but Dev said it was something he’d grown up doing in India, where it was so hot that people didn’t leave their homes until the sun went down. (94)

He would go to the bathroom and brush his teeth with the index finger, something he told her all Indians knew how to do, to get rid of the smoke in his mouth. (95)

Indian routine actions exposed in 'Sexy'.

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5.4. **Expressions of Indian Culture**

The stories of Jhumpa Lahiri focus on the subtle struggle of Indians to maintain a sense of identity and cultural togetherness in foreign settings. Their sense of link to the Indian heritage and culture is a vital aspect of the stories.

**Scenes, Customs, Habits, Appearances** are part and parcel of the Indian social life. Although most of the stories are set abroad, the characters involved stick to the rituals. This helps them to maintain their identity. They also help in the movement of the story by lending an insight into the characters and reveal how even in a foreign land such customs help them to assimilate into the alien life. A few examples from the stories are given below.

5.4.1. **Scenes**

Mr. Kapasi pulled over to the side of the road as Mr. Das took a picture of a barefoot man, his head wrapped in a dirty turban, seated on top of a cart of grain sacks pulled by a pair of bullocks. (49)

*Typical Indian rural scene found in 'Interpreter of Maladies'.*

They hammered, shouted, spat and cursed. They wiped their sweat with the ends of their turbans. (78)

*Such instances of Indian life add to signify the cultural aspects.*
She had a number of coffer boxes whose skeleton keys she still wore along with her life savings, tied to the free end of her sari. (73)

They went about their business, scolding children or adding up expenses or picking stones out of the evening rice: (76)

*Regular scene in an Indian household and scene of identity of Indian custom in 'A Real Durwan'.*

Film songs blared from amplifiers strung through streets. Arcades and markets stayed open all hours. We bought our children ball and coloured ribbons, purchased sweet meats by the kilos, paid calls in taxis to relatives we had not seen throughout the year. (169)

*Typical Indian festival scene.*

### 5.4.2. Customs

In an effort to cure her, concerned members of her town brought her holy water from seven holy rivers. (158)

*Indian custom expressed in 'The Treatment of Bibi Haldar'.*

By the next morning three separate palmists had examined Bibi’s hand and confirmed that there was no doubt evidence of imminent union etched into her skin. (162)

*Indian custom of belief in horoscopes and predictions brought out in 'The Treatment of Bibi Haldar'.*
I assumed the role of the eldest son and had touched the flame to her temple, to release her tormented soul to heaven. (182)

*Indian custom at funerals as found in ‘The Third and Final Continent’.*

5.4.3. **Habits**

Lahiri’s stories abound in exposure of Indian culture which help Indians maintain their uninhibited link with their motherland and maintain their sense of identity.

Their reminiscences of Indian life expose their struggle to lead life unnerved in a foreign land. A few such examples are quoted below to drive home this point.

When friends dropped by, Shoba would throw together meals that appeared to have taken half a day to prepare---------(7)

“It’s like India”, Shoba said, “Sometimes the current disappears for hours at a stretch. I once had to attend an entire rice ceremony in the dark. The baby just cried and cried. It must have been so hot”. (11)

*Situation that exposes the Indian habit as shown in ‘A Temporary Matter’*

We ate with our hand on a table covered with newspapers. (173)
So we drive to Cambridge to visit him or bring him home for a weekend, so that he can eat rice with his hands. (197)

_Peculiarity of Indian habit in ‘The Third and Final Continent’._

5.4.4. _Appearances_

He unlaced his shoes and lined them against the base board—(28)

_Identification through Indian custom found in ‘When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine’._

The family looked Indian, but dressed as foreigners did. (44)

When he had introduced himself, Mr. Kapasi had pressed his palms together in greeting. (44)

_Stroke of alien Indians to adhere to Indian identity as exposed in ‘Interpreter of Maladies’. _

Recalling our own experiences, we prepared her for an interview.

“Most likely the groom will arrive with one parent, a grandparent and either an uncle or aunt. They will stare, ask several questions. They will examine the bottoms of your feet, the thickness of your braid. They will ask you to name the prime minister, recite poetry, feed a dozen hungry people on half a dozen eggs.” (165)
Indian appearance during certain marriage formalities is explained above in ‘The Treatment of Bibi Haldar’

Identity is exposed through other means in the stories. Community life is prevalent in India. This Sense of Community, especially in a foreign land, reverberates through some of the stories. This sense helps them maintain their identity, but simultaneously assimilate themselves into the culture of the alien land.

5.5. Expression through Identity

In search of compatriots, they used to trail their fingers at the start of each new semester, through the columns of the university directory circling surnames familiar to their part of the world. (24)

Identification of one’s own country folk in an alien land as in ‘When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine’.

“Could I drive all the way to Calcutta. How long would that take, Eliot. Ten thousand miles at fifty miles per hour. (119).

Another day she played a cassette of people talking in her language - a farewell present, she told Eliot, her family had made for her. (128)

Playing cassettes taken for native land experience in ‘Mrs. Sen’s’.
The above are examples of identification of native land through certain experiences.

5.6. **Food as Talisman of Homeland.**

One aspect of community life is **FOOD**, which helps to define social hierarchies and serve as a driving force behind people’s actions. It does not discriminate on the basis of privilege, economy, gender or social position. It helps sustain life on earth and is part and parcel of social life.

Food is also a motivating factor for a society. It is a replica of culture. Indians living abroad are presumed to shed their regional, linguistic and ethnic identities and become ‘Indians’ overseas. All such disparities are discarded by the Indian Diaspora.

Food has a soothing effect on the lives of Indian Diaspora. It also is a significant part of their identity and instills a sense of belonging, a force that greets one in a foreign land and fosters cultural exchange.

Jhumpa Lahiri has used food as a linking force throughout her collection of short stories so as to make it serve as a source of identity and assimilation in the myriad fabric of life in the United States where the
characters feel a ‘sense of exile’. Alienation seems to be a predominant feeling.

In spite of several deadlock in their effort to adapt to the new world, their strong will helps them overcome their obsession with their foreign culture by the use of food items.

It is possible to analyze through the stories, Lahiri’s use of food as a factor of Indian identity.

Traditionally Indians are said to be good hosts who entertain guests by their meticulous cooking practice and cuisines. The food habits of Indians are portrayed at a micro level by the author in several places. A description of the kitchen and the store room apart from that of the act of consumption etc. found in the stories point out how food serves as a linking factor and helps the characters perceive their identity even when they assimilate into the alien life. Such instances are ubiquitous throughout the stories:

The pantry was always stocked with extra bottles of olive and corn oil, depending on whether they were cooking Italian or Indian. There were endless boxes of pista in all shapes and colour, zippered sacks of basmati
rice, whole sides of lambs and goats from the Muslim butchers at Haymarket, chopped up and frozen in endless plastic bags. (6)

*Indian traditional cuisine stocks even in an alien land taken from 'A Temporary Matter'.*

“For months now they’d served themselves from the stove, and he had taken his plate into the study, letting the meal grow cold on his desk, before shoving it into his mouth without pause”

*Indian eating habit.*

When she came downstairs they ate together. (20)

*Reconciliation is brought out between an estranged couple through the use of food.*

In the autumn of 1971 a man used to come to our house bearing confections in his pocket and hopes of ascertaining the life or death of his family. (23)

*Food items used as a gift and to bring about relationship in 'When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine'.*
I had no response, offered no comment, betrayed no visible reaction to the steady stream of honey filled lozenges, the raspberry truffles, the slender rolls of sour pastilles. (29)

*Mild negative reaction to Indian food in the above said story, ‘When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine’*

She walked slowly carrying some puffed rice tossed with peanuts and chilly peppers in a large packet made from newspapers. (48)

They had bottled mango juice and sandwiches and plates of onion and potatoes deep fried in graham flour batter.

She reached into her straw bag in search of something, then pulled out a packet of puffed rice. (63)

*The Indian food experience brings them closer to the native land in ‘The Interpreter of Maladies’.*

Dev had ordered foie gras and soup made with champagne and raspberries. (93)

Dev liked to eat pickled herring and potato salad, and tortes of pesto and mascarpone cheese. (93)

*Penchant for particular Indian foods in ‘Sexy’.*
Food, and especially Indian fish, plays a dominant role in this story, which deals with cultural alienation through food. Fish, which is almost the staple food of Bengal, becomes an obsession with Mrs.Sen, as it is not always possible to get full and fresh fish in America. The arrival of fish at the local store is greeted as a piece of news from home and she is always too eager to hold it, cook it and serve it. Fish becomes the leitmotif in the story. When she gets it she is happy, and when it is unavailable in the kitchen stock, she sulks like a child. For Mrs.Sen fish is her home, her state, her neighborhood, her friend and her family. It is the one that excites and lands her in ecstasy. She finds it to be a sense of proximity to people.

At the fish shop the ice beds were nearly empty, as were the lobster tanks, where rust coloured stains were visible through the water. A sign said the shop would be closing for winter at the end of the month. There was only one person working behind the counter, a young boy who did not recognize Mrs.Sen as he handed her a bag reserved under her name.

"Has it been cleaned and scaled ?" Mrs.Sen asked.

The boy shrugged.

"My boss left early. He just said to give you this bag". (132)

The driver turned his head and glanced back at Mrs.Sen.

"What's in the bag ?".
"A fish", Mrs. Sen replied. (133)

"I am going to put these in a very tasty stew with fish and green bananas", she announced. "Only I will have to do without the green bananas".

"Are we going to get the fish?"

"We are going to get the fish?" (133)

*Bengali's obsession with fish, found in "Mrs. Sen's".*

He had to admit though, that whatever it was that she had cooked today, it was unusually tasty, attractive even, with bright white cubes of fish and flecks of parsley, and fresh tomatoes gleaming in the dark brown red broth.

"How did you make it?".

"I made it up".

"What did you do?".

"I just put some things into the pot and added the malt vinegar at the end".

"How much vinegar?"
She shrugged, ripping off some bread and plunging it into her bowl. 

(144)

Marginalization of relationship and an act or reconciliation to family life in 'This Blessed House'

In the end I bought a small carton of milk and a box of cornflakes. This was my first meal in America. I ate at my desk. I preferred it to hamburgers or hot dogs, the only alternative I could afford in the coffee shops on Massachusetts Avenue, and besides, at the time I had yet to consume any beef. Even the simple chore of buying milk was new to me. (175)

Preference to Indian food.

I told her I had prepared some egg curry at home. "What did they give you to eat on the plane?"

"I didn’t eat".

"All the way from Calcutta?"

"The menu said oxtail soup".

"But surely there were other items".

"The thought of eating an ox’s tail made me lose my appetite".

Food habits reveal displacement as found in "The Third and Final Continent".

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5.7. Experience and Expression of Dichotomy of Integration and Non-Integration

Lahiri laments over the failure of global living to bridge the gaps between cultures and individuals as well. Her characters attempt to understand the human experience on the one hand, while trying to find satisfaction in their individual lives. This struggle to bridge the gap between the collectivist and individualistic cultures, between the universal and the unique is brought about by the homogenizing forces of globalization, the chaos of mechanized living and the silence of loneliness.

Although several instances have been pointed out, some of the stories and the incidents therein expose this concept emphatically. These can be divided into psychological integration, emotional integration on the one hand and emotional, social and psychological non integration on the other.

5.7.1. Psychological Integration

In the first story, ‘A Temporary Matter’, the marriage of a young couple, Shoba and Shukumar seems to have fallen apart, due to the delivery of a still born child. It reached a stage where it was a temporary matter. But the salvage is brought about by the temporary power cut. But Lahiri has used her Indian reminiscences and the problem of marital
discord to put an end to their apparently catastrophic disagreement. Shoba's problem is her inability to suppress the anger and frustration of losing the baby for whose arrival she had planned elaborately. In her state of self pity and disappointment she was ready to sacrifice her marriage. But the reconciliation and integration is brought about when she learns that the loss of the baby had affected Shukumar as deeply as her. Thus their confessions during the power cut brings about their re union, in other words the integration seems to be flashpoint of this story.

The title story 'Interpreter of Maladies' does not fall into the line of arising any curiosity in the minds of the reader, in spite of the shocking confession of Mrs.Das to Mr.Kapasi. She feels utterly relieved of the pain that she was subjected to for seven long years by disclosing the secret that shrouded the birth of her second son to Mr.Kapasi. He then asks her 'Is it really pain you feel Mrs.Das or is it guilt?'. This question has a far reaching effect on her. She seems to be relieved of her guilt for the first time in seven years. She is no more the uninterested or brooding woman as at the beginning of the story. She is able to integrate herself into the reality of the situation and her family life along with Mr.Das and thus integration is brought about through revelation.
5.7.2. Emotional Integration

‘When Mr.Pirzada came to Dine’ is the story that exposes the fact of what it means to miss someone dear. It is based on real life experience. Mr.Pirzada is a research scholar in America, but his family-- his wife and seven daughters - is in war-torn Dacca. He became a regular dinner guest at Lilia’s house after her parents were acquainted with him, having been fed up with the monotonous American style of living. Lilia, the young school girl learns that Mr.Pirzada missed his children and home very badly. In spite of being a Muslim, he becomes a close friend of Lilia’s family. It is because Mr.Pirzada and Lilia’s parents

‘speak the same language, laughed at the same jokes and looked more or less the same.’ (25)

But Lilia realizes his concern for the family during the war between India and Pakistan on account of East Pakistan’s demand for sovereignty. She senses the tension it created in her parents as well as Mr.Pirzada due to the insecurity of the family in Dacca. She consoles him by

‘eating a piece of candy for the sake of his family and praying for their safety’. (34)

The story ends on a happy note when Mr.Pirzada joins his family after the war and thus come back to normal life. But at the same time it
reveals what it means to miss someone one loves unmindful of regional and religious disparities. Lilia remembers how her parents and Mr. Pirzada were integrating themselves.

“as if they were a single person, sharing a single meal, a single body a single silence and a single fear”. (41)

and thus realizes

“What it means to miss someone who was so many miles and hours away” (42)

*The dichotomy of happiness and agony is well brought out when we find that one is happy due to a union, and the other sad due to the pangs of separation.*

5.7.3. Emotional Non integration

‘Emotional exile’ forms the focus of the story, ‘Mrs. Sen’s’. As in other stories, the immigrant experience is at the core of this stirring story also. It explains the wonderful companionship between two entirely different persons, Eliot, a boy of eleven and Mrs. Sen, an elderly woman, his baby sitter. She communicates to him on an equal footing in spite of the difference in age. She is overwhelmed with joy every time she shares her Indian memories with him. With enthusiasm and verve, she describes the variety and uniqueness of her life in India. Her religion, food and pattern of living are brought alive in her words. Even after Eliot has stopped coming
to Mrs. Sen’s place, he seems to be missing their togetherness and as a result goes through a void as he watches

‘the gray waves receding from the shore’. (135)

_The sadness due to separation is the underlying current of this story._

In ‘Mrs. Sen’s’ the protagonist has lost her sense of belonging, her sense of shared experience. She finally becomes a victim of the noisy flow of machinery with which she cannot merge. She seems to have lost herself to the silence of loneliness and the noise of modern life. But it is the ‘emotional dependence’ that binds Eliot and Mrs. Sen and helps them integrate into the life abroad.

The story ‘Sexy’ is woven around the sexual relationship between Dev and Miranda and the hopelessness of their extra-marital relationship. The relationship meets its waterloo naturally. Miranda realizes that she cannot expect more than physical fulfillment from Dev and that her love towards Dev was like ‘loving someone you don’t know’. (107)

She thus perceives the parallel between her desperate situation and the pathetic condition of a deserted wife. Both long for impossible
relationship based on love. Thus she ‘cried harder unable to stop’.

Therefore again here integration seems to be impossible because relationships do not preclude issues of morality.

‘The Treatment of Bibi Haldar’ is ‘about a misfit, a young woman living in a rundown building in Calcutta and she is in the care of her cousin and his wife.....She is an epileptic’.

But it also is about ‘the town’s involvement …over her marriage and in the idea of finding a husband’. Allowing the reader an insight into the workings of the human psyche, the story reveals that deprivation of fulfillment of certain desires proves detrimental to the integration with society.

5.7.4. Social Non Integration

Another story that throws light on non-integration is ‘The Real Durwan’. The protagonist, Boori Ma, the gatekeeper of an apartment building is unable to integrate into her present situation as a durwan, reminiscing about her affluent past. Even kind people like Mrs.Dalal get lost in the quagmire of vanity and selfishness. Thus the eternal disparity that
exists between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', is sharply emphasized in this story.

5.7.5. Integration through the Feeling of Love

"This Blessed House" is a story that emphasizes the point that it is not the religious identity that satisfies man but the sense of affinity and involuntary affection that exists between people, even among strangers. Thus the story exposes the relationship between the characters and the modern global world. The characters, Sanjeev and Twinkle, seem to seek meaningless tokens and avoid the complexities of communication with each other, thereby distancing themselves from humanity. A kind of personal and spiritual vacuum seems to have been created. But this fallacy is removed when Sanjeev discovered that passions or religious sentiments do not rule humanity, but it is eternal love that prevails overall.

5.7.6. Integration through the Feeling of Universal Love

The final story, 'The Third and Final Continent' celebrates universality. In it, the author brings out the differences in behavior, lifestyle and expression as found in three different places, India, Britain and America. The narrator finds solace in caring for his landlady, which he could not do for his mother. He thus finds humanity in these acts and "simple gestures". He remarks that he has lived a life rich with the universal
feelings that bind men and women together across continents and time. The universal and the individual seem to have converged in this story alone.

The collection gives the reader ‘profitable pleasure’. They combine learning experience with delight. ‘The yearnings of exile’ and the ‘emotional confusion’, the feelings of separation and integration are the two basic themes of the stories and they replace the dominance of power and impact. According to Joseph Warren Beach, (The 20th Century Novel, 1995, 33) the objective of this collection is to make us

‘feel and appreciate and what counts is not the number of facts but the degree to which we have been made to live with them’.