CHAPTER II

THEMATIZATION

2.1. GENERAL

The word ‘nouvelle’, derived from Italian, refers to a collection of love stories in prose after Boccasio’s ‘Decameron’ (1350). The term originally meant a ‘fresh story’, but gradually came to denote a story in prose. A novel is also known as a pocket theatre since it contains all the characteristics of a drama. It has no undue limitations and therefore offers a fuller representation of life. Several novels and short stories are published every year, which are not of high literary value, for as W.H.Hudson (1841-1922,27) opines that ‘any one can write a novel who has pen, ink and paper at command, and a certain amount of leisure and patience’. The short story or novel is thus a very effective medium for the portrayal of human thought and action.

2.2. THEMES IN SHORT STORIES

Observation of life coupled with independent thinking and portrayal through various viewpoints using one’s own style make good writers. Their keen sense of perception of the social, political, cultural, religious and domestic phenomena enable them to present life in an astute manner. The essence of reality is absorbed by the writer who recreates it in his/her
own fashion. The artist is usually inspired by invariably the theme. The broad canvas of the writer usually accommodates a plurality of themes and motifs. Characters, narrative and setting are important in a short story, but these are definitely determined by theme. Human beings are bound by certain basic feelings which are ultimately passed on to the society, such as birth, death, hunger, emotions etc. Therefore themes may be socio-political, satirical and didactic. Sentimental themes that express varying psychological moods, reunion of estranged ones, melodrama, humor and other emotional aspects of life contribute to the themes on a larger scale. Such themes are sometimes based on fantasy, superstition, supernatural elements, suspense, imagination, dreams, cheery or fate, mystery, science, fables, crime, etc.

2.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF A SHORT STORY

A Short story is usually short and can be read in one sitting.

a. Conciseness is the hallmark of a short story. This is unlike other literary forms, where the story can diverge from the main plot.

b. Usually it leaves behind a single impression or effect. It may be built around one character, place, idea or act.

c. Because a short story is concise in form and theme, writers direct readers in bringing personal experiences and prior knowledge to the story for evoking aesthetic experience.
2.4. FOUR MAJOR COMPONENTS OF A SHORT STORY

a. Plot
b. Setting
c. Characters
d. Theme

2.4.1. Stages of a Plot

This forms the action that takes place in a story. It is a series of connected happenings and their results. In order to have a result, it is necessary to have an initial event or conflict. Therefore the stages include:

a. Introduction of characters.

b. The situation: Initial conflict.

c. The generation of circumstances which create a Rising action - heightened anticipation for the reader or climax.

d. Falling of action and conclusion. These two are known as denouement.

2.4.1.1. Short stories usually possess the following

a. Dramatic Conflict: This is the basis of the story. The source of the problems which may or may not be overcome in the climax.

b. Foreshadowing: Many stories, despite their surprise ending, leave clues through the story.
c. Repetition: Helps drive home a point.
d. Suspense: Draws readers to the work.

2.4.2. Setting

This forms the background against which the incidents of the story take place. It includes all aspects such as place, the time and the social conditions under which the story moves along. This can also include the atmosphere, the tone and feeling of a story, i.e. gloomy, cheery, etc. In one form or another, setting is indispensable to a story. Often, the relevance of a story is lost in another setting.

2.4.3. Characters

Characters are the pen portrayals that evolve the story and are living beings that think or act in order to keep the story moving. They are portrayed as living individuals with sense and sensuality in order that the reader feels strongly about them. The writer should never feel indifferent towards the characters. If the reader does not care for the characters, then the reader will not feel inclined to keep himself/herself engaged in reading.
2.4.3.1. Methods of Presenting a Character

In order to keep the stories moving by sustaining the interest of the reader, characters should be presented in such a manner that their importance is recognized by the reader and they contribute to the development of the plot.

This is done through four methods:

- Actions or thoughts of the character.
- Conversations the characters engage in.
- Conversations of other characters about a third character.
- Author’s own opinion. This may be overt or implied.

2.4.3.2. Point of View

Point of view has received much critical attention very recently. Fundamentally, the features of analysis include the probe into the plot, characterization, setting and the method of narration or point of view from which the novelist tells the story.

The presentation of a story is done using one or all of the following methods

- Author Omniscient (all knowing, all seeing). This is a third person narrative. The omniscient author, writing in the third person, sees
whatever he wants to see, inside or outside the character, in privacy or public and interprets according to individual wishes.

- **Author Participant** (first person). The author may be the main character, or could be a secondary one.

- **Author as an Observer** (third person). This involves a totally objective treatment, as though the story teller had no inner insight into the character’s thinking or behavior.

- **Multiple Story tellers** (third person). Here the author may tell the tale in a sequential form with views of many characters from shifting points. Importance is given to that character which is prominent in that particular description.

### 2.4.3.3. The Theme

The theme is the most important part of a story. It is the theme that makes up the total meaning of a story. It does not need to be tied up in a simple moral. Without this, the story lacks meaning and purpose. There are several ways in which a theme is revealed. This includes:

- Sometimes the theme is directly stated.

- The theme is only implied.

- The theme may be a direct refutation of a traditional theme.
2.5. JUSTIFICATION OF TITLES IN THE COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES

It is mandatory and customary to examine why Jhumpa Lahiri chose the various titles for her collection of short stories. These stories reveal the life of Indians in America, their cultural bondage with their motherland, yearning for life in India, Indianised ways of living in the USA and their desire to return to their homeland to ensure a more peaceful living. The following are the various stories and opinion on why she chose such titles for her collection:

2.5.1. A Temporary Matter

This title is apt since the couple who drifted apart on the death of their first born feel comfortable to confide during a temporary black out. Thus both their estrangement as well as the power breakdown is a temporary matter.

2.5.2. When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine

The story revolves around the title character, a Bangladeshi immigrant in the USA during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, who pines for the welfare of his family in his native land. It was during dinner time that he updates his knowledge of the happenings in his homeland and thus goes the title.
2.5.3. **Interpreter of Maladies**

This title involves a hero, who is not only a taxi-driver and a tourist guide but also an interpreter of the maladies of patients to a doctor. Patients confide in him. Similarly the lady of a tourist family from the USA confides in him about her past guilt of extra marital relationship. Lahiri has used this title for her collection of stories, wherein she interprets the maladies of Indians living abroad.

2.5.4. **A Real Durwan**

The word ‘durwan’ is borrowed from Hindi language and means ‘a gatekeeper or a watchman’. This story about an old lady who is a sweeper and gatekeeper of a derelict apartment is pathetic. She is accused of theft. Lahiri tries to find a real durwan to uphold Indian traditions abroad.

2.5.5. **Sexy**

This story develops against the background of a man leaving his wife and child for another woman. Here the child explains the meaning of ‘sexy’ to another character, Miranda, as “when you love a person without knowing them at all”.

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2.5.6. Mrs.Sen's

This is the story of an at-home baby sitter for a 11 year old boy. Mrs.Sen is new to the USA, but is unable to erase memories of her motherland. She is obsessed with fresh fish, her favorite recipe, which she wishes to obtain at any cost. Lahiri has used Bengali surnames to drive home the fact that Indian’s abroad pine for their native land and her culture.

2.5.7. This Blessed House

This is a typical depiction of the clash of the eastern and western cultures as involved in by a couple. A Hindu couple who are the new owners of a house, discover a treasure chest of objects related to Christianity. The heroine is all excited about the significance of the treasure and gives them a place of importance on her mantelpiece. The hero, meanwhile, is apprehensive about how guests and colleagues would react to their showing an interest in Christianity and believe that they have converted to Christianity.

2.5.8. The Treatment of Bibi Haldar

This story of a mentally challenged girl is about her desires to settle down in life with a husband and a home of her own. But she is ill treated by her far off cousins, her modesty outraged by an unknown rapist, but her illness finally is cured through her pregnancy.
2.5.9. The Third and Final Continent

This story of an immigrant to the USA who studied in the USA significantly reveals the cultural bondage and respect that Indians have for their elders. He waits for his Indian wife to join him, in the meanwhile, lives temporarily in an apartment along with an old lady more than a hundred years old. This period of boarding makes him establish a bond and after his wife joins him, he makes it a point to visit the old lady and seek her blessings for their family life. The hero as well as the story travels through three continents and finally ends up in the USA. It is here that the couple resolve to live happily.

2.6. THEMES IN THE ‘INTERPRETER OF MALADIES’

Maladies, both accurately diagnosed and misinterpreted, matters both temporary and life changing, relationships in flux and unshakeable, unexpected blessings and sudden calamities and the powers of survival in these are some of the themes of Jhumpa Lahiri’s extraordinary, Pulitzer prize winning debut collection of stories.

Lahiri in an interview narrates an anecdote that gave her the title. The title, she says, came to her long before the book did. In 1994, during under graduation, she bumped into an acquaintance, who informed her that he was working for a doctor’s office, interpreting for a doctor, who had a
number of Russian patients who had difficulty explaining their difficulties in English. This she considered to be a unique position, therefore resolved to write a story with that title. Her dream, materialized after almost five years. While she was putting together the skeleton of 'Interpreter of Maladies' she knew it expresses thematically the predicament at the heart of the book - the dilemma, the difficulty and often the impossibility of communicating emotional pain and affection to others and as well as to ourselves. She says that in some senses "I view my position as a writer, in so far as I attempt to articulate these emotions, as a sort of interpreter as well" (Arun Auguiar Interview, 1999).

Indians living abroad consider it a ritual to visit India at least once in their lifetime. They believe that such visits will put an end to the individuals suffering, yearning, longing or any kind of emotional vacuum which seems to engulf them in foreign soil. Hence the commonest ritual for all expatriates is a visit to India. Such visits bring alive the past in the present, prolong time, and carry through time and project tangible parts of the past overtime. The myriad of culture clash ripples prove that there is much more subtlety than assumed about living in an ethnic divide. Lahiri shifts the cultural perspectives as easily as a bilingual speaker shifts languages. These stories fill the cultural gaps with invisible ease.
Lahiri views Indian culture from the perspective of a child, a Midwesterner or an Indo-American. In ‘Mrs.Sen’ for example, an eleven year old boy in an American town watches his baby sitter go about her chores from chopping vegetables with a blade, to applying a fresh streak of vermillion to the part in her hair with the head of a thumbtack, while describing the life she had reluctantly left behind in Calcutta. Thus Lahiri quietly manages to portray the confusion and despair a young Indian wife feels so far from home.

Themes in these stories are universal, although these stories are set with Indian culture in America. Themes such as love, fidelity, tradition, alienation, crop up in the lives of Indians and non-Indians alike. *All the stories can be grouped under four themes.*
Tabular column indicating Plot, Setting, Character and Themes in the collection of 'Interpreter of Maladies.'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Story</th>
<th>Plot</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Temporary Matter</td>
<td>Marriage drifts to deadlock, confession leads to renewal of intimacy</td>
<td>The house of Shukumar is in darkness due to power shutdown.</td>
<td>Shukumar, Shoba</td>
<td>A Couple drifts apart on the death of their firstborn. Estrangement remains a temporary matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Mr.Pirzada came to Dine</td>
<td>Desperation, separation, Pangs of immigrants</td>
<td>Indian immigrants in the US, in 1971 (during the civil war in Pakistan)</td>
<td>Mr.Pirzada, the botanist Ms.Lalia, the child of Indian parents in US</td>
<td>Immigrants pining for native life, emotionally concerned about the welfare of the family left behind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter of Maladies</td>
<td>Romanticism as a cure for break down of a marriage</td>
<td>On a tour to India by Indians in America</td>
<td>Mr.Kapasi, Mrs.Mina Das</td>
<td>Seeking a remedy for infidelity and highlight of romantic moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs.Sen’s</td>
<td>Isolation, loneliness and home sickness</td>
<td>In an American home as a baby sister to a 11 year old baby</td>
<td>Mrs.Sen, Eliot</td>
<td>Methods adopted to overcome isolation and loneliness of Indians in US and to get rid of their obsession with native land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Real Durwan</td>
<td>Woes and sufferings experienced by expatriates</td>
<td>A home in Calcutta</td>
<td>Boori Maa</td>
<td>The pangs of deportation experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>This Blessed House</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clash of different personalities</strong></td>
<td><strong>A house in America, where Christian paraphernalia is found all round by the new inmates</strong></td>
<td><strong>Twinkle, Sanjeev</strong></td>
<td><strong>Excitement of a new environment by one contradicted by the other Icons bring about the reunion at the end</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Treatment of Bibi Haldar</strong></td>
<td><strong>Marriage and sexual relationship a panacea for all maladies</strong></td>
<td><strong>An American neighborhood</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bibi Haldar, neighbors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pining for a stress free life. Remedy in the form of a child</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adoption of ali culture through love of a married Bengali in US</strong></td>
<td><strong>Native Indian home abroad</strong></td>
<td><strong>Miranda, Rohin</strong></td>
<td><strong>Captures various range of emotions of joy, skepticism, grief. Finally realizes the fruitlessness and ramifications of this relationship</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Third and Final Continent</strong></td>
<td><strong>American life. Aversion to arranged marriage due to the belief that it is unadjustable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Various continents and America</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mrs.Croft, Mala, the protagonist</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interactions with the old lady help in bringing about a loving and lasting relationship with his life.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These stories reveal myriad aspects of NRI life. It strikes a chord with those who feel alienated and lonely in a foreign land and who appreciate Indian culture. The struggles and emotions portrayed are universal in nature.
2.6.1. The Theme of Love

Lahiri leads us down interesting paths narrating, for example, the challenges faced by the modern couples who on the one hand had to concede to an arranged marriage to uphold tradition, and on the other, are confronted with the challenges of Indian Americans building their lives and careers in another country. ‘This Blessed House’ uncovers the fragile boundaries of a marriage when the couple gets into a silly squabble over some Christian knickknacks discovered all over their new home. In ‘A Temporary Matter’, Shoba and Sukumar fail to reconnect after Shoba gives birth to a still born baby.

2.6.2. The Theme of Infidelity

In the story, ‘Sexy’, the theme of infidelity and inexperience is narrated from a non-Indian perspective. Miranda, a mid-western woman “with silver eyes” is having an affair with a married Bengali. The shame associated with her memories encourages Miranda to learn as much Bengali culture as she can.

2.6.3. Theme of Alienation

One of the most powerful stories in ‘Interpreter of Maladies’ explores the subject of partition; the division of India and Pakistan in 1947. In ‘When Mr.Pirzada came to Dine’, set in New England in 1971 (the time...
of civil war in Pakistan), ten year old Lilia observes the similarities between her Bengali parents and Mr. Pirzada, a Pakistani from Dhaka, then a part of Pakistan and now the capital of Bangladesh. Mr. Pirzada pines to know the state of his family in the strife-torn capital through newspapers and television. Thus the theme of what it meant to miss someone so close and loving is clearly brought out.

2.6.4. Theme of Duty

The title story of the collection ‘Interpreter of Maladies’ is Lahiri’s masterpiece. In it, a family of Indians from New Jersey, the Dases, hires an old-fashioned Indian, Mr. Kapasi, as a guide. Mr. Kapasi, a polyglot, informs them that he is also an interpreter for a doctor. Mrs. Das seeks remedy for her unhappiness from Kapasi, who is finally at a loss as to how he should interpret her secret. He asks a single question “to get to the heart of the matter”, and thus the truth unfolds. Shuttling between India and America, and back again, Lahiri charts the emotional voyages of characters seeking love beyond the barriers of nations, cultures, religions, and generations like the interpreter of the title story. Lahiri translates between the ancient traditions of her ancestors and sometimes baffling prospects of the new world. Lahiri thus honors the vastness and variousness of the world.
2.7. MODELS OF NARRATIVE

Novels are made of different types and classes of prose. — formal description, meditation, reflection, speech, dialogue, letters. But at an individual and separate level, each different stylistic register is likely to have more in common with the functional, metonymic dimension of style than with the perversities of poetry.

Consequently, the stylistics of prose fiction, while giving the attention to localized effects, is particularly concerned with the ways in which different registers and forms of prose can be assembled as a single text which tells a story and which establishes a certain mode of formal coherence. One such formalist is Labov (1972).

2.7.1. The Labovian model

Labov defines a natural narrative as a method of recapitulating past experience by matching a sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is implied) actually occurred. A minimal narrative can be defined as a sequence of two clauses which are temporarily ordered: that is, a change in their order will result in a change in the temporal sequence of narrative categories. Normally narratives are explained as representing a sequence of five categories which are given in the following table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>FORM</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Signals that a story is about to begin and draws attention from the listener; gives some idea what the story is going to be about</td>
<td>Normally a short summarizing statement, provided before the narrative commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Helps the listener to identify the time, place, persons, activity and situation (i.e. the who, what, when, where) of the story.</td>
<td>Often characterized by past continuous verb forms and adverbs of time, manner and place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating Action</td>
<td>The core narrative category providing the ‘what happened’ element of a story</td>
<td>Realized by narrative clauses which are temporarily ordered and normally have a verb in the simple past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>Recapitulates the final events of a story, ‘what finally happened’ is depicted.</td>
<td>Comprises the last of the narrative clauses which begin the complicating action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Functions to make the point of the story clear, to ward off responses such as ‘so what?’</td>
<td>Marked by a number of different linguistic forms Includes evaluative commentary, embedded speech, comparisons with unrealized events, departure from basic narrative grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>Signals that a story has ended, brings back to the point at which he or she entered the narrative</td>
<td>No specific linguistic features, although frequently a generalized statement which is timeless in character, occurs here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of complicating action and evaluation, the categories listed above are arranged in the sequence in which they would occur in a typical narrative. Evaluation is situated outside the central pattern and can be inserted at virtually any stage during a narrative. The complicated action does not find a place in certain narratives. A fully
formed narrative realizes all six categories, although many narratives may lack one or more components.

2.7.1.1. Analysis of Interpreter of Maladies on Labovian Model

All the motifs enumerated above are woven in the collection of short stories in an intricate manner. The stories are rich in thematic content and the method of narration complements it. The moral and social aspects are not dictated to the reader through the narrator's spokesman or the omniscient narrator, but through the events. Only FOUR components of the Labovian model, viz., Abstract, Orientation, Resolution and Coda have been included for the analysis of the stories.

Although all the stories have not been analyzed on the basis of the model, yet a couple of them have been subjected to analysis in order to drive home the pattern of the model utilized.

The passages chosen from the short story collection as part of the Labovian model are from all the nine stories. They enable the reader to understand the introduction of important characters and the events connected with them. The passages reveal the predicament of Indians living abroad, their longing for their motherland, the unforgettable culture interwoven in them and the expatriate sentiments.
2.7.1.1. Abstract

This category signals that a story is about to begin and draws attention of the listener/reader and gives some idea about what the story is going to be about. Usually, these may be in the form of short statements provided before the narrative commences.

2.7.1.1.2. Orientation

This category enables the listener to identify the spatial-temporal features of the story like time, place, person, activity and situation (i.e. the ‘who, what, when, where’ of the story). These passages are often characterized by past continuous verb forms and adverbs of time manner and place.

2.7.1.1.3. Resolution

The final events of a story are recapitulated in the resolution. They deal with the complications that took place in the story and how each character resolved to cope with the complications towards the end.

2.7.1.1.4. Coda

The Coda signals that a story has ended and brings the reader back to the point at which he/she entered the narrative. The coda completes the
circle. The final events are narrated. The quotes from the text help the reader to understand that each story has concluded.

2.7.1.2. A Temporary Matter

2.7.1.2.1. Abstract

The notice informed them that it was a temporary matter: for five days their electricity would be cut off for one hour beginning at 8 a.m. (1) *There was a temporary matter.*

2.7.1.2.2. Orientation

But nothing was pushing Shukumar. (4)

But now the trenches were widening, and water drained steadily into grates in the pavement. (5)

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

*Rift widening over time.*

2.7.1.2.3. Resolution

“I have been looking for an apartment and I have found one” said Shoba. (21)
The day she told him she was pregnant, she had used the very same words”. (21)

*Peak of estrangement*

2.7.1.2.4. Coda

Shukumar stood up and stacked his plate on top of hers. He carried the plates to the sink but instead of running the tap he looked out of the window. Outside, the evening was still warm and the Bradfords were walking arm in arm. Shoba had turned the lights off. She came back to the table and sat down and after a moment Shukumar joined her. They wept together for the things they now knew. (22)

*Indicates Reunion.*

Outside the evening was still warm and the Bradfords were walking arm in arm. (22)

*Initial rift in the family life and subsequent reconciliation.*

2.7.1.3. When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine

2.7.1.3.1. Abstract

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)
Creates interest of who the person is what has happened to his family.

2.7.1.3.2. Orientation

Mr. Pirzada was standing in the frame of the doorway, a short figure between my parents, waving back. (38)

Her father was lying on the couch, reading a magazine with a glass of wine on the coffee table and there was saxophone music playing on the stereo. (39)

The relationship blossoms.

2.7.1.3.3. Resolution

In the autumn of 1971 a man used to come to our house bearing..........of his family.(23)

“What is this thank you.................at my funeral”. (29)

I wondered too, what would happen if suddenly his seven daughters were to appear on television, smiling and waving and blowing kisses to Mr. Pirzada from a balcony. (31)

I prayed that Mr. Pirzada’s family was safe and sound. (32)

In January, Mr. Pirzada flew back to his three storey home in Dacca to discover what was left of it. (41)
Finally several months later, we received a card from Mr. Pirzada. He was reunited with his wife and children. (41)

Though I had not seen him for months, it was only then that I felt Mr. Pirzada's absence... that I knew what it meant to miss someone who was so many miles and hours away.

*Concern for Pirzada's family recapitulated*

2.7.1.3.4. Coda

Though I had not seen him for months, it was only then that I felt Mr. Pirzada's absence. It was only then, raising my water glass in his name that I knew what it meant to miss someone who was so many miles and hours away, just as he had missed his wife and daughters for so many months. He had no reason to return to us and my parents predicted correctly that we would never see him again. (42)

*Final separation*

2.7.1.4. Interpreter of Maladies

2.7.1.4.1. Abstract

At the tea stall Mr. and Mrs. Das bickered about who should take Tina to the toilet. Eventually Mrs. Das relented when Mr. Das pointed out that he had given the girl her bath the night before. In the rearview mirror Mr. Kapasi watched as Mrs. Das emerged slowly
from his bulky white Ambassador, dragging her shaved, largely bare legs across the back seat. (43)

*Introduction of main characters and inkling of the state of affairs the story is to take.*

**2.7.1.4.2. Orientation**

She was wearing dark brown sunglasses with a pinkish tint to them and carried a big straw bag almost as big as her torso, shaped like a bowl with a water bottle poking out of it. (49)

She spoke slowly, as if she were thinking aloud. (51)

In addition to these were assorted scenes from daily life, of hunting and trading, of deer being killed with bows and arrows and marching warriors holding swords in their hands. (57)

According to his schedule, allowing room for delays, he would hear from Mrs. Das in approximately six weeks time. (59)

He knew that Mr. Das was watching him but he did not turn to force her. (62)

*Infatuation exemplified.*

Mr. Das continued walking, oblivious trailing grains of puffed rice. (67)
Mr. Das was kneeling on the ground, focusing the lens of his camera.

(67)

Because they were calling, they did not initially hear the boy's screams. (67)

Mr. Kapasi gathered Bobby in his arms and brought him back to where his parents and siblings were standing. (68)

*Disillusionment of the couple.*

2.7.1.4.3. Resolution

"Where's Mina", Mr. Das asked.

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

"I am not a doctor. I work with one. I am an interpreter". (50)

"What is your address, Mr. Kapasi?" she enquired. (55)

As his mind raced, Mr. Kapasi experienced a mild and pleasant shock. (55)

Mr. Kapasi was beginning to dread of dropping them off. He was not prepared to begin his six week wait to hear from Mrs. Das. (60)

"No, not of course not. And no one knows of course. No one at all. I've kept it a secret for eight whole years........But I have told you now". (62)
“About what I’ve just told you. About my secret and about how terrible it makes me feel”. (65)

*The confession of Mrs. Das and Mr. Kapasi’s imagination of romantic possibilities.*

2.7.1.4.4. Coda

When she whipped out the hair brush, the slip of paper with Mr. Kapasi, address on it fluttered away in the wind. (69)

Mr. Kapasi observed it too knowing that this was the picture of the Das family he would preserve forever in his mind. (69)

He watched as it rose, carried higher and higher by the breeze into the trees where the monkeys now sat, solemnly observing the scene below. Mr. Kapasi observed it too, knowing that this was the picture of the Das family he would preserve forever in his mind. (69)

*Wishes unfulfilled.*

2.7.1.5. A Real Durwan

2.7.1.5.1. Abstract

Boori Ma, sweeper of the stairwell had not slept two nights. (70)

*There was a problem for Boori Ma.*
2.7.1.5.2. Orientation

She wandered through markets and began spending her life saving on small treats. (81)

It was there, while she was standing in a shopping arcade surveying jack fruits and persimmons that she felt something tagging on the free end of her sari. (81)

*Seemingly careless.*

2.7.1.5.3. Resolution

Mr. Dalal was meanwhile thinking. A sink on the stairwell is sure to impress the visitors. (78)

By early evening the residents gathered to admire the day’s labors. (78)

Even Boori Ma was urged to rinse her hands under the clean running water. (78)

Mr. Dalal proceeded to demonstrate the basin’s various features. He turned each faucet completely on and completely off. (79)

Among the wives, however, resentment quickly brewed. The Dalal’s had their own sink. “Why did the rest of them have to share?” (79)

“Are the Dalal’s the only ones who can improve the conditions of this building?” asked another. (79)

The Dalal’s were going to Shimla for 10 days. (79)
As soon as the Dalai's were gone, the other wives began planning renovations of their own. (80)

Workers began to occupy this particular flat building night and day. (80)

She (Boori Ma) grew restless on the roof. She started circling the neighborhood in the afternoons. (81)

*Events lead to an incredible climax explained.*

2.7.1.5.4. Coda

So the residents tossed her buckets and rags, her baskets and reed broom down the stairwell, past the letter boxes, through the collapsible gate and into the alley. Then they tossed out Boori Ma. All were eager to search for a real Durwan. (82)

*Despised and neglected by society.*

2.7.1.6. Sexy

2.7.1.6.1. Abstract

It was a wife’s worst nightmare. After nine years of marriage, Laxmi told Miranda her cousin’s husband had fallen in love with another woman. (83)

*Illegal Sex.*
2.7.1.6.2. Orientation

The man was glancing in a mirror too, quickly wiping the cream from his nose. (87)

Miranda began walking. (87)

He told her he liked spending time in her apartment with its kitchen counter no wider than a breadbox and scratchy floors that sloped and a buzzer in the lobby that always made a slightly embarrassing sound when he pressed it. (88)

*Life with paramour.*

In the middle of the room was a transparent bridge, so that they felt as if they were standing in the centre of the world. (90)

*Ecstatic state of moving away from original family life.*

After his wife came back, that was his excuse: on Sundays he drove into Boston and went running along the Charles. (93)

But he complained that she was depriving him of the sight of her long legs and demanded that she remove it. (93)

After six minutes she turned to face him, sighing and stretching to test if he was really sleeping. (98)

A video was playing on a television hooked up in a corner of the store. (98)
He was eating a samosa dipping it into some dark brown sauce on a paper plate. (98)

The only thing that she recognized was a rock lined with bags and bags of the hot mix that Laxmi was always eating. (99)

Because we’re never going to see each other, ever again. (104)

*Miranda’s realization of her folly.*

She was watching a cooling show on television. (109)

She had fallen asleep beside Rohin and when she woke up he was drawing an airplane on the copy of the Economist she’d saved hidden under the bed. (109)

*Instances of Miranda trying to move away from her paramour.*

### 2.7.1.6.3. Resolution

“Is she pretty?” his mother would have asked his father. (108)

“Is she sexy’, his father would deny it at first, try to change the subject. (108)

*Theme of infidelity exposed.*

### 2.7.1.6.4. Coda

The third Sunday she got up early and went out for a walk. It was cold but sunny and so she walked all the way down Commonwealth
Avenue, past the restaurants where Dev had kissed her; and then she walked all the way to the Christian Science Center. The Mapparium was closed, but she bought a cup of coffee nearby and sat on one of the benches in the plaza outside the church, gazing at its giant pillars and its massive dome and at the clear blue sky spread over the city.

(110)

*Resignation to reality.*

### 2.7.1.7. Mrs.Sen’s

#### 2.7.1.7.1. Abstract

Eliot had been going to Mrs.Sen’s for nearly a month, ever since school started in September. The year before, he was looked after by a university student named Abby----for Eliot, containing meat. (111)

*Shift in guardian.*

#### 2.7.1.7.2. Orientation

But they might complain that you were making too much noise.

(117)

Now that it was getting colder, the boats were no longer going out regularly and sometimes there was no whole fish available for weeks at a time. (123)

*Character fishing in troubled waters – uncomfortable life abroad.*
The first day just as he was taking off his coat the phone rang. (135)

*Interruption in integration.*

2.7.1.7.3. *Resolution*

The accident occurred quickly. After about a mile Mrs. Sen took a lift before she should have and, though the oncoming car managed to swerve out of her way, she was so startled by the horn that she lost control of the wheel and hit a telephone pole on the opposite corner. (134)

When Eliot’s mother arrived at quarter to six Mr. Sen told the details of the accident and offered a check reimbursing November’s payment. (134)

*The role of baby sitter comes to an end.*

2.7.1.7.4. *Coda*

His mother was satisfied with the arrangement and in a sense she confessed to Eliot as they drove home, she was relieved. It was the last afternoon Eliot spent with Mrs. Sen; or with any baby sitter.

It was his mother calling from office. “You’re a big boy now, Eliot”, she told him.

“You okay”. Eliot looked out the kitchen window at gray waves receding from the shore and said that he was fine. (135)

*Expression of Contentment at maturity of child.*
2.7.1.8. This Blessed House

2.7.1.8.1. Abstract

They discovered the first one in a cupboard above the stove, beside an unopened bottle of malt vinegar a white porcelain effigy of Christ, roughly the same size as the vinegar bottle. (136)

What will happen after the discovery of the effigy of Christ?

2.7.1.8.2. Orientation

He was kneeling on the floor, marking with rapid bits of post-it patches on the baseboard that needed to be retouched with paint. (136)

Sanjeev had stepped on with bare feet as he was installing extra shelving in Twinkle's study. (137)

She fretted when they were driving home after he had mentioned that her shoes looked uncomfortable and suggested that perhaps she should not wear them. (141)

She seemed content with whatever clothes she found at the front of the closet, with whatever magazine was lying around, with whatever song was on the radio-content, yet curious. (141)

Customizing to family life although non integration exists.

She was completing her mother's thesis at Sanford, a study of an Irish poet whom Sanjeev had never heard of. (145)
Twinkle, who was taking a bubble bath, for she announced that her limbs ached from raking the lawn, something she had never done before. (148)

She had applied a bright blue mask to her face, was smoking and sipping some bourbon with ice and leafing through a fat paperback book whose pages had buckled and turned gray from the water. (148)

He took a breath, and then he informed her very calmly that after finishing his drink, he was going to put on his shoes and go outside and remove the Virgin from the front lawn. (148)

His face was flushed and he was wearing Nora’s feather hat on his head. (154)

_Thoughts of reconciliation._

**2.7.1.8.3. Resolution**

His head ached from gin and his arms ached from the weight of the statue. He said, “I put your shoes in the bedroom”

“Thanks. But my feet are killing me”. Twinkle gave his elbow a little squeeze and headed for the living room. (157)
2.7.1.8.4. Coda

Sanjeev pressed the massive silver face to his ribs, careful not to let the feather hat slip, and followed her. (157)

Recognition of settlement to family life.

2.7.1.9. The Treatment of Bibi Haldar

2.7.1.9.1. Abstract

For the greater number of twenty nine years, Bibi Haldar suffered from an ailment that baffled family, friends, priests, palmists, spinsters, gem therapists, prophets and fools. (158)

What ailment? How it baffles everyone?

2.7.1.9.2. Orientation

The seller of jackfruits was holding Bibi’s head which struggled to toss from side to side. (168)

Her hair was malted, her elbows caked with dirt and a small piece of one front tooth was missing. (168)

By then Bibi was sleeping downstairs again though they kept her camp cot in the corridor and would not let her touch the child directly. (169)

Claiming that she was stitching a new curtain to hang across the entrance of the storage room. (170)
For a time we sent our children to play on the roof in the afternoons so that they could alert us if she was having another attack (171).

Some of us began to wonder if she was dying (171).

_The role of society in helping her begins._

### 2.7.1.9.3. Resolution

We found her lying on the camp out. She was about four months pregnant. (172)

_Curiosity aroused through specific events._

### 2.7.1.9.4. Coda

For years afterward, we wondered who in our town had disgraced her. A few of our servants were questioned, and in the tea stalls, and bus stands, possible suspects were debated and dismissed. But there was no point carrying out an investigation. She was, to the best of our knowledge, cured. (172)

_Panacea invented._

### 2.7.1.10. The Third and Final Continent

#### 2.7.1.10.1. Abstract

I left India in 1964 with a certificate in commerce and the equivalent in those days of ten dollars to my name. For three weeks,
I sailed.............the Arabian Sea, Red Sea, the Mediterranean and finally to England. (173)

What is the outcome of the travel?

2.7.1.10.2. Orientation

It was walking distance from MIT and steps from the post office and supermarket called Purity Supreme. (174)

A man said that he was operating a swan boat with a radio pressed to his jeans, a woman had been baking rolls for her grandchildren. (179)

But when we reached the bottom of the staircase, she was sitting there as usual, her hands folded together in her lap. (186)

I wanted somehow to explain this to Mrs.Croft, who was still scrutinizing Mala from top to toe with that seemed to be placid disdain. (195)

Marks arrival in the United States of America.

2.7.1.10.3. Resolution

We (Mala and the narrator, her husband) walked several blocks down Massachusetts Avenue, looking into the windows of restaurants and shops. Then, without thinking, I led her down the quite street where for so many nights I had walked alone.
“This is where I lived before you came”, I said stopping at Mrs.Croft’s chain link fence. (193)

The sentimental touch to meet Mrs. Croft pronounced.

2.7.1.10.4. Coda

------I return instantly to those six weeks if they were only the other day and I slow down and point to Mrs.Croft’s street, saying to my son, here was my first home in America, where I lived with a woman who was (103)------ Whenever he is discouraged, I tell him that if I can survive on three continents, then there is no obstacle he cannot conquer. (197)

Expression of Universal experience.

Thus the theme is unearthed layer by layer from each of the stories. This collection is therefore, a kaleidoscope of themes and motifs. The thematic ploy thus develops a harmony between the characters and the plot. It highlights their desires through the dissection of the soul. Lahiri thus places us within the minds of characters and helps us vicariously understand their sentiments, emotions and desires as well.