

My memoir is about my experience as an international student at Georgia Tech and in the US in general. It is an exploration of the complexity that comes with that identity, including the various ups and downs, moments of alienation, as well as times of hope and excitement that I have experienced. Through this memoir, I hope to better inform my audience about the unique challenges faced by many members of the international student community at Georgia Tech and colleges across the country.

The first chapter of my memoir focuses on the day I arrived in the US, and the thoughts and emotions that I was feeling at that time. Namely, I hope to convey the fact that I was very excited about being in a new environment and looking forward to the experiences that I hoped to have here; at the same time, I also try to point out that things may not be as rosy as they seem via some small incidents and thoughts, such as the extra security check that my father and I (and seemingly nobody else in the line) experienced at the airport, or even the fact that I felt overwhelmed by the idea of eventually living in such a huge and unfamiliar place on my own. As a result, I hope to achieve two main effects: to foreshadow the challenges and feelings of alienation that are to come, as well as to serve as a contrast with those tougher moments to better convey my momentary disappointment in later scenes.

In subsequent chapters, I want to explore the specific emotionally significant incidents that I have faced during my time here. To do so, I have decided to structure my chapters by beginning with a flashback to a relevant incident back in my home country. For instance, before leading up to my experience with meeting my roommates and other people on campus, I begin by looking back toward the last night I spent with my friends in Karachi, and how comfortable I felt as we played video games and ate biryani and ice cream together. Likewise, before discussing my first football game, I want to begin by recalling a cricket match that I was

watching with my family. In both these instances, I hope to effectively contrast my feelings of comfort and familiarity in the flashback with the apprehension and worry in the current moment, thereby conveying the idea that things did not quite play out as I had hoped.

After presenting these flashback scenes, I discuss the relevant scenes here at Georgia Tech and how they differed from my previous experiences. After the flashback with my friends, I reveal my initial excitement upon entering my residence hall for the first time and my subsequent disappointment when I find that my roommate and floormates were not as friendly as I had hoped. Here, I aim to highlight the frustration and anxiety that I felt about spending the rest of the year around people I did not connect with, in contrast to my friends in Pakistan with whom I was very close. On a more positive note, after recalling the significance of cricket in my life, I move on to reveal how football ended up playing a similar role for me in that it allowed me to relate to my roommate better. Here, I hope to convey the idea that I was starting to take steps to overcome the negative emotions I had felt until then.

To conclude, I rewind a few days back to the last night I spent with my parents before they left Atlanta to go back home. This was an important moment for me, not only because it was the first time I opened up to somebody about how I was feeling (and firmly acknowledged my own feelings in the process), but especially because the advice my parents gave to me really allowed me to understand that feelings of alienation are commonly felt and valid. This is why, when they left the next day, I did not feel as lonely as I thought I would: I moved on to tackle my feelings of alienation more directly than before by making an effort to forge relationships with like-minded people around me.

Ultimately, I hope that my audience can catch a glimpse of what it feels like to experience the feelings of unfamiliarity and culture shock that are inherent to the international

student experience. I do this with the hope that they may keep these feelings in mind in their future interactions with international students and help them feel more comfortable, thereby creating a safer and more welcoming environment for this community at Georgia Tech.