

**Representation of Trauma in Post-9/11 Fiction:
Revisiting Reminiscences
in Mohsen Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist***

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DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.34785/J014.2020.812>

Article Type: Original Article

Page Numbers: 131-153

Received: 26 March 2020

Accepted: 22 September 2020

Abstract

The current paper aims at presenting a close reading of the protagonist's reminiscences in Mohsen Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in terms of an eclectic approach toward representation of trauma. Freud and Breuer's theory of psychological trauma, Judith Herman's concept of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and Jeffery Alexander's notion of cultural trauma are employed as the conceptual framework of this analysis. Psychological trauma refers to the unbearable, untreatable, and unspeakable psychological wounds remaining on the subject's unconsciousness. PTSD concentrates on troublesomeness in regular physical activities including rapid distraction, insomnia, and shifting in and out through past memories, triggered by trauma. Cultural trauma traces the changes at the level of collective identity of a group due to a formerly experienced horrendous event. The Adventures of Changez, the novel's narrator, dating back to around the 9/11 attack are represented in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The paper conducted a survey through theories of trauma depicting memory as a venue where the subject's psychical status could be fully scrutinized. The results of the study demonstrated that a traumatic event such as that of the 9/11 has a long-term devastating impact on Changez's subjectivity as well as a collective negative consequence for Pakistan's new generation of intellectual immigrants.

Keywords

Trauma; PTSD; Cultural Trauma; Identity; Post-9/11 Fiction.

1. Introduction

The process that shapes a traumatic experience disables the subject to express his/her feelings. Literature is a way through which the unbearable recall of a

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traumatic event is facilitated. As Sadjadi and Esmkhani maintained, “[f]iction is the medium of engaging with diversity of points of view. Through imagination machinery, it provides the ground to engage with perspective of other; experiencing the same feelings and memories that a character goes through. In this vein, fiction sets a ground for a better recognition of the concept of trauma” (“Trauma and Narrating” 158). Trauma is of those concepts variously discussed through both within and out the psychoanalysis.

The leading approach to study trauma is rooted in Freud and Breuer’s description of and elaboration on trauma. They illustrated resemblances between the roots and symptoms of hysteria and trauma. The concept of trauma was introduced after their explanation on the new concept of Charcot’s ‘traumatic hysteria’. After reconsidering traumatic hysteria and justifying trauma, Freud and Breuer concluded that the role of psychological features including terror, anxiety, or shame is much more considerable than the physical wounds of an incident (*Selected Papers* 3). They thus decided to trace this form of trauma in their patients. Therefore, a more powerful type of trauma, which can be regarded as the psychological trauma, was introduced.

Thinkers like Judith Herman and John Marizillier study the essence of trauma as a mental disorder. “Although written over two decades ago, Herman’s work is still considered an essential work in the field of traumatology” (Zaleski et al. “Grounding Judith Herman’s Trauma Theory” 377). Herman contended that there is no a particular concept defining the condition of a traumatic event’s aftermath. She employed the term ‘Post-traumatic Stress Disorder’ (PTSD) in a book entitled *Trauma and Recovery* (1992) for her study on the aftermath of a traumatic experience. Marizillier persicely classifying the concepts and notions in this field left a mark on the body of traumalogy. His brief description of era in the life of a traumatized subject later became a source for scholars and therapists interested the study of trauma.

‘Cultural trauma’ frequently repeated in Jeffrey Alexander’s theoretical work, is of significances in contemporary sociology. Each of the contemporary social theorists, due to the formation of their ideas and conditions dominating their age, is influenced by one or more classical sociologists or thinkers. Alexander played a major role in integration of contemporary social theories who follows the structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons and is inspired by Émile Durkheim’s and Max Weber’s theories (Elliott 72). The most prominent feature of Alexander’s project is the combination and composition of different aspects of sociology. He has presented multi-dimensional understanding of culture.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist as one of the most remarkable post-9/11 novels entered academic courses of various universities. Hamid’s well-sold novel is a

story of a young Pakistani student in Princeton University who lives in New York. He joins a consultancy firm addressed as Underwood Samson. Meanwhile, he falls in love with Erica, a traumatized American girl. Contrary to his progressive life in American society, after the attack on the twin towers of World Trade Center, Changez Khan, the young Pakistani who faces humiliation and bothering due to the aggravation of the security atmosphere and its aggression on Islam and Muslims (Haider 203). The condition leads him to abandon his life and career in the United States and return to Pakistan.

The Adventures of Changez, which date back to around 9/11, are presented in the novel. Hamid takes advantage of a dramatic monologue as a modern technique in Fiction to reproduce the character's memories. Changez's reminiscences for a seemingly American spy at Lahore form the novel's narration. Seven flashbacks to Changez's life disclose much about the subjectivity of the character. The flashbacks could be categorized as enthusiasm toward American Dream, economic prosperity, social threats to a foreigner, slope in life style, self-awareness, returning home, and the final cultural flourish. Through intervals between these flashbacks, the reader observes the status of Changez who has been involved in lecturing at a local university. In the shifts between the present and the past, the author narrates the psychical and social aspects of the protagonist actions.

Changez faces binary oppositions during his immigration; the most significant are tradition versus modernity, justice versus progress, westernization versus localization, and marginalization versus globalization. The source for all the binaries above is the bipolar treatment of west toward eastern. Western culture welcomes Changez in the secure days of America as workforce, yet at the time of crisis, it suspects him as a criminal or a terrorist. He stands as an alienated subject of capitalism system advertised by west rather than being a subject of his national identity (Khan 143). As a result, Changez feels a sort of reluctance and fundamentalism at the same time.

In the present paper, after providing a general overview of the case study and the theories, in Literature Review section, the researchers go through scholarly researches linked to the novel. The researchers then present a Theoretical Framework including Freud and Breuer's definition of trauma and the way they treat it. They also refer major ideas regarding post-traumatic stress disorder and cover Alexander's way of interpreting trauma as a collective phenomenon. The critical reading of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in terms of features of trauma provides the core section of the paper. The final section of the article, addressed as Conclusion, sheds light on the experience of the trauma and the PTSD by

Changez and the collective aspect of 9/11 disaster on the collective identity of Pakistan's new generation of intellectual immigrants.

2. Literature Review

Since this study is a literature-based research, an investigation of former scholars' works on the selected novel is presented in the current section. The reviews provide an analytical reading of the former researches as well as a brief introduction of the singled out studies. The section will point to the similarities and the differences between the present study and the previous ones. There are much written text on the behalf of 9/11 and post-9/11 fiction majorly arguing the role of 9/11 terrorist attack in the conscious life and unconscious existence of the subjects. Due to the significance of the case study, vast ranges of texts on the novel are able, which forced the researches to adopt a selective method regarding the sources to be reviewed. Literature Review accordingly focuses on the most recent and theoretically related research works on *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

Post'-9/11 South Asian Diasporic Fiction: Uncanny Terror (2013) by Pei-chen Liao particularly focuses on selected novels, including Hamid's grounded work, with a reference to the concepts of uncanny and terror. Liao follows a systematic analysis of a period, from not long before 9/11 to after the event. The author goes through the four novels considering each as a step toward an uncanny terror for south Asian country produced by United States' political attitudes. Liao work refers to the 'Violence of strangers' causing changes at 'body politic after 9/11' resulted in 'unhomely homes' for immigrants forcing them to 'return home'. The semifinal chapter of the book characterizes *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a return home novel. The chapter argues on modes of immigration and evaluates Changez's experience of hostility through his memories; "the ambivalence of identity, as shown in Changez's inner struggles, in the figure of the double in the mutual suspicion with which Pakistan and the US view each other, and in the two characters' co-existent perspectives as the host and the guest" (153). The chapter shares a lot with the current paper; however, researchers in present treatment observe the narration of the novel far different from what Pei-chen Liao did in her book.

Suzy Woltmann in "'She Did Not Notice Me': Gender, Anxiety, and Desire in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*" presents a gender psychoanalysis-based study of the narrator's attitude when he lived in the United State of America. She maintains that "We as readers wish to identify with a protagonist whose story we slowly learn is largely articulated in terms of his sexual desire and denial" (104). This claim draws the readers' attention to the protagonist's psychological trauma experience and neglects the social aspects of the trauma.

In "The Backlash of 9/11 on Muslims in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*" (2015), Isam M. Shihada investigates the way Muslims are pictured in Hamid's novel. This study highlights the strict encounter of the westerners with Muslims after 9/11. Shihada treats back west as the terrorists who are not Muslims and proposes the fact as an evidence for true Muslims' innocence. Shihada's article appears bias and harshly attacks west for every horrendous event in the novel, which fades the realistic aspect of a scholarly study. This mode of criticism is directly connected with the cultural outcomes of the 9/11; however, there is much more to be interpreted from the novel regarding the cultural and psychological consequences of 9/11.

Valerie Kennedy argued the identity change with regard to Changez's dramatic monologue in "Changez/Cengiz's Changing Beliefs in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*" (2018). Taking advantage of Slavoj Žižek's terminology, concerning identity, Kennedy claims that the protagonist as the narrator has lost his true originality and is no longer 'Changez.' This point absolutely helps readers to reconsider the process of trauma, yet it does not cover the notion of trauma as one of the most significant themes of the novel. Additionally, the study is satisfied with the notion of identity reformation and it does not concentrate on the collective aspect of the identity treatable in the narration. Having this in mind, this article appears very different from what the present paper meant to offer.

Since the novel pictures a post-9/11 subject which becomes a lecturer for his nation's goods, Nishat Haider analyzes *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* from a political perspective. Her study aims "to create counterintuitive rethinking on the Clash of Civilizations theory and to elucidate the linkages between new American imperialism, fundamentalism, globalization and terrorism" (20). This highly politics-related article observes 9/11 as a turning point in the history of modernity. This is the point that the researcher of the current paper cannot disagree with. She observes sociopolitical offspring of the event and goes through the novel with an eye on the modern sociological theories. Nonetheless, he never addresses Changez as an individual subject struggling with a trauma.

Mohsen Hamid published an article entitled "Slaying Dragons: Mohsin Hamid Discusses *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*" (2009) explaining to his reader that the plot in the novel is completely fictional. To the author's background, many critics guess that Changez is Hamid. Hamid in this denial article describes the character and his intention in creating such a character. Hamid does not mention any theoretical approach applicable to his novel. To sum up the section, very many researches are devoted to Mohsen Hamid's *The Reluctant*

Fundamentalist although none of them covers both the individual and collective forms of the trauma.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Reconsidering Traumatic Hysteria

In a set of articles entitled *Studies on Hysteria* (1893; 1895; 1955), Freud and Breuer delved into the mechanism of hysteria. They rejected the regular examination of hysterical phenomena. The point in their rejection was related to the point that, “what is in question is often some experience which the patient dislikes discussing; but principally because he is genuinely unable to recollect it” (3). The point highlighted two vivid aspects of hysteria; first, it cannot be put in language, and second, the subject cannot recollect a hysterical phenomenon. They thus endeavored to help the patient in recalling the hysterical phenomena. After the examinations, the result was as,

we found, to our great surprise at first, that each individual hysterical symptom immediately and permanently disappeared when we had succeeded in bringing clearly to light the memory of the event by which it was provoked and in arousing its accompanying affect, and when the patient had described that event in the greatest possible detail and had put the affect into words. (6)

The statement discloses the role played by language in the treatment of an individual’s hysteria. In fact, what they announced is that the subject, in order to be treated, requires coming across the hysterical phenomena.

This finding led Freud and Breuer to conclude that “external events determine the pathology of hysteria to an extent far greater than is known and recognized” (3-4). This is the root where they introduced traumatic hysteria. In terms of traumatic hysteria, the accident became the source for symptoms in *Studies on Hysteria*. Freud and Breuer attempted “to establish an analogy between the pathogenesis of common hysteria and that of traumatic neuroses, and to justify an extension of the concept of traumatic hysteria” (5). This statement illustrated the psychical aspect of an accident as the cause of the illness. In this clarification, the concept of fright played a significant role:

What Breuer and Freud are suggesting is nothing short of a revolutionary new conception of trauma. The medical concept of (physical) trauma is extended to include *the affect of fright—the psychical trauma*. It was, of course, nothing new that life events can cause suffering. What was new was the idea that events in life can not only cause unhappiness but also illness, hysterical misery. (Sletvold 462)

At this stage, for the first time, the significance of the psychical trauma over the physical trauma was alarmed by Freud and Breuer. Trauma thus is equal to the subject’s experienced feelings at the moment of an incident.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud pointed to the psychological wounds caused by war. He elucidated that trauma refers to the situation after a horrendous event or incident threatening the subject's life. Freud asserts "the course of those [mental] events is invariably set in motion by an unpleasurable tension, and that it takes a direction such that its final outcome coincides with a lowering of that tension that is with an avoidance of unpleasure or a production of pleasure" (*Beyond* 3). Having been disturbed by the devastating consequences of World War I, Freud reconsidered his previously introduced concepts including the structure of the psyche, anxiety disorders, and trauma.

'Fright' is what Freud addressed as the result of every psychological suffering of a war, whether caused by casualties, anxieties, threats, or the social and economic impacts of military conflict (6). Freud argued that every remembrance of the fright leads to the subject's experience of trauma. In fact, trauma remains on the subject's psyche as a wound every irritation of which causes the same practice of the fright as an extraordinary phenomenon. Fright, in other words, is the reason beyond trauma's repetitive nature. The subject, once experienced a traumatic event, is stuck in a periodical cycle. In a retroactive view, a horrendous event will cause fright for the subject which itself was firstly experienced because of a traumatic event.

"In early twentieth century, Freudian-Bergsonian views of memory, as individual consciousness, were giving way to a more culturally oriented perspectives" (Mousavi, Pourgive and Hadaegh 62). Freud points out that the fright is always rejected by the subject. He claimed, "hysterics suffer mostly from reminiscences" (*Selected Papers* 3). The rejected fright, akin to repressed drives, reappears to the subject in a similar condition to the traumatic event. Freud maintained, "the psychic process originally rebuffed must be reproduced as vividly as possible so as to bring it back into the *statum nascendi* [in the course of being formed] and then be thoroughly 'talked over'" (4). Owing to this explanation, 'representation' is an inevitable point in the process of trauma. An event thus must share secretive similarities with a traumatic event to remind the subject of the fright.

Freud's studies and examinations of trauma are linked to his observation of the dream. The attempt leading to the understanding of trauma is a recurrent representation of a traumatic event. Freud said the dreams "continually take the patient back to the situation of his disaster, from which he awakens in renewed terror" (*Beyond* 115). Although this statement is in a paradoxical condition with the dream wish-fulfilling process, it demonstrates a psychological escape from mind's passiveness. The mind tries to encounter the rebuffed terror stated in the subject's mind in order to vanish the source forever.

In *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Freud addressed dreams as representations of the psychological complex or unpleasant experiences in the form of understandable events (Hosseini 37). In terms of trauma, representation is equal to the experience of a traumatic event for the subject. It thus results in the rebirth of unconscious fright which terrors the subject. The rebirth of a traumatic event sometimes lets the subject actively encounter the resulting fright. The active part of the subject in her or his dream helps the subject to overcome fright in some cases; however, most of the time, the source of terror remains unknown to the subject.

There are various types of events directly causing trouble for the subject's psyche. "In the area of trauma theory, destructiveness and survival are directly codependent" ("Investigating Trauma" 190). The structure of psyche after a traumatic event loses its systematic natural progress. Traumatic events are those unbearable sudden incidents that cause unexpected changes in the subject's life; for instance, an accident, rape or natural disaster. These unhealthy changes are "emotional responses" to terrible conditions in which the subject suffers. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical regarding trauma, yet the most significant sign of the trauma is the incapability of the subject to talk about an event.

3.2. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Judith Herman practiced trauma as a mental disorder for twenty years. Herman introduced "the main symptoms of this mental disorder and its influence on different aspects of personal and social life of the victim" (Sadjadi and Bahrami 82) in *Trauma and Recovery*. Her frequent examination of trauma-experienced subjects resulted in a range of later studies following her approach toward trauma and her method of recovery after trauma. Post-traumatic stress disorder, as an outcome of experiencing or observing of a horrendous event, will cause serious problems in social or work environment as well as in daily basic human relationships.

Judith Herman basic attempts concentrated on "how the victim is rendered helpless and powerless by the traumatic event and how traumatic events call into question the basic human relationships" (82). The point in Herman studies goes to her clinical treatment of trauma as a mental disease. She contends that in encountering trauma the first intention is to understand it then finding the symptoms. Regarding PTSD, Herman also works on the side of finding a cure. She argues that finding the symptoms is just the first move for a therapist encountering the traumatized subject. Herman's studies at a mental health clinic demonstrate that the primary reaction in case of trauma is a harsh banishing of the event and its memories by the subject.

Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder depend on the type of the trauma. Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery* implicitly classifies the trauma as trauma and complex trauma. John Marzillier's classification of trauma suggests, Type I trauma, those mentally and short-term trauma, and Type II, complex or repetitive memory-based traumas. It is difficult for most people to cope with a type I traumas, but over time and with self-care, the subject usually gets better. Type II traumas impair the subject's ability to perform daily tasks (*To Hell and Back* 2-12). Herman, linearly, classifies post-traumatic stress disorder to two levels, PTSD caused by trauma type I and CPTSD – C stands for complex – that is the offspring of trauma type II *Trauma and Recovery* 121).

The symptoms of PTSD generally fall into four categories: distressing memories, escaping, pessimism, and changes in physical and emotional reactions (Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* 118-122). Distressing memories are those memories related to the traumatic experience; every related thing that has a contribution to the day of accident can be considered as a distressing memory (*Trauma and Recovery* 10-16). Escaping comes as a conscious attempt of the subject from any recollection of memories regarding the horrendous event (37-42). Pessimism caused by the experience of a traumatic event hunts the subject at any level of life. Herman elaborates how “[t]rauma destroys the social systems of care, protection, and meaning that support human life” (“Recovery from psychological trauma” S98) during aftermath of the event. Physical symptoms of the PTSD appear in the life of the subject as insomnia, amnesia, and weaknesses (*Trauma and Recovery* 82-83). These symptoms change over time and vary from person to person.

In case of caregiving process, Herman refers to various aspects and element influential on the result of therapy. However, before taking any action, “[i]n the aftermath of crime, [this is] victims [that] must decide whether to seek justice” (Herman, “The mental health” 159) or remain in pain. This claim illustrates the role of victim in the process of healing. She asserts:

The essential features of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others. The recovery process therefore is based upon empowerment of the survivor and restoration of relationships. The recovery process may be conceptualized in three stages: establishing safety, retelling the story of the traumatic event, and reconnecting with others. Treatment of posttraumatic disorders must be appropriate to the survivor's stage of recovery. (“Recovery from psychological trauma” S98)

Herman's idea for treating traumatized is exceedingly reliant on particular understanding of the patient. The required capability of a therapist in understanding the stage that the subject stands in is in direct association with the treatment will be suggested.

The path of trauma-therapy and traumalogy is still open and not precise treatment proved to be the true and the only solution. Moreover, the way a therapist trace trauma and treat a patient is less represented in the works of fiction author. In the present paper the ideas on the treatment whether introduce by Herman or other scholar are not of consideration. The authors of this study will demonstrate the notion of PTSD in the character's subjectivity and hint the symptoms of the disorder in the case of Changez as a traumatized subject.

3.3. Cultural Trauma: Collective Experience of a Horrendous Event

3.3.1. Collective Identity Equals Collective Memory

Identity and identical crises for individuals have always been of much consideration in anthropological and sociological studies. This issue, in the past decades, spread itself through social groups while remaining among individuals. This means groups socially constructed in a multicultural society; for instance, homosexuals, religious, Africans, feminist groups, now are in search of their own identity; the identity that is known as the property of a group instead of an individual. This widely spread issue was titled as collective Identity by scholars of social sciences. According to *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (2007), collective Identity

refers to shared definition of a group that derives from its members' common interest, experiences, and solidarities. It is the social movement's answer to who we are, locating the movement within a field of political actors. Collective identity is neither fixed nor innate, but rather emerges through struggle as different political actors, including the movement interact and react to each other. (586)

The term indicates the way in which a gathered group of the subjects is referred in the modern social context. The references can be ascribed to every aspect of the group which demarcates it from other groups.

Collective identity also effects the form of an act performed by a particular group. Though psychological theories always try to set out a reason for every act of an individual, they merely appear rational with regard to a wider discourse. Collective identity in a structuralism view explains this irrationality of human choices in acts; with this – collective identity – in mind, sociologists accept that many choices of individuals are irrational, but it is necessary to be ready for these choices because they are the spectacles of a collective act's starting.

Émile Durkheim and his pupil, Maurice Halbwachs, are regarded as the pioneers of the term collective memory. A vast number of thinkers believe that commemorative rituals introduced by Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912) are highly related to the term collective memory. In addition, after acceptance of his master's sociological critique of philosophy, in *The Social Frameworks of Memory* (1925), Halbwachs goes through the

discussion of memory as a concept that cannot be won by individuals. Halbwachs demonstrates that “[I]t is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories.” (38) In a simple method of explanation, Halbwachs’ definition refers to the human as a social creature and sheds light on the interior dialectical relationship in everyday life of man; an individual only can find his/her existence through social life.

“[T]he whole complex of ideas, aspirations, and feelings which link together the members of a social group” (Goldmann 17) make a thorough investigation of historical memory and collective memory available. This idea claims that anything from a shared memory in a group can lead sociologists to the exploration of the origin of the memory. Meanwhile, Assmann poked this point that a memory “is concerned not with the past as such, but only with the past as it is remembered” (9). This clever point made by Assmann draws attentions towards a more philosophical issue; regarding a particular period, memory is not the complete truth that existed, but it is the only available mere truth.

“Social memory studies” (Olick and Robbins 105) paved the way into the academic and scientific atmosphere of last decades, while as Jay Winter put it, the twentieth century had faced a “memory boom” (1). For Winter this boom is “the efflorescence of interest in the subject of memory inside the academy and beyond it” (1). The provided description can also be considered the major topic of the contemporary anthropologist and sociologist. Memory for today’s thinkers acts as a portal gun that sends them to the past in the easiest possible way. This journey, accessibility of past through memory, provides the required material for domestic and international exploration of these thinkers. The social concept of collective memory comes from social constructions – groups – as the consequence of social structures. Thus, it is acceptable that such a social concept grabs the major attention of the social science researchers.

3.3.2. Toward Cultural Trauma

From the 1940s to 1960s, culture played a significant role in both social science theory and social researches. Sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, and psychologists using the concept of values have made a modified version of the interpretive tradition that Max Weber had introduced to the field of social sciences. Alexander believes that the analysis of the value and cultural attitude is underestimated in recent studies (Alexander and Smith 151). According to Alexander, the cultural and social realities, and discontents associated with them can directly be understood through Narratives and Symbolic Codes; the changes in these narratives and symbolic codes always already depend on the social conditions.

It becomes possible to achieve a global and transnational attitude towards culture through the extension of narratives and symbolic codes that are playful in cultural theories (Alexander and Sherwood 5). From his point of view, paying attention to different existing forms of culture is necessary. A single cultural system should not be the re-presenter of the whole culture because cultural structure comes from various types of cultural systems. Alexander observes culture as a cause for social life rather than a reflection of it; culture happens to be rooted in institutions and characters. This means culture mainly stands beside ideology. (*The meanings* 48)

With regard to the newly introduced definition of culture, Alexander has criticized the contemporary feminism for eliminating cultural concepts of masculinity and femininity. For him, existence of these concepts for getting the right analysis of gender roles in society is necessary (Wallace 116). He contends that multiculturalism has been misinterpreted for not only conservatives, but also radical intellects who define it as a structure that achieves its goal throughout a process based on the differences, rather than a cooperative unity. (“Robust Utopias” 585-587)

Alexander provided a model for civil society in which multiculturalism stands in a place between separation and cohesion of different aspects of social structure. He believes that these seemingly contradictory concepts are only understandable in a one-to-one relation. Multiculturalism is a situational framework where groups are mainly trying to defend their rights of living. Multiculturalism enhances a civic environment, a space that cultural, institutional, and interactive practices are not necessarily under social and individual forces but are fundamentally interlocked with these forces. Multiculturalism as a project can only be strengthened on the path of humanity and human common feelings. The integrated emotions that develop among individuals will reveal the great significance of this concept –multiculturalism. (“Robust Utopias” 587-589)

Cultural trauma is a process demonstrating the way in which a group’s collective memory is wounded. The collective identity of the group will change because of the wound on the collective memory. According to Alexander “Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (“Toward a Theory” 1). The process possesses required features such as multicultural society, horrendous event, and cultural Shock.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Traumatized Changez Strive for Love and Peace

In America, Changez fell in love with nice girl, Erica, he met in college; however, Erica experienced a traumatic event early in her life. Erica, as an American girl who is drowned in the loss of her childhood sweetheart, Chris, cannot accept Changez as very person he is. She thus thinks of Chris instead of Changez in order to have sex with Changez (*The Reluctant* 119-121). On the other hand, this is Changez who offers this methodology to Erica; hence, as Hamid puts, “[t]he interaction between these two characters, Erica and Changez, is problematic on a lot of levels” (“Slaying Dragons” 227). Hamid emphasize Changez’s self-alienation through the cannon of his relationship with Erica. It illustrates the situation the particular moment for for the character and his wounded subjectivity.

This traumatic experience of Erica affects Changez as a partner-to-be. He remembers his first conversation with Erica on Chris.

We stayed at our table, talking as the sun set, and she told me about Chris. They had grown up together – in facing apartments, children the same age with no siblings – and were best friends well before their first kiss, which happened when they were six but was not repeated until they were fifteen. [...] They were both admitted to Princeton, but he had not come because he was diagnosed with lung cancer [...]. He died three years later, at the end of the spring semester of her junior year. (*The Reluctant* 31)

The statements delineated the type of relationship that Chris and Erica experienced. They were neighbors, best friends, and later, lovers. The relation in early ages, childhood love, causes a more firm bondage for them.

Chris’ death without a doubt is a traumatic experience for Erica. The disease that killed Chris is also a traumatic type of disease. He died young from a ‘lung cancer.’ Meanwhile as Erica said to Changez, it took ‘three years’ for him. Erica indirectly bore all the pain and struggles for her passed away boyfriend bore. The period of the traumatic experience was so long that its effect would be too hard to forget. Hamid’s choice regarding the disease is full of intelligence. The unseen scene of Chris’ death also traumatizes Changez as the protagonist and the narrator of the novel.

Chris’ story ends with a traumatic experience for Changez, like his act of sex with Erica. Moreover, Erica’s seemingly suicidal act added to the traumatic aspect of Changez’s relation with Erica. These events – Chris’ death, Changez and Erica’s sex scene, and Erica’s suicide act – appear rationally linked and tangible to the reader. The reader is aware of the shattered relationship between Erica and Changez that haunts the character psychologically. Changez seeks comfort and satisfaction from his relation with Erica; however, these two were

always banned from him. The banishment is the result of Erica's traumatic experience. In such a relation, the partners must support each other to achieve their goal that is mostly an inner psychic objection, yet in this case, the formula does not work in the right way. Even later, Erica's disappearance itself causes a traumatic experience for Changez.

4.2. PTSD Symptoms of Traumatized Changez

The very act of narrating in the novel denotes the haunting memories of Changez. The explosive recollection of past memories or distressing memories, in case of changes are much than one particular object or day as his traumatizing process took too long. The paradigmatic shifts in the narration also delineate the distraction and incapability in recalling memories firmly that could be considered as the major symptom of PTSD. Moreover, the reader comes to know that Changez's life after his return differs much from what he narrates. The changes and troubles in regular life he used to it, illustrates a mental disorder caused by the traumatic experience of living in America.

As an instance, while Changez watching the sea after a party at Jim's house, his inverted culture represents Jim's house as the Great Gatsby's house. He shares his feeling with the stranger – the listener in the novel – as,

After a while, I stepped outside the pavilion for some air. The sun had set, and I could see the lights of other houses twinkling in the distance along the curve of the shore. The waves were whispering as they came in, causing me to recall being in Greece not long ago. The sea had always seemed far away to me, luxurious and full of adventure; now it was becoming almost a regular part of my life. How much had changed in the four years since I had left Lahore! (43)

This observation reproduces the primary horrendous event of his life that Changez is unaware of it; immigration to America from his motherland, Lahore. At this point the very type I traumas PTSD are observable in Changez's attitudes. He confesses that 'sea had always appeared far away to' him, yet after his immigration, this feeling has been changed. He is aware that now the sea is 'almost a regular part of' his life.

He lost his enthusiasm towards life, yet what he does not know is that the routine working class life alienates him from his personal ideas. He thinks as if he were as he had always been; however, the reader knows the things are always the same, and it is just the perception of Changez that is changing. This personal meaninglessness of the character spreads out through his life. The spread out feature pushes Changez toward a pessimism in life. At the stages in the novel, like Changez encounter with his parents' home at Lahore after his return, the negativity of constructed by the experience of the traumas are observable. He surrenders himself to the fate and power of western politicians.

The incapability of analyzing the situation is a sign for the reader to sympathy with the narrator. Changez is shocked by everything that lost its primary meaning and vision for him. He himself unconsciously feels lost regarding why at the end he compares things with when he was in Lahore. The comparison of things' essences located in Changez's mind demonstrates his inner struggles, which reflect his social life. In other words, Changez cannot handle the social and personal relation in his life and consequently becomes powerless and feel insecure. Therefore, some symptoms of PTSD as troublesome in relation, pessimism, amnesia, and a false feeling of insecurity are traceable in the case of Changez.

4.3. 9/11 as a Mean of Cultural Trauma

4.3.1. Multiculturalism is Everywhere

It is fair enough to consider every cultural interaction of west and east as Multiculturalism in modern era. The literature as a cultural means often stands at the point of Multiculturalism. As Roland Barthes asserts,

[the] infinite variety of [Literary] forms, it is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; all classes, all human groups, have their stories, and very often those stories are enjoyed by men of different and even opposite cultural backgrounds: narrative remains largely unconcerned with good or bad literature. Like life itself, it is there, international, transhistorical, transcultural. (237)

This demonstrates the essence of narration as the essence of literary work. Therefore, wherever the narration exists, the culture exists too due to the laid cultural background of the narrator and the narratee. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* enjoys the ancient frame tale or frame narrative and prepares the reader for a story within an eastern location. The central character, an easterner, describes his life story to a westerner, the so called American tourist. This encounter of west and east also appears in the very first pages of the novel when for the first time Changez meets the stranger:

Excuse me, sir, but may I be of assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Do not be frightened by my beard: I am a lover of America. I noticed that you were looking for something; more than looking, in fact you seemed to be on a mission, and since I am both a native of this city and a speaker of your language, I thought I might offer you my services. (*The Reluctant* 1)

The significant point of being a westerner weighs over the stranger's character; however, the stranger's aim and the real personality lie still under the shadow of ambiguity. Hamid pictures the clash between two different cultures as if it were more important than the clash between two characters. All the points mentioned

by the narrator register the fact that western culture, American culture in particular, exists in the subjectivity of members of the other cultures.

There are codes inserted in the extract which point both to the setting and cultural atmosphere of the novel. For instance, the word 'frightened' followed by the word 'beard' represents the stereotypical idea about the eastern Muslim countries. Another modifying code comes with the paradoxical condition of a 'native of this city' who speaks of a foreign language. This demonstrates the clash of two cultures through the language. The difference between the languages, as a presenter of the culture, illustrates the cultural differences of the characters. On the other hand, the phrase, 'offer you my services' clarifies the binary opposition existing between these two cultures; of the marginality and the priority.

One of Hamid's significant treatments in this novel regards the concept of multiculturalism. The author presents multiculturalism of the world in a simple yet influential way. Observing Hamid's work from every possible aspect implies the notion that the setting is the world, not only America or Pakistan. Alexander refers multiculturalism as one of the means in the process of cultural trauma ("Robust Utopias" 585-587). This mean exists in the present literary work. The first step toward cultural trauma is thus treatable in the novel. Hereafter, the evidences of the 9/11 attack in the novel as the traumatic event of the novel will be referred to. Various events can be addressed as a 'horrendous event' ("Toward a Theory" 1) in the process of cultural trauma. The traumatic event is the event, which causes an 'epistemological dilemma' ("Beyond" 532) to a group or a nation.

4.3.2 The 9/11: A Traumatic Event at the Collective Level

The 9/11 terrorist attack and its offspring for subjects like Changez are inevitable. The initial depiction of the 9/11 terrorist attack in the novel is when Changez says, "I was in my room, packing my things. I turned on the television and saw what at first I took to be a film. But as I continued to watch, I realized that it was not fiction but news. I stared as one – and then the other – of the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center collapsed" (*The Reluctant* 65). Changez who experienced a different level of life in America is unconsciously bond to the physical atmosphere of the American cities, particularly New York. He assumes what he was watching as 'fiction' movie. The word 'fiction' here implants the impossibility of the event in the mind of Changez. The word 'collapsed' in the paragraph illustrates the catastrophic aspect of the attack and can refer to the demolition of the western civilization.

At the same time, the attack scratches Changez's imagination of the American Dream and the liberty that he was feeling in those years:

I had heard tales of the discrimination Muslims were beginning to experience in the business world – stories of rescinded job offers and groundless dismissals – and I did not wish to have my position at Underwood Samson compromised. Besides, I knew that our firm, like much of our industry, had seen a sharp downturn in activity levels following the September attacks, and Wainwright had shared with me a rumor that cutbacks were on their way. (103)

This is for the first time in the novel that the narrator speaks of the ‘discrimination Muslims.’ For him, the ‘stories of rescinded job offers and groundless dismissals’ appear as an alert.

Changez, who earned a high level of salary during the years of working for Underwood Samson, now finds himself at the edge of being fired. The hopelessness followed by such news causes him to leave his goals and objections behind due to the present situation. In other words, he only tempts to save his present position. He directly points that after the ‘September attacks’, the situation for him and other foreigners was changed in American industries. Changez thinks that his future life is entirely dependent on his job. He likes the way that things were going on until that attack occurred. In this sense, he is experiencing a trauma during the following days and months of the 9/11.

The instances of a traumatic event are much more in this novel. For instance, Changez repeats September as the representative of the 9/11 in five other pages of the novel. (57; 63; 83; 103; 147). The word ‘war’ also appears through the lines of the novel that represents another collective crisis of the modern time (67; 103; 109; 129; 139; 147; 151). As the narrator of the novel is a Pakistani man, he represents the Pakistani culture. All these demonstrate the existence of a collective trauma in the novel. In other words, what Changez experienced as trauma is what all Pakistanis experience as trauma. In this sense, the lying trauma in the novel comes to the level of collectivity.

4.3.3. Cultural Shock Reaches at Cultural Trauma

One the most significant shocks in the plot comes along with the first news of the 9/11 attack. At this level, Changez expresses himself regarding the news as “I smiled. Yes, despicable as it may sound, my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased” (65). In fact, the reader experiences a shock, too. The ‘smile’ on Changez’s face itself is a representative of his shock. He, who felt uncertain about every aspect of life due to his colonization by American culture, mentally and physically, is now watching his colonizer in an uncertain situation. Two pages later, the narrator elaborates on the mentioned ‘smile’. He tells the stranger that:

I am not indifferent to the suffering of others. When I hear of an acquaintance who has been diagnosed with a serious illness, I feel – almost without fail – a sympathetic pain, a twinge in my kidneys strong enough to elicit a wince. When I am approached for a donation to charity, I tend to be forthcoming, at least insofar as my modest means

will permit. So when I tell you I was pleased at the slaughter of thousands of innocents, I do so with a profound sense of perplexity. I was caught up in the symbolism of it all, the fact that someone had so visibly brought America to her knees. (67)

This clarifies the point that the 'smile' was not an intimate revenge of Changez from America. The reader comes to know that the narrator is an adult who thinks properly and is of a regular feeling. Then, what did happen to him that causes him to laugh at the news?

The answer is in the statement itself. He says, 'when I tell you I was pleased at the slaughter of thousands of innocents, I do so with a profound sense of perplexity.' Again, in this scene, Hamid points to Changez's shock to his reaction toward the news. Changez confesses that he was perplexed at the time. The ambiguity of Changez is an evidence for his shock. This shock is a result of the horrendous event of the 9/11 from two various points of view; firstly from Changez's point of view as a citizen of America and secondly from Changez's point of view as an eastern person who is against the capitalism system of America.

The shock of the 9/11 is noticeable as the narrator continues. Changez goes starts to tell the stranger about the time after knowing the news of the attack. He expresses his ambiguity to the reader, and shares the way he was treated after then:

Why did part of me desire to see America harmed? I did not know then; I knew merely that my feelings would be unacceptable to my colleagues, and I undertook to hide them as well as I could. When my team gathered in Jim's room later that evening, I feigned the same shock and anguish I saw on the faces around me. (67)

Changez is in shock, but in a different way from his colleagues. He knew that his way of expressing his shock with a smile would not be a good approach, thus he hid his smile.

The statement also provides the other side of the coin; the shock of other characters regarding the 9/11 terrorist attack. As the pervious section delineated, Hamid does not take sides in this political battle. Therefore, he also pictures the westerners' shock in this part of narration. It helps the reader to observe the traumatic event as a collective matter. To be precise, this is not only Changez and the Pakistani culture that get shocked, in fact the entire subject from every cultural basis got shocked regarding this catastrophic political action. Moreover, it reminds the reader that such an event will cause an epistemological dilemma for the entire existing cultural group at its global level.

The most shocking scene of the novel is when Changez gets shocked after his return to Pakistan. In a repetitive mode, he expresses his shock in words.

I was struck by how shabby our house appeared, with cracks running through its ceilings and dry bubbles of paint flaking off where dampness had entered its walls. The electricity had gone that afternoon, giving the place a gloomy air, but even in the dim light of the hissing gas heaters our furniture appeared dated and in urgent need of re-upholstery and repair. I was saddened to find it in such a state – no, more than saddened, I was ashamed. This was where I came from, this was my provenance, and it smacked of lowliness. (107)

Changez uses adjectives like 'shabby' and points to the 'cracks running' and 'dry bubbles of paint' in describing the houses. These elements were always there even before he left Pakistan; yet, he never noticed. Therefore, the shock Changez experiences is a cultural shock caused by shifts between eastern and western cultures.

The luxurious culture of the American lifestyle changed Changez's subjectivity in a way that everything appears out of place for him. He finds their furniture in need of 're-upholstery' or 'repair.' The furniture of a house can be the representative of a nation's cultural figures in this case. Changez felt 'saddened' and 'ashamed' because he is shocked. He compares his previous life, his original culture, with the alienated devoted American life that he just tasted for a short period. All the ambiguity haunting Changez is a result of the 9/11 as a traumatic event. He is no longer a Pakistani, nor is he an American. He feels hopeless as it is insecure in everywhere.

5. Findings

In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Mohsin Hamid acts bravely in terms of the narration technique. Adopting a dramatic monologue method of narration for this story draws the attention of the reader towards Hamid's focus on Changez. This Technique lets Hamid put features that are more modernistic in his work. It also provides the base for flashbacks and flash-forwards in the work. At the same time, this dramatic monologue with no reply appears as personal confession to a psychoanalyst, which delineates the psychological trauma of Changez. Another significant aspect of the novel is the setting that covers the world; yet the protagonist is sitting in a café. Differences among the works are evidences for novels' Novelty. The authors draw several paths in order to illustrate the process of cultural trauma in these novels.

The researchers attempted to select a post-9/11 literary work that has the tendency of being analyzed both in terms of eastern vision of the traumatic event and the western modes of facing the event. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a novel of multicultural society. In the novel, there is a disgrace of various cultures from both East and West; for instances, Pakistani culture, American culture, Greek culture, Philippines culture, Indian culture, etc. This multiculturalism of

the novel provides the required ground of cultural interaction in the form of a horrendous event.

Various horrendous events occur during the narration of the novel. Events like immigration, gender-related trauma, the terrorist attack on the twin towers of World Trade Center, and war are narrated through Changez's reminiscences, the narrator of the novel. The aftereffects of these traumatic experiences in the novel cause post-traumatic stress disorder for the character. As each of the characters belongs to a specific group, characters' actions after each of these traumatic events are representatives of their group's action. It demonstrates the way a traumatic event remains in the collective memory of a group. It also illustrates the way in which a traumatic event comes to the level of collectivity.

6. Conclusion

The study aimed at providing a critical reading of Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* with an eye on theories of trauma. Changez, as a foreigner, despite the way he himself felt, never merges with other members of the society; for instance, in his personal relation, and this brought a psychological wound for the character. At this point, the reader discovers the character's personal trauma. The experience of trauma is traceable by checking the symptoms of PTSD. Additionally, the novel represents a vast variety of groups bearing various cultural tendencies although the focus occurs on the part of the Pakistani culture that the protagonist stands as its representative. After the 9/11 attack, Changez, as a representative of Pakistanis, faces discrimination and humiliation. The situation of the aftermath makes him reconsider all the points in his years of enjoying pre-9/11 life living abroad. The reconsideration changed the character views toward the west. Changez, as the subject experiencing the trauma at the collective level, transfers his new perception to the younger generation as a lecturer. A traumatic event experienced at the collective level will change the new generation's identity in the novel. Therefore, traumatic event relating historio-cultural elements can involve an individual with PTSD condition while effects the identity of a collective.

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