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### A Study Of Naturalism In Khalid Hosseini's The Kite Runner And Moshin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist

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#### Abstract:

South Asian fiction in English, which was grown over the years in bulk, variety and maturity, has aroused considerable interest both in Asia and rest of the world. In fact the idea expressed by South Asian novelists are all – pervasive and embarks the entire corpus of human values. It augurs well that the South Asian novelists are aiming at cardinal human virtues. Multicultural fiction has the power to bring out responses from the readers after linking them with the stories. These works help in developing an understanding of the diverse cultures of the world. The Kite Runner by Khalid Hosseini as a multicultural novel has the power of exiting emotions, provoking thoughts and touching the hearts of the readers of diverse cultures. Khalid Hosseini subtly describes Afghan culture along with giving us an insight into the person gains and losses of individual characters. The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Moshin Hamid examines the 'strategies of survival and revived of South Asian immigrants in America Post 9/11.

**Key Words:** parallelism, aspirations, survival, integration, provoking, subtly, augurs.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Relationship between Amir and Hassan is the representation of strong relationship and nostalgias and nowhere Amir has treated Hassan as an enemy. HE was very close with Hassan the unbearable pain is he could not accept and allow to share his father's love as equal. Baba alone knows answer to all those questions because he was illicit son. The novel he could trace the bondage of Afghanis with their land culture and tradition.

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The relationship of migrated Afghans with their people, land, culture, tradition and heritage is enduring we can witness such a savor in Amir and Baba and also in other characters like General Taheri and Jameela.

“That was a long time ago, but it’s wrong what they say about the past, I’ve learned about how you can bury it. Because the past claws its way out. Looking back now, I realize I have been peeking into that deserted alley for the last twenty – six years”. ( Hosseini 1) There is also another kind of memory in the novel, which is nostalgia for good things. Amir remembers his good times with Hasan as a child, and the old, beautiful Kabul before it was destroyed by war. These good memories bring sadness for what was lost, but also hope for what could be throughout *The Kite Runner*, many characters are haunted by memories of the past. Amir constantly troubled by his memory of Hassan’s rape and his own cowardice, and it is the memory that leads Amir to his final quest for redemption.

The betrayal of a loyal friend by a wealthier, more corrupt “master” in *The Kite Runner* and Amir feel guilt for his betrayals. The betrayal comes when Amir watches and does nothing as Hassan, who has always stood up for Amir in the past, gets raped by Assef. Amir then worsens the betrayal by driving Ali and Hassan from the household. “Your father, like you, was tortured soul, Rahim Khan had written. May be so. We had both sinned and betrayed. But baby had found on the very same people I had betrayed, and then try to forget it all” (Hosseini 278)

Amir understands that Baba also betrayed his own best friend and servant – Ali, Hassan’s father – by fathering a child (Hassan) with Ali’s wife Sanaubar. This knowledge comes as another kind of betrayal for Amir, who had always hero-worshipped Baba and is shocked to learn of his father’s flaws. These ruins in the two men’s lives create a sense of tension and guilty throughout the novel, but the betrayals of Amir and Baba also lead to quests for redemption that bring about some good in the end – as Baba leads a principled, charitable life, Amir rescued Sohrab from Assef. “Because the truth of it was, I always felt like Baba hated me a little and Why not? After all, I had killed his beloved wife, his beautiful princess, hadn’t I? The least could have done was to have had the decency to have turned out a little more like him. But he hadn’t turned out like him” (Hosseini 18)

The quest for redemption in the novel includes both the personal and the political. Completely in his childhood, Amir’s greatest struggle was to redeem himself to Baba for “killing” his mother during childbirth, and for growing up a disappointing son was unlike Baba himself. “Sohrab, I can’t give you your old life back, I wish to God I could. But I can take you with me. That was what I was coming in the bathroom to tell you. You have a visa to go to America, to live with me and y wife. It’s true, I promise.” (Hosseini 325)

Changez, the novel’s protagonist is a brilliant young Pakistani man, who moves to America to pursue an education at Princeton. He is ambitious, like no one of his Ivy League Friends could be. At his interview at Underwood Samson, he is caught off guard because his interviewer Jim recognises in him hunger that his friends in Princeton hadn’t caught on. Jim sees into changez’s class aspirations and believes his ambition will benefit the company as well. At this point, the reader understands Changez’s need to fit in: his sophisticated accent and lifestyle give off the impression that he belongs. And yet, he remains a foreigner. He says:

Princeton made everything possible for me. But did not, could not, make me forget such things a how much I enjoy the ea in this, the city of my birth, steeped long enough to acquire a rich, dark colour, and amde crea,y with fresh, full-fat milk. (Hamid 22)

Clearly, he experiences a sense of separation from his homeland. He is caught between the pull of his roots and the dream of immigration. His essentially hybrid state of existence maybe defined in terms of Bill Ashcroft’s “Creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonisation.” (118). In this case, the contact zone is produced not so much by colonization as the

forces of modernity, globalisation and neo-colonialism. Thus, Changez's identity, essentially a field of contesting forces involves, as Homi Bhaba suggests, "the continual interface and exchange of cultural performances that turn produces a mutual and mutable recognition (or representation) of cultural difference" (62). In the novel, Erica, his girl friend, and her father are also shown as occupying an ambivalent position with regard to Changez. Erica is effacing about her aristocratic lineage. She identifies Changez, a validation of her own sense of new – age liberalism. While her father isn't as inclusive; he regards Changez with fake disdain and suspicion even, and Changez soon realizes that he will not be gladly accepted into household. Erica's father comments on Pakistan:

Economy's falling apart though, no? Corruption, dictatorship, the rich living like princes while else suffers. Solid people, don't get me wrong. I like Pakistanis. But the elite has raped that place well and good, right? And fundamentalism. You guys have got some serious problems with fundamentalism. (68)

Changez's position of liminality connotes a sense of in-betweenness one that is occupied by diasporic writers such as Rushdie and Hamid himself. In his work *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhaba analyses the means by which difference is socially articulated by minority communities. He perceives hybridity to be a state arrived at by minority communities, though constant negotiation, emerging from moments of historical transformation. Changez gradually abandons the idea of America as he realises the fallacious nature of his own divided self.

At this juncture, one must address the construction of the nation and nationhood as discussed by Bhaba. In his essay "Dissemi Nation: Time Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation" in *The Location of the Culture*, he writes:

It is the mark of the ambivalence of the nation as a narrative strategy – and an apparatus of power – that it produces a continual slippage into analogous, even metonymic categories, like the people, minorities, or 'cultural difference' that continually overlap in the act of writing the nation. What is displayed in this displacement and repetition of terms is nation as the measure of the liminality of cultural modernity. (292)

Post- 9/11, American writers were confronted with the problem of representing a traumatic event that belied linguistic expression. When they contributed to 9/11 literature, they represented the collective trauma faced by nation, and not just individual histories. Fredric Jameson reflects this in his notion of "situational consciousness" or national allegory, where the telling of the individual story and the individual experience cannot but ultimately involve the whole laborious telling of the collectivity itself." (4). Changez reflects on America as a character in herself, unwilling to forget or look ahead. He notes how the country seems to 'look back' nursing past wrongs and marking the first year anniversary of 9/11 rather than implementing the real bureaucratic changes. Moreover, he registers the little ways by which his colleagues had distanced themselves from him. America becomes clouded in an air of suspicion and fear, and Changez feels more alienated than ever.

He also begins to grow a beard after a brief visit to Pakistan. At this point, he wishes to articulate his social difference; his beard becomes an external manifestation of his identification with his Pakistani heritage. Bhaba writes, "Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affinitive, are produced performatively.... IT is in this sense that the boundary becomes the place form which something begins its presencing in a movement not dissimilar to the ambulant, ambivalent articulation of the beyond." (167)

The movements of history are constantly interfering with the private lives of characters in *The Kite Runner*. The Soviet War in Afghanistan interrupts Amir's peaceful, privileged life and forces him and Baba to flee to America. After the fall of the USSR, Afghanistan continues to be ravaged by violence, and when Amir does finally return to find Sohrab, the Taliban regime rules the country with violent religious laws. IT is the Taliban that give Assef an outlet for his sadistic tendencies, and it is this political state that facilitates Amir's final meeting with Assef and his redemptive beating.

“The curious thing was, I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either.... Never mind that we spend=entire winters flying kites, running kites, never mind that to me, the face of Afghanistan is that of a boy with a thin-boned frame... a boy with Chinese doll face perpetually lit by a hare lipped smile. Never mind any of these things. Because of the history it isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, I was Sunni and he was Shi'a, and nothing was ever going to change that.” (Hosseini 24) Hosseini also critiques the sexism and racism of Afghan society throughout the novel. Ali and Hassan are Hazaras, an ethnic group that most Afghans (Who are Pashtun) consider inferior, though Hosseini makes it clear that Hassan is Amir's equal and in many ways morally and intellectually superior.

“As I drove, I wondered why I was different. Maybe it was because I had been raised by men; I hadn't grown up around women and had never been exposed firsthand to the double standard with which Afghan society sometimes treated them.... But I think a big part of the reason I didn't care about Soraya's past was that I had one of my own. I knew all about regret,” (Hosseini 165) When Amir starts courting Soraya, both Hosseini and Soraya comment on the double standard that Afghan Society holds for women and men. Men are forgiven for being promiscuous or flirting, but women will be shamed and gossiped about for life.

Hamid ends the novel with further questions than providing any semblance of a resolution. It is unclear whether Changez has, as the title suggests, become a 'reluctant fundamentalist' who incites his students to protest and take up arms. This conveys the situation of uncertainty that prevails in most conflict zones, suggesting how his narrative can have no closure. Just like the consequences of 9/11, multiple narratives can unfold for a single historical incident.

In his decision to move back to Pakistan, one registers an affirmation of his Pakistani roots. This may be seen as a direct consequence of the treatment of Muslim immigrants in America post - 9/11. The return-to-one's homeland narrative is a nativistic trope, that is problematic by Benita Parry, who asks the question of who is doing the remembering and why. She links cultural nationalism to colonialism's discourse of ancestral purity. Following 9/11, Americans accost Changez and refer to him as an Arab using abusive language. Changez also begins to experience a sense of alienation from Erica, which takes a toll on their relationship. In his conversations with the American stranger, one notices how Changez is regarded with suspicion and considered as a possible threat. Parry suggests how acts of resistance may be mistaken for a case of essentialism. This is evident in the novel's ambiguous ending wherein Changez may have turned over to become a riot - rouser, an instigator of violence. If this were true, he would in effect, be affirming essentialised American notions of terrorism and its roots.

The inheritant danger of these assumptions suggests how nativism and essentialised notions of nationality and cultural identification are problematic. In an article in the New York Times Hamid remarks, “We are repelled by what is different, and we are fascinated by what is different. We long to mingle, and in doing so, we hope” (web). The novel may be seen as suggesting how the liminal space occupied by those such as Changez, may be embraced rather than contested. In his ambiguous ending, he strives to express how hope may be sustained regardless of the fallibility of human thought and emotion.

These two novels are able to explore the Possibility of correspondence and Parallelism and highlight the regional and universal aspiration of the people of South Asia.

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