

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

A Study of Cultural Trauma in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

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A Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Nitya Raj Bhattarai has completed his thesis entitled “A Study of Cultural Trauma in Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*” under my supervision. He carried out his research work from October 11, 2009 to April 16, 2010. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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A Letter of Approval

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “A Study of Cultural Trauma in Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Nitya Raj Bhattarai has been approved by the undersigned members of Research Committee.

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Abstract

Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* primarily deals with the cultural trauma on the basis of Third World Muslim immigrant's experience in present America. To go one step ahead, it deals with the traumatic condition of whole Muslim community and America, especially by the September 11 attack on Twin Tower. Since it deals with cultural trauma, its prime emphasis is on the explication of the protagonist, and his unadjustable situation, in America, due to extreme impact of cultural trauma- originated through his inferiority complexes; in economics, power, race, and ethnicity in comparison to America leading his individual trauma to be a collective one. This trauma of inferiority ultimately makes him conscious of his own identity along with Pakistan's national identity. Changez has the trauma of identity of being a so called fundamentalist. So he turns to be an anti- American and resents America and its unnecessary use of power on weaker countries.

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I. Changez, as a Traumatized Character

This research, especially, lays its attention on Mohsin Hamid's well read book *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* published in the year 2007, to prove how Hamid tacitly exposes and expresses the severe condition of Non-Western immigrants, in America, through cultural trauma that ultimately affects their identity. Written in the tumultuous backdrop of the political unrest that followed the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the novel is an elegant and sharp indictment of the clouds of suspicion, representation, and amalgamation of perspectives, multiple kinds of trauma and identities. The protagonist, Changez, always seems to be haunted by different kinds of cultural inferiority. A variety of socio-political, cultural, religious, economical etc. inferiorities engaged in articulatory practice in the process of Changez's as a victim of cultural trauma.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist calls out our attention to the condition of contemporary immigrants who are being culturally traumatized in some way. These people could be whether Non-Western immigrants or post capitalist country, like America, itself. The immigrants who make America their dreamland, soon find difficult to adjust there when they encounter different kinds of cultural traumas. It is in the sense that, Hamid's protagonist, in the novel, finds his so called dream shatters as soon as he becomes conscious about the inferior position of his class, race, ethnicity and religion in America. So, Changez's trauma does not remain in the limits of his nation's inferior economic position and power in comparison to America. But it also touches the issue; like class, race, ethnicity and religion, that is related with a person's nation's identity. So, Changez's trauma, at last leads him to the trauma of shattering of true identity through false representations.

As soon as Changez goes to America, the most developed American cities make him realize the weaker economical condition of Pakistan. Occasionally, Changez agrees the members of his household are working class people. Similarly, load shedding is the major problem in Pakistan. Likewise, Americans' suspicion over Changez's dress and beard makes him culturally alone. On the other side, he also becomes the victim of falling in love with an American girl, Erica. Though he has negative attitude with America he loves Erica dearly. But Changez thinks it is him being a Muslim, Erica left him. After all, these kinds of false representation changes Changez's identity. He has the trauma of being defined as a fundamentalist. Here, Changez's trauma is expressed on the collective level because it is associated with Pakistan's identity. So, Changez's individual trauma is, in another sense, the collective trauma of whole Muslim community.

Changez is the symbol of whole Muslim community who suffers at the hand of America, where he gets new kind of trauma in his every new step. So, he has a great sympathy for the Muslim race and religion which can be found in the appreciation of the terrorist attack and his resentment towards American achievement to the extent that he insists on viewing that achievement from the perspective of some anti-American collective whose attachment to terrorist can be found through his expressions.

With the encounter of such traumatic situation, Changez finds himself alone among the mass. The situation even becomes worse after the terrorist attack on Twin Tower. The protagonist is viewed through biased perspectives not only by the Americans but also by the fellow colleges. He is fired from his job. He expresses his hope and frustration, love and hatred, and after all a sense of "self" and "other" mentality. Before the attack he was almost equal to all the Americans where as there

is the paradigm shift in the perspectives after the September 11 attack on the Twin Tower of the World Trade Centre. This vast shift in American behavior, before and after the Twin Tower attack, makes Changez conscious about the American power politics over Non-Western countries, especially to the Muslim countries. So, Changez, at last, becomes anti- American and returns to his home country Pakistan.

On the other hand, there is also trauma in the American side. Not only its citizens but whole America seem to be traumatized. The main cause of trauma, for American, is the nostalgia for past. Americans long for their utopian world before Twin Tower attack. Erica, a typical American girl whom Changez loves, always seems to be haunted by the trauma of her previous boyfriend, Chris. Though Changez loves her much, she cannot free her mind from the memory of Chris. Similarly, America wants to globalize its culture through the wrong use of power in the name of war against terrorism. America, as a whole, seems to be haunted by the trauma that Muslim race and religion might challenge the American culture. This is why, America finds a way out for its trauma by falsely representing Muslims as terrorist.

Since the publication of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in 2007, it is analyzed from various perspectives. Christine C. Menefee, a well noted critic, focuses on its narrative and style. She comments:

Changez, a Pakistani, confronting an American spy bent on assassinating him, manipulates the encounter, seizing the chance to tell his story and to be heard. His narrative style (monologue or perhaps an imagined dialogue) can be distracting, but clearly reveals his interior world and motivations. [...] multiple cultures shock him over a short space of time (144).

In Menefee's view the style is compatible to the theme and subject matter of the novel. During the course of the narrative Changez reveals his background, origin, class, nationality and even solidarity with his race and ethnicity. With the attack on the Twin Tower on September 11, America's view to the Muslim race changes suddenly and he rebels against America. Further he criticizes America's role in the world.

East and West tension and the torn existence of the protagonist is highlighted in the *Kirkus Reviews*:

“this is a story of leaving America”, says Mohsin Hamid, who delves deep in to the tension between east and west in his latest novel. [...]

“its like the way America and Muslim look each other”, says the author. “Is America the country that produces the music we love, or is it the country that will bomb us? Is Pakistan full of normal people like us or crazed terrorist?” neither side really knows so there is this weird suspicion on both side [...]. Wherever he goes, he will always be torn (5).

Hamid in his work unfurls the picture of the Muslim world, especially the East which is misrepresented by the West, particularly by America. America views the Muslim countries as the world of crazed terrorists. There is the vast misunderstanding between both sides and therefore there are suspicions and prejudices.

On the other hand, commenting on the novel, Satya Bhabha, a noted critic and inept lover of cultural aspect of writing, responds:

Hamid grabs hold of the American dream as seen through the eyes of a young Princeton grad from Pakistan in a post 9/11 world. As the protagonist, Changez finds moderate business success and romantic love in New York City, his heritage and identity will be lost in a sea of

subtle and blatant bigotry as well as international politics. In relating this journey from loving to loathing of all things American, Changez speaks to a nameless and speechless American whom he encounters in the marketplace of his home city Lahore Pakistan (56).

Bhabha talks about multiculturalism and the characters' paranoid crisis of identity. Hamid sounds autobiographical in his portrayal of the character of Changez. Like Hamid himself his characters bring a deep sense of contemporary reality. Like Changez, his character, Hamid also grabs hold of the American dreams and longs for a grand success in America. As a result of multiculturalism, his identity remains in crisis in the West.

Publishers Weekly reviews Hamid's novel as:

... an intelligent and absorbing 9/11, written from the perspective of Changez, a young Pakistani whose sympathies, despite his fervid immigrant embrace of America lie with the attackers [...] after the Towers fall, Changez is subject of intensified scrutiny and physical threats and his co-workers become remarkably less affable as his beard grows in (42).

Publishers Weekly especially focuses the Americans' perspective changed after 9/11. Before the attack, Changez was equal to all the Americans but there is a vast shift in the perspective after the September 11 attack on the Twin Tower of the World Trade Centre.

However, Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* can be claimed as a fine creation written by the Non-Western writer in English language, which is characterized by drawing shifts of socio-cultural, political and ideological encounters that lead Non-Western Muslim immigrants to a vast cultural trauma. Number of

Muslim's experiences of such cultural traumas were even increasingly higher after post September. That is to say, Hamid fluently expresses the Non- Western Muslim's trauma in the foreign land. In this novel, he deals with the distinctive predicament of the Muslim people as represented by western discourse. Hamid's intension of selecting the setting of this novel as the post September 11 America and Pakistan, a Muslim country, is to show the effect of cultural trauma in both foreign and native land. In other words, Changez's sympathy towards the Muslims nation or people not because of being the same race, but it is of having collective trauma, which later becomes the question of collective identity. Hamid's novel is not the 9/11 novel. But 9/11 is presented as a means to show how Muslim immigrants become the victim of unpredicted cultural, economic and religious inferiority. It is not the question of struggle between East and West. But it raises the question about Muslims' facing cultural trauma in the West.

Similarly' Hamid's novel talks about the identity crisis of Muslims due to cultural trauma. As culture is directly related with one's race and nationality, so the attack on it shatters the basic identity of people. These are the significant issues of the novel. But the critics brought here for analysis don't seem to analyze how the cultural trauma questions Changez's identity, as a whole Muslims' identity. Thus, the present research paper presents Changez as the symbol of Muslim immigrants' traumatic experiences in present America. Changez, a representative of Muslim race, always seems to encounter a new kind of cultural trauma. This cultural trauma, after all, becomes the identity formation of all Muslim people.

The theoretical modality of this research work is heavily set on the cultural trauma theory. The theories especially follow Geoffrey Alexander, Ron Eyerman and Neil J Smelser's concept of cultural trauma. Cultural trauma theory focuses on the

fact that how it is created and how it affects an individual's personal life. It especially focuses on memory. The critics of cultural trauma theory believe that it is through memory people are traumatized. Furthermore, cultural trauma is not an individual trauma but it occurs in the collective level. It is in the sense that cultural trauma raises the question of social responsibility. Through cultural trauma different social groups, nations and even entire civilization significantly identify the existence and the source of human suffering. Thus, cultural trauma inaugurates 'we feeling' in the society. More than that, sometimes cultural trauma may also take the form of national trauma. In this sense, cultural trauma directly affects the identity of people. And that formation of false identity is not only in the form of an individual level but on the collective level. Hamid's idea of presenting the characters and protagonist in diverse situations confronting kinds of traumas match with the present Muslim condition in America. The book unfolds the situation of the protagonist in Pakistan and shows that the effect of cultural trauma haunts an individual wherever he goes.

This research has been divided into four chapters to alleviate the study of the effect of cultural trauma with respect to the central character, Changez. The first chapter includes the general introduction to the study and it also presents the hypothesis, elaboration of the statement of the problem against the backdrop of the different critics' commentaries on the novel. The second chapter elucidates the methodology employed to study the text. This chapter is divided into four parts. It, as a whole, deals with the effect of cultural trauma and how it shatters the true identity of people. The third chapter presents an extensive textual analysis. This chapter, too, is divided into two parts. It basically reveals how cultural trauma is realized through memory and how violence helps to create it. And, at last, it reaches the conclusion that how cultural trauma affects the identity of the collectivities. The fourth chapter

concludes the research with a brief recounting observation of the work affirming the hypothesis. Finally, all the chapters will attempt to revolve around what is cultural trauma and how it affects the identities of particular collectivities.

II. Cultural Trauma Leading to Identity Crisis

A. Trauma Theory: An Introduction

“Trauma” is often seen as injury. “First the word meant an injury to the body, but now it is more commonly taken to mean an injury to the psyche, or even the community, the culture or the environment” (Edkins 109). Relating to psychiatry, *The American Heritage College Dictionary* defines trauma as “an emotional wound or shock that creates substantial lasting damage to the psychological development of a person” (1439). A traumatic event is one that entails the blurring of the very distinction upon which everyday existence depends upon which people rely to continue their lives. “Traumatic events tear us from ourselves, bind us to others, transport us, undo us, implicate us in life that is not our own, irreversibly, if not fatally” (Edkins 110).

In the context of defining trauma, Berendra Pandey, in his article, takes the reference of Paola Palladino. According to Pandey, for Palladino, “trauma is a medico legal concept that is intimately involving in the shaping of a distinctively late modern form of subjectivity” (124). Enlarging Palladino’s statement, Beerendra Panday writes, “since the mid 1990s, the medico take on trauma has converged with fields such as psychology, sociology, history, political science, philosophy, literature and aesthetic to give rise to a fast emerging critical category called trauma theory” (124). The events of 9|11 and its after effects are foundation of trauma theory after 1990s. In this concern trauma theory “ranges from the public and historical to the private and memorial” (Lukehurst 197).

Trauma theory is intrinsically multidisciplinary so it needs to displace older paradigm and attends a new configuration of cultural knowledge. Trauma theory especially has its base on Freud’s psychoanalysis and speaks and argues about the

need for “acting out” or “working through” of the trauma for leading life as healthy citizens. A traumatic event is one that entails the blurring of the very distinction upon which everyday existence depends; upon which people rely to continue their life.

Wulf Kansteiner, Bereendra Pandey quotes, “sees the emergence of cultural trauma in the intersection of Freud’s concept of belatedness with Caruth’s extending De man’s theory [of temporality] into the past ... that our knowledge of history is the result of a belated failure of representation” (125). Unlike the psychological trauma cultural trauma examines the undercurrents of the distorted testimonies by contextualizing it in the network of cultural politics.

B. Cultural Trauma

The idea of cultural trauma has come into literature in the past few decades via history, psychology, anthropology, not so much political science to some degree. The idea is that certain historical events are so profound in their cultural and personal impact that they develop the features that resemble psychological trauma, namely that they are permanently unsettling, that we can forget about them, there is a kind of compulsive need to relieve and re-experience. Cultural traumas are mainly negative but not exclusively so.

Cultural trauma is one that we as a social group experience together. In such case, we experience being that of perpetrators, victims, or spectators with all of us sorely affected by the experience as presenting some form of violent interruption to our lives. Geoffrey C. Alexander is an important person belonging to cultural trauma. In the book, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, he forwards “cultural trauma occurs when members of collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories for ever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable

ways”(1). As Alexander develops it here, it can mean that trauma is an empirical scientific concept. Sometimes, by constructing cultural trauma, social groups, national societies and sometimes entire civilization not only cognitively identify the existence but “take on board” some significant responsibility for it. In so far, as they identify the cause of trauma, and they assume such moral responsibility, members of collective define their solitary relationship in ways that, in principal, allow them to share the suffering of others. In this point of view, cultural trauma helps to expand the circle of we in the society.

Cultural trauma indicates the response to a shock encounter with brutality or death. In *Memory Trauma and World Politics* Jenny Edkins quotes Cathy Caruth . . . “cultural trauma is an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events, in which the response to the events occur often delayed and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucination and other intrusive phenomena” (107). So it is a confrontation with an event that, in its unexpected and horror, can not be placed within the schemes of prior knowledge. In this sense, cultural trauma can never be a purely individual event. It always involves the community or the cultural setting in which people are placed. “The effect of traumatic events are not owned by anyone and, in various ways, affect everyone” (Lacabra XI).

Cultural traumas are constructed by society. “It is historically made not born” (Smelser 37). This concept brilliantly casts a steely gaze on several social nightmares- the Nazi holocaust, slavery in the United States and September 11, 2001 . . . in order to limn the social and cultural process by which events come to be viewed to the very identity of the collectivities. The mediation, through representation, which give rise to cultural trauma, sets of, Panday quotes Eyerman, “ a dramatic loss of identity and

meaning, a tear in the social fabric affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion” (Panday 125).

Similarly, Eyerman focuses on the cause, meaning, meditation, and representation to bring identity crisis through cultural trauma. Thus, to be a cultural trauma, “some event to be necessarily established as the significant cause, its meaning as traumatic must be established and accepted and this requires time to occur, as well as mediation and representation”(61). Here, Eyerman picks the reference of Arthur Neal’s definitions of national trauma in which he prioritizes ‘enduring effect’ and ‘collective memory’ to be national trauma. According to Eyerman, Neal’s national trauma is equal to cultural trauma because both are affected by mass media and representation. Neal urges, Eyerman says:

‘national trauma’ according to its ‘enduring effect’, and as relating to events ‘which can not necessarily be easily be dismissed, which will be played over again and again in individual consciousness’ and which then become ‘ingrained in collective memory’. In this count national trauma must be understood, explained and made coherent through reflection and discourse. (61)

Cultural trauma can not be explained within limited territory for it is interconnected “with specific ethical and socio-cultural tension” (Hartman 257). This arises from an awareness of persistence of violence in a culture that no longer condones the material virtue of war. Along with Nazism, Second World War as well as the American politics changed aftermath of Twin Tower attacked in America yearning for the arts of peace has never been achieved. As a matter of fact, the trans-historical awareness of the incident of trauma, personal or collective should make it realizes the extent of human suffering.

Cultural trauma may be in the form of cultural and technological disasters, wars, or individual trauma. Emotional trauma occurs when “the psychological form of traumatic events involve damage or threat of damage to an individual’s psychic integrity or sense of self” (Carlson 29). Cultural trauma’s effects can be seen as, “multiple personality paranoia, anger, sleep problems . . . difficulties in trusting people and difficult relationship; and general despair, aimlessness, and helplessness” (Root 229).

Whether the individual level of analysis is appropriate for discussion of the collective is seen as synonyms with political. Lacanian thinking is one that refuses the distinction between the individual and the social. Lacanian analysis is not best understood as situation situated within framework, or at the level of individual. “Ones this separation is assumed, the political question becomes: how the people joint to form communities” (Edkins 103).

Drawing on insight that might come from the background of identity crisis and psychology can helps us understand the event of 9/11 as a cultural trauma. Cultural trauma refers to the condition that we, as a social group, experience together (as in 9/11 event) being that of perpetrators, victims, or spectators. All of us are solely affected by the experience as representing some form of violent interruption. Some times the expression of cultural trauma is experienced through language. “People also have continually employed the language of trauma to explain what happen not only to themselves, but to the collectivities to which they belong” (Alexander 2). We know from ordinary language that are onto something wildly experience and intuitively understood. Such rootless ness in the life world is the soil that nourishes every social scientific concept.

The range of events or situations that may become cultural trauma is enormous. And this enormous event can bring social change. So, Smelser “ties cultural trauma to the effects of processes of social change”. The change includes mass migration, mass unemployment and dislocation. He also defines cultural trauma as the culturally defined and interpreted shock to the cultural tissue of the society and, presents a model for the traumatic sequence, describing typical condition under which cultural trauma emerges and evolves. A cultural trauma refers to an “invasive and overwhelming event that is believed to undermine or overwhelm one or several ingredients of a culture or the culture as a whole” (Smelser 38).

Alexander also talks about lay trauma theory which suggests that “trauma is a kind of rational response to abrupt change whether at the individual or social level” (3). In this case, the objects or events that trigger trauma are perceived clearly by the person and their responses are lucid. From an enlightenment perspective, according to Alexander, political scandals are the cause of people’s indignation; economic depressions are caused for despair, lost wars create a sense of anger and aimlessness, disaster in the physical environment leads to panic; and assault on the human body leads to intense anxiety

The open ended and contingent process of cultural trauma creation and the assigning of collective responsibility that goes along with are relevant mode to Non-Western than western societies. “Collective trauma has no geographical or cultural limitations” (27). Nowadays, it is Non-Western region of the world, and the most defenseless regment of world population, that have recently been subjected to the most terrifying traumatic injuries. There is no more excruciating example of the universal relevance of trauma theory than the way it can help illuminate the tragic difficulties that Non-Western societies have often experienced. Americans’ attack on

Afghanistan, and as well on the whole Muslim communities, and its after effects, in the name of war against terrorism, is the token of creating cultural trauma for whole Muslims communities. “Cultural trauma helps us to understand, instead is a central paradox, not about the causes of genocide but it’s after effects” (26).

Dominic LaCapra, in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, talks about the concept of sublime in relation to cultural trauma. He says that, “there has been an important tendency in modern culture and thought to convert trauma into the occasion for sublimity” (23). LaCrapa believes that it is only to transvalue it into a test of the self or the group an entry into the extraordinary. More than that, he extends the notion of sublime into “the notion of negative sublime” (94). LaCapra believes that negativity always involves in sublimity. It is applicable to the Nazi’s quest for redemption or regeneration through extreme violence. For Lacrapa, the possible role of Nazi sublime should be understood as one factor of Nazi ideology and practice, especially with respects to fanatically committed Nazis, such as Hitler, who were prime movers of the Holocaust. Considering Lacapra’s notion, it is said that the event of Twin Tower attack in America and American strategy to generate peace through extreme violence on Iraq and Afghanistan is the negative sublime in trauma. This negative sublime “invites distortion, disrupts genres or bounded areas and threats to collapse distinction” (96).

C. Memory and Representation

Memories of traumatic events can be seen, to borrow Toni Morrison’s phrase, as a “thread thrown” between dead and those who survive. To hold the dead in our arms is an impossible gesture of solidarity and compassion in the face of ‘wit of eternity’ (Edkins 99). In the face of terrorist attack it is people who suffer, in their physicality and their vulnerability, that experience the trauma. The experience of

trauma is on the cultural level and it should be to them that the enemies belong.

Memories of trauma are, potentially, a mode of resistance to a language that forgets the essential vulnerability of flesh” (Edkins 100).

It is a debate on whether the person traumatized by a severe event will repress his trauma or not. Social scientists stress through public acts of commemoration, cultural representation to restore collective psychological health by lifting societal repression and restoring memory. They try to find some collective means for undoing repression and allowing the pent up emotion of cultural trauma to be expressed. But on the other hand, Elizabeth Jelin and Susana Kaufman, Alexander writes, contrast the victims insistent on recognizing the reality of traumatizing events and experiences with the denials that insist on looking to the future and forgetting the past. They believe that “the personalized memory of people can not be erased or destroyed by decree or force”. The efforts to memorialize the victims of the repression are presented as efforts to restore the objective reality of the brutal events, to separate them from the unconscious distortion of memory. “Monuments, museums and memorials attempt to make statements and affirmations (to create) a materiality with a political, collective, public meaning (and) a physical reminder of a conflictive political past” (8).

Eyerman writes about individual and collective memory in cultural trauma which ultimately leads to the identity crisis of collectivities. Individual memory, he writes, is something that “goes on inside” the head of the individual human beings. According to Young, Eyerman says, “memory has three meanings: the mental capacity to retrieve stored information and performed learned mental operations, such as long division; the semantic, the imagistic, or sensory content of recollection; and the location where these recollections are stored” (64). Theories of identity formation

or cultural trauma tend to conceptualize memory as a part of the development of the self or personality and to locate that process within an individual, with the aim of understanding human action and their emotion. Notion of collective identity built in this model, such as those within the collective behavior school, theorize a “loss of self” and the formation of new, collectively based, identities as the outcome of participation in forms of collective behavior like social movements. Alongside these individually focused accounts of memory has existed a concern with collective identity and with “how societies remember”, “with roots in Durkheim’s notion of collective consciousness”. According to Schuman and Scott, Eyerman writes, collective memory is defined as “collection of shared past that are retained by members of a group, large or small, that experienced it” (64).

Similarly, Maurice Halbwachs (1992), Eyerman presents, too has the opinion that “memory is collective in that it is supra individual and individual memory is always conceived in relation to a group”. This group may be geographical, positional, ideological political or generationally based. Halbwach himself, in his classical account, says that memory is always group memory because “the individual is the derivative of some collectivity, family and community” (65). Individual identity is said to be negotiated with in this shared past. Thus, while there is always unique, biographical memory to draw upon, it is described as being rooted on collective history. Here, collective memory provides the individual with cognitive map within which to orient present behaviors.

Food and household items can evoke memory, such as suggested by the examples found in African American cook book *Spoonbread and Strawberry wine*. The authors (Darden and Darden), Eyerman quotes, write “Aunt Norma’s biscuits cutter, Aunt Maude’s crocheted afghan, our father’s old medicine bottles all evoke

powerful and loving memories”(68). The same can be said of other cultural artifacts, like music and art objects. Igarua and Paez believe, Eyerman quotes, “collective memories do not only exist in the individuals, but that in fact it is located in cultural artifacts” (70). This means cultural artifacts can evoke strong emotional responses connected to the past and can be formative for individual and collective memory. According to Eyerman, memory can also be embedded in physical geography as illustrated by “Maya Angelou’s vivid description of her youth in small southern hamlet, and as described in Barton” (68).

The notion of cultural trauma implies that direct experience is not a necessary condition for the appearance of trauma. It is in time delayed and negotiated recollection that cultural trauma is experienced, a “process that places representation in a key role” (Eyerman 71). How an event is remembered is intimately entwined with how it is recollected. In Eyerman view, representation can be analyzed along several dimensions. It can be in the form of “re-presenting”. That is, as the representation through words and visual images of something else were considerations of form at least as important as content. Representation has a moral dimension too, when questions like “How should people be represented” are raised.

Dominick LaCapra, in *writing History, Writing Trauma*, talks about traumatic memory in a slightly different way. He believes that accurate memory of the past may or may not necessary for an individual use. He associates the traumatic memory with the collapse of time. In traumatic memory the “distance between here and there, then and now collapses” (89). The traumatic memory haunts an individual in a compulsively repetitive manner. “It turns in nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety attacks and other forms of intrusively repetitive behavior...” (89).

D. Politics and Violence

Politics refers to the spheres of activity and institution that is called as opposed to 'economics' and 'sociology'. Politics is the part of social reality. It works with agendas and frameworks of the powerful. On the other hand, "the political in its proper traumatic dimension, concerns the real" (Edkins 12). Every political community analyses its traumatic situation and makes the political strategy to face it. But "a traumatic analysis is constructivist" (570). Thus, politics is a discourse from which one political community creates violence on another political community. In this reference Cathy Caruth says, Pandey quotes, "the trauma shows up with a vengeance over a period of time" (125).

On a way, by which the dominant culture codifies its trauma is by domesticating the unspeakable. The chasm between the unspeakable past and the favorable present makes the traumatic memory function as the cultural political force the significance of which lies solidifying the notion of nationhood or community. Jenny Edkins remarks, Beerendra Panday quotes, "nationhood as a form of political community in contemporary society produces and is produced by the social practices of traumatic memory"(130). Such a cultural political codification of trauma gives rise to essentialist version of identity politics, the exploration of which exposes the performative nature of testimony.

Edkins points out the connection between trauma, violence and political community by looking at how cultural traumas such as wars, persecution are inscribed and reinscribed in everyday narratives. Edkins, in her essay *Introduction: Trauma, Violence and Political Community*, puts out that "traumatic invocation registers a movement in the boundaries of acceptability of use and abuse of violence in relation of power and forms of authority or political community" (9). To explore the

connection between violence, the effect of trauma and forms of political community, it aims to contribute to understand the particular way in which power, social order and the persons are reconstituted in the contemporary America through the study of trauma memory and within.

Again, in *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, Edkins talks about “political abuse”. She believes that “political abuse in one parallels sexual abuse in the other and both give rise to what we call symptoms of trauma” (7). Here political abuse is the parallel exploitation of power in political communities. Political authorities are using their power over people who have inferior political community. They abuse and torture them to accept abhorrent acts, such as stereotypical representation, which violate their sense of self and which provoke intense shame, humiliation and anger.

Larry Ray, in her essay *Mourning, Melancholia and Violence*, sees unpredicted trauma is the cause of traumatic violence. She believes that melancholia and grief constitute the basis for the desire for vengeful revenge. According to her, “grief and loss may prove to be significant in discourses authorizing violent actions and unresolved grief does not allow accommodation or reconciliation, but perpetuates stereotyped of thought and behavior” (152). Referring to Ray, it is said that the unresolved grief gives rise to conflict. And the violence resulting from that conflict brings enmity in which very presence of other sustains yet threatens each identity. In this sense, violence creates cultural trauma to the victim side.

Writing about partition in his book, *Remembering Partition*, Gyandera Pandey says that the idea of the purity of their own culture between Hindus and Muslims is the main cause of partition. Talking about purity of Indian culture, Sukeshi Sharma’s *The End of the Raj*, Pandey writes, “throws spotlight on the Indian cultural logic of chastity and logic of determining the specific nature of the trauma survivors of

partition” (14). Similarly Muslims wanted the “separate Muslim state in India”. After the partition “the goal of Pakistan (the pure land) was seen as the Muslim answer to Hindu oppression and Hindu capitalism” (27).

On the other hand, both Eyerman and Alexander’s notion of cultural trauma can be linked with India and Pakistan’s partition violence and all those violence that have occurred as the revelation of trauma of partition of 1947. Eyerman’s theory of cultural trauma, as it relates to the formation of the Indian and Pakistani identities, depends largely on the experiential mediation of the partition violence and its after effects. It is a mediation which conjoins collective memory and national identity through cultural templates. Here, the blending comes with Alexander’s notion of cultural trauma. What the theory of Alexander and Eyerman underscore vis-à-vis partition violence and its after effects of threat that the seminal event is not naturally traumatic but that the cultural templates through which they are experienced turned into trauma.

E. Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity

Cultural trauma, after all, affects the identity of the people. This identity is not only on the individual level, but it is in the collective identity. It is because of the traumatic consciousness and the memory is the collective memory. In this sense, sharing the trauma gives rise to ‘we’ feeling. Again, Geoffrey Alexander’s definition of cultural trauma is relevant here. Alexander stresses that to be cultural trauma “members of collective must be subjected to a horrendous event”. Such kinds of attack may affect the groups’ identity. In such a situation, they develop common sentiments to save their future identity (1).

Like Alexander, Arthur Neal too stresses on the collective identity. He associates collective identity with the national identity. Neal, in his book *National*

Trauma and Collective Memory, says that “national traumas are created by individual and collective reaction to a volcano like event that shook the foundation of the social world” (ix). An event traumatizes the collectivity because it is an ‘extraordinary event’, “an event that has such an explosive quality” that it creates disruption and radical change...within a short period of time. (3, 9-10). Neal further writes that these objective empirical qualities “command the attention of all major subgroups of the population” triggering emotional response and public attention because national people can not simply react in any other way (9-10). “Dismissing or ignoring the traumatic experience is not a reasonable option”, nor, holding an attitude of being neglect” or cyclical difference (4, 9-10).

Following the meaning of Neal’s statement, it is said that, the very fact that “a disruptive event has occurred” means that there is the attack on the very identity of the collective. The traumatic event changes the very permanent identity of the collective. Taken as an example, “the present identity of America was in crisis as a result of the Civil War, the Great Depression and the trauma of the World War II” (5). In this sense, the traumatic event of the attack on the American Twin Tower has too changed the American’s identity, and its aftermath changed the Muslim identity, especially South Asian containing those of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Neil J. Smelser stresses on the affect of trauma for understanding cultural trauma. He takes effect on the central position. In this way, he defines cultural trauma on the basis of the threat on individual and its culture which ultimately results in identity crisis. He believes a cultural trauma is above all, “a threat to a culture with which individual in that society presumably has an identification” (40). To put it differently, cultural trauma is a threat to some part of their personal identities and it may arouse negative effect. Smelser further adds that “if a potentially traumatizing

event can not endow with negative effects, then it can not qualify as being traumatic” (40).

Again, Alexander believes that “identity involves cultural reference” (10). And an individual is only the ounce of culture but the whole culture functions by the collective. Individual security is anchored in structures of emotional and cultural expectation that provides a sense of security and capability. These capabilities and expectations, in turns, are “rooted in the sturdiness of the collectivities in which individual is a part” (10). This is why, a traumatic status is attributed to real or imagined phenomena, not because of their actual harmfulness, but because these phenomena are believed to have abruptly, and harmfully affected collective identities” (9-10).

Experiencing trauma can be understood as a social process that defines a painful injury to the collectivity. The trauma to emerge at the level of collectivity, social crisis must become cultural crisis. Trauma is not the result of group experiencing pain. But it is the result of “cultural pain entering into the core of the collectivity’s sense of its own identity” (10). In so far, as trauma are so experienced and thus imagined and represented, “the collective identity will become significantly revised” (22). This identity revision means that there will be a searching and remembering of the collective past.

Smelser too talks about collective trauma. He defines collective trauma with the group’s identity crisis. He argues “a collective trauma, affecting a group with definable will of necessary, also be associated with the groups collective identity” (43). It means that a meaningful cultural membership implies a name or category of membership. And the social psychological representation of that category produces a

sense of psychological identity with varying degree of salience, articulation and elaboration.

So, while analyzing Smelser's statement we can conclude that to be cultural trauma, whether it be individual or group, there must be crisis of identity. Quoting Erikson, he says that "any trauma may be community and identity disrupting or community or identity solidifying" (44). Through these lines of reasoning Smelser shows the association among collective trauma, collective (national) identity and collective memory in the sphere of cultural trauma.

Like Alexander and Smelser, Ron Eyerman too describes trauma in terms of identity formation of the collectivities. In his essay, *Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*, Eyerman associates cultural trauma to the identity crisis of the African American people. Likewise, he too finds the collective memory is the central theme in identity crisis. He forwards, "the trauma [...] is a collective memory, a form of remembrance that grounded the identity crisis of a people" (60). As we have discussed earlier, Eyerman too argues on the difference between trauma as it affects individual and as a cultural process. As a cultural process, trauma is linked to the "formation of collective identity and the construction of collective memory" (60). According to him, the notion of unique American identity was in crisis in the civil war period.

Eyerman differentiates cultural trauma with the psychological and physical trauma. And the difference is at the heart of the loss of identity in cultural trauma. He says that psychological and physical trauma only involves a wound or an experience of great or emotional anguish by an individual. On the other hand, cultural trauma refers to a "dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion" (61). In this sense, the

trauma need not necessarily be felt by everyone in a community or experienced directly by any or all.

Stressing on collective identity crisis through cultural trauma, Eyerman says that “collective identity refers to a process of ‘we’ formation” (74). More than that, Eyerman also focuses on the resolution of cultural trauma. He hinted that the resolution of the cultural trauma involves the articulation of the collective identity and the collective memory, as individual stories meld into collective history through forms and processes of collective representation. In this sense, we can say that both the massive violence or disruption and the resolution of it, bring identity formation. When the collective experience “a massive disruption, a social crisis, becomes a crisis of meaning and identity” (Eyrman 62).

While talking about the crisis of African American identity enduring the civil war, Eyerman adds the concept of ‘race’. At that time, blacks want to express the feelings of racial pride in public, that is, for white eyes (84). “Race, by which one meant cultural heritage, more than physical characteristic, was often argued as a most useful ground for cultural identification”(85).The point here is that the race is perhaps the most common reference point for collective identity at the time of cultural trauma. Speaking in a broad sense, “race not only function as a unifying concept but also function as one that endows purpose” (86). Its aim is to find the positive in the negative, the distinctness in the distinction. When the United States vigorously rested its intention to exclude black from full and acknowledge participation in the construction of the American society, some black intellectuals seized upon the notion of race to ground the counter collective of this marginalized group. Similarly, the identity crisis brought by the cultural trauma of the aftermath of Twin Tower attack, Muslim who live in America and outside ground the soul of distinct race. It was this

identity, born of the violence in Muslim, united all Muslims in all around the world. And this trauma of rejecting from other race “produce the need for collective positive identification and a plan of action, a cultural praxis as well as political and economic practice”(86). Thus, the trauma of being new distinct race produces the collective identity crisis to the Muslims all around the world.

So, the cultural trauma is always associated with identity of people. It, in some way or another, brings the identity crisis. In another way, it is a fundamental way to identity formation, but that new formed identity must be in the negative form. It is only because of the stereotypical representation of the particular culture or the people belong to that culture, by the people or culture which is powerful. Thus, the power politics and the violence caused by that power is the core of cultural trauma. Similarly, memory also comes side by side. Traumatic event not only affect the cultural and physical aspects of an individual but it also affects the individual's personal psychology. And the memory of the event creeps in the individual's mind. Time and often, when individual remembers the event he becomes traumatic and also finds the crisis of his identity. The identity crisis may occur both in individual and the collective level, in the sense that, the violence on the culture affects the collectivities belong to that culture. So the individual memory is the collective memory. Similarly, the identity crisis that the individual get through memory is also the collective identity crisis. Thus, cultural trauma, as a whole affects the identity of people.

III. Cultural Trauma Affecting the Identity in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

A. Formation of multiple identities/ identity crisis

Identities are created in the fields of socio-political, cultural, racial, ideological and national position. It is constituted by means of representation and discourses. The identity of every human being engages in a dynamic interchange of beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, sentiments and other states of consciousness. False representation, which constitutes the identities, is considered to be the product and manifestation not of timeless linguistic system of particular social condition, class structure, politics, ideology and power relation that alter in the course of history. Identities created through the false representation bring the identity crisis to the people represented.

The formation or the crisis of identity occurs both in individual and collective level. Especially in the field of cultural trauma, the individual identity crisis may affect the whole race in which the individual belongs. In Hamid's novel, Changez's traumatic life, in America, is actually the trauma of whole Muslim race. So, the identity crisis encountered by Changez, on the other hand, is the identity crisis of whole Muslim community. In other words, the formation of an individual identity, at the same time, affects the race he belongs to.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist describes an immigrant's experience of discrimination and ignorance that cause alienation, multiplicity of identity and identity crisis as a whole. Changez's sympathy for his race, ethnicity and religion, his inclination to his tribesmen and intense sympathy for the terrorist attackers etc. keep him in the state and position of confusion and paranoid crisis of identity.

Changez, who came America making his dream to be fulfilled, becomes disillusioned at the very first meeting with an American. Changez's trauma, of being the citizen of poor country, is revealed in his interview with Jim. He, at that time,

thinks that if Pakistan would also be a develop country, he would not come America. Similarly, his trauma of being ill treated, here, also affects his identity. Changez, the person of Third World, does not have the idea of Americans' passion for materialism. In the interview, Jim asked Changez "sell yourself" if he wants to remain in the Underwood Samson (6). Changez was aware of the fact that he should work as a machine there. He knows that the environment of Underwood Samson would change him. Expressing his trauma of identity, he says that "Underwood Samson had the potential to transform as surly as it had transformed his, making my concern about money and status things of the distance past" (14).

Changez's trauma of being a victim of false representation ultimately changes his identity. To go one step ahead, it changes the identity of whole Muslim community. He is always against such stereotypical representations. He, who loves Erica, becomes the victim of both Erica and her father's thinking. When Changez was at Erica's home, while talking with Erica's father, he was shocked of hearing the Erica's father's statement that "you guys have got some serious problem with fundamentalism" (55). Changez felt bridle at that time. He knows that all Pakistani, who love their nation and deny the America's policy, cannot be defined as fundamentalist. He has the trauma of being identified as fundamentalist. After all, it is not the trauma of Muslim students, but it is the problem of whole Muslim community.

Furthermore, this identity trauma of Changez becomes the trauma of national identity. The single ill-treatment to Changez, ultimately questions the national identity of Pakistan. After horrendous attack on Twin Towers, Changez is being seen as a potential terrorist back in America. He gets the pressure to shave his beard and not dress up in Pakistani style. He takes it as an attack in his personal identity. But on the other hand, it affects the Pakistan national identity. Changez remembers the event

when his mother asked him to save his beard though she knows that having beard is their nation identity.

Similarly, Changez also becomes the victim of national, racial and ethnic identity. This is an absorbing and an intelligent novel written from the perspective of Changez- a young Pakistani whose sympathies, despite his fervid immigrant's embrace of America, lie with the attackers of the Twin Towers. Changez has a great sense of nationalism. He has affinity and sympathy with his race, ethnic group and religion. The resentment and shame Changez feels while in America, is on behalf of an entirely national, indeed a prosperous sense of affinity with a civilization to which he could not possibly have no real connection. There is no sense in which the contemporary dwellers of Lahore are the same 'people of Indus River Basin', as those whom Changez refers in the text. He always relates himself to the people and civilization of Lahore which marks the eastern boundary of Pakistan, but the 'Indus River Basin' proceeds well passed the boundary into India. Changez seems proud to be a Pakistani. When Erica, his beloved, in the very first encounter asks him where he is from, he narrates as:

I said I was from Lahore the largest city of Pakistan, ancient capital Punjab, home to nearly as many people as New York, layered like a sedimentary plain with the accreted history of invaders from the Aryans to the Mongols to the British. [. . .] I told her Pakistan was many things, from sea side to desert to farmland stretched between rivers canals (7, 27).

Thus, Changez talks boastfully about Pakistan. He talks more about Pakistani and Muslim culture. He says that “. . . alcohol is illegal for Muslim to buy and so he had a Christian bootlegger who delivered booze to his house in Suzuki pickup” (27).

Changez is not only the victim of national identity, but of multiple and conflicting ones. As he moves through life, he can not help but thinks of himself as a member of “we”. He is at different times in the novel, a ‘Third Worlder’, a ‘Muslim’, a ‘Pakistani’, a member of the ‘Indus River Basin Civilization’, a ‘New Yorker’ and a ‘Princeton’. Even this act of rebellion and assertion are expressions of collective identity- Changez as a Muslim rebelling against America. This appropriation of collective identities produces an unstable mix of superiority and inferiority complexes as well as a sense of powerful and powerlessness. On the one hand, it mitigates Changez’s sense of inferiority by making him of some thing larger than himself significant- an ethnicity, a nation, a religion and a culture. On the other hand, this very conception of power enervates him because it is the source of his obsession with invidious comparison making. He expresses resentment at American achievement to the extent that he insists on viewing that achievement from the perspective of some antidote American collective whose identity he tries on. But he feels self content when he realizes that he is not infant a genuine member of the entities, like Pakistan, to which he “professes attachment” (128-29).

Changez, as a Muslim, has great sense of affinity with the attacker and thus has sympathy in a way towards those attackers though he sympathizes the victim of the attack. He relates himself to those marginalized and minority Muslims and pours his sympathy upon them. In this sense, Changez internalizes and appreciates the event as a revolutionary response to American new colonialism rather than a terrorist attack.

While viewing form America’s perspective, certainly, America was the bombing victim. However, Changez is lashing out against American. It is because at the core of his heart, Changez considers himself a man from Lahore, a foreigner and a Muslim whom America will never truly accept as its own citizen. As an outsider, he

feels personally insulted by America's foreign policy, particularly its heavy hands in Asia. He resentfully reels of the list of American constant interference on Asia.

So, Changez's trauma of identity always links him with his race and ethnicity. At the time he finds his individual identity is in crisis, he associates it with his race. That is why, the imprint of discrimination haunts him, even after his leaving of America. As a whole, he finds his mother continent, Asia, is in the American's grip. Here, Changez's trauma reels towards the positive direction of brushing up the negative image of Muslim race. Keeping such things by heart, he starts an anti-American movement in his home country Pakistan.

B. Cultural trauma in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Cultural traumas are created in the crucible of social, political, ideological, racial, national, sexual and emotional position. More than that, cultural trauma also results when outside hindrances are created in people's religion and economic status, and as a whole, identity. Cultural trauma is experienced through people's direct experience of unpredicted event and the haunted memory of that event, whether in the individual or collective level. The individual experiences/ memories or representation of the traumatic events, in another sense, are the collective representation. It means, cultural trauma, as a whole, affects the collective sentiments of people. It can be said, by the fact that, when violence of political disturbances is created to a particular race all the people belong to that race are traumatized. So the cultural trauma creates a community and inaugurates 'we feeling' among people. This we feeling also make people conscious of their responsibility towards their community and culture. In this sense, cultural trauma may also take the form of resistance.

As memory is an important part of cultural trauma, so with *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, in which, we hear the traumatic memory of Changez's, the

protagonist. Mohsin Hamid's novel is fairly based on an one -note story of Changez himself in which we get an immigrant's experience of discrimination and various kinds of cultural difficulties, in recent America, that ultimately create cultural trauma in him. Hamid's novel is distinguished by its portrayal of Changez's individual trauma and his struggle to brush up the negative image of his race and ethnicity. On the other hand, Changez's sense of nationalism, his sympathy for his race and religion, his inclination to his tribesmen and intense sympathy for the terrorist attackers prove that it is the collective trauma of whole Muslim community. Thus, Changez's experience in America represents the Muslim's traumatized condition in the present America.

A young Muslim's experience raises his consciousness and shapes his future in this terse, disturbing novel. It has been presented as a "conversation" in which we hear only the voice of the protagonist and narrator, speaking to an unnamed American stranger at a café in Pakistan. All the events, of the novel, are Changez's remembrance, containing his traumatic experience of America. Changez remembers and describes in eloquent his arrival in America as a scholarship student at Princeton, his academic success and lucrative employment at Underwood Samson, "a valuation firm" that analyses its clients businesses and councils improvement via trimming expenses and abandoning efficient practices, i.e., going back to "fundamentals". Changez's success story is crowned by his semi-romantic friendship with beautiful, rich classmate Erica, to whom he draws close during a summer vacation in Greece. But the idyll is marred by the Erica's distracted love for a formal boy friend that died young by the events of September 11, which simultaneously makes all foreigners the object of suspension.

Changez reacts in a manner exacerbate such suspicions by supporting the attack. He says that “someone has so visibly brought America to her knees’ (73). Similarly, Changez’s decision of having beard and a visit to home country under seize, the trauma of breakdown of the fragile relationship with Erica, and increasing enmity with the non-whites all take their toll and Changez withdraws from his cocoon of career and financial security. He feels that “his days of fundamentals were done” (88).

So, Changez always seems to have been haunted by the traumatic memory, created through false representations, of the days he has spent in America. Changez, who is now in his home city Lahore and working as a professor, is still searching a person, or a way out, for his traumatic memory. Changez wants to take relief by expressing his trauma. When he met an American stranger, at a café in Lahore, Changez still tries to resist American strategy on war and terrorism with that stranger. Changez tries to prove that false representation is bad, and every Muslim who have beard is not a terrorist. In the very first paragraph of Hamid’s novel before telling his story, Changez tries to convince the stranger by saying “do not be frightened by my beard: I am lover of America” (1). Still Changez clearly knows that American could suspect the Muslim who have beard.

To be the victim of such kinds of stereotypical representation are Changez’s individual memory which still haunts him. But such representations, as a whole, affect the whole Muslim community. So, Changez’s individual memory, on the other hand, is a collective memory of the whole Muslim community. That is to say, when such kinds of stereotypical representation address the collectivities it is directly associated with national identity. While Changez was departing to America after his vacation in

Pakistan, his mother tries to convince him to shave his beard, but he didn't; and says "it was perhaps, a form of protest on my part" (130).

The memory of being the citizen of the country of poor economic condition is there in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The novel depicts the pictorial scenario of the trauma caused by the poor economic condition in its very starting. Changez is the person who represents the Third-World emigrants to America. He is the symbol of the suffering of whole Third World people in America. Changez narrates the events of his interview in Underwood Samson where, he thinks; he was asked such questions that still haunt his memory. He was asked lots of questions regarding his financial status. The interviewer, Jim, generalizes the condition and asks that it would be difficult for the student like Changez to come America without financial aid. Jim was even strict, so he particularizes the condition and asked Changez "that your family could not afford to send you to Princeton without scholarship?" (8). But he does not like the interference in his personal life by an interviewer of an office. To him "there are subjects interviewer were not permitted to broach- religion, for example and . . . sexual orientation and financial aid was one of these" (8).

Changez was conscious that in comparison to America, his country is much weaker in economic condition. But he tries to hide the circumstance. He does not like to show the poor economical condition of his family and his homeland. He tries to clarify the better economical condition of his family saying that ". . . I am not poor far from it: my great grand father, for example, was a barrister . . . like him, my grand father and father both attained the university in England. Our family home sits on an acre of land in the middle of Gulburg" (10). On the other hand, Changez's trauma is revealed when he accepts the decreasing economical stability of his country. He admits that they "are not rich". The women of his household are working class people. So the

condition of Pakistan is worse which he describes as: “salaries has not risen in line with inflation, the rupee has decline steadily against the dollar, and those of us who have substantial family states have seen them divided and sub-divided by each-larger subsequent generation” (10).

Following his statement it proves that Changez was aware of the poor economic condition of his country. That is why, he fails to hide the bitter reality, at the inner core of his heart. He accepts that due to decline of rupee, his grand father could not afford what his father could. To be more general, Changez raises the poor condition of Non- Western students who depend upon scholarship for their study in the country like America. It is because the rupee of Non- Western countries can not compete with American dollar.

Furthermore, Changez, as a citizen of poor county Pakistan, exclaims on the budget that America allocated for education. He says that four thousand years ago, the people of the ‘Indus River Basin’ had cities that were land out on grinds and boasted underground powers, while the ancestors of these who would invade and colonize America were illiterate barbarians. Now, he claims, his cities are largely unplanned, unsanitary affairs, and “America had university with individual endowments greater than our national budget for education” (36). To be reminded of this vast disparity was for Changez is to be ashamed.

Similarly, Changez’s trauma of loosing his love goes side by side to the trauma through memory. While Changez was in America, he falls in love with Erica, a high class American girl whose former boyfriend was dead. Changez’s trauma of broken love with Erica still haunts him. In one hand, he believes that it was him being a Muslim, is the cause of their unsuccessful love. Though Changez chooses his race and identity, leaving Erica, his trauma of lost love is clearly seen in his statement,

even when he has already left America: “I entwined emotionally with Erica, and brought something of her with me to Lahore- or perhaps he would be more accurate to say that I lost something of myself to her that I was unable to relocate in the city of my birth” (172). This kind of memory affects Changez’s mood. He still, in one side, longs of Erica’s love. He can not control his emotion. He feels that “weaves of mourning was over him and sadness and regrets prompted at times by external stimulus” (172). In fact, he still longs for America is only because of Erica. Erica, for Changez, is the network that connects him with America. Though he had returned to Pakistan, his inhabitation of America had not entirely ceased. One part of his hearts is still in America and dreams for unification with Erica. That is why, Changez feels as if he is unable to relocate himself in the city of his birth.

The trauma of lost love can also be seen in Erica. Time and often Erica becomes nostalgic remembering Chris, whom she loved and who was died some years ago. Though Changez loved her much, she did not able to avoid Chris out of her mind. She keeps thinking about Chris. The trauma of lost love makes her restless, at first, and later she has to be admitted at hospital. She has to take something to help her rest. Outwardly she is fine, but inwardly she feels haunted. Later she had admitted that “she has been hiding herself” from Changez (134). She becomes contactless. The trauma of lost love haunts her so much that the love of Changez cannot replace it.

Not only individual person like Erica, but also whole America, becomes nostalgic at that time. The attack on Twin Tower shatters American utopian concept that previously existed. Now Americans have lost their love ones as well as its utopian concept that America was the land of security and peace. Erica herself says that her parents are demanding to leave the city and she also admitted that “the attack has churned up old thought in my head” (80). The trauma of lost dream can also be

seen in Changez. Changez, at first, when came to Princeton thought “this is a dream come true” (03). He was quite happy seeing the physical structure of Princeton. He looked around the Gothic buildings. But now, after the Twin Tower attack, he has a fear that his dream might be spoiled. He prevented himself from making the obvious connection between the crumbling worlds around him. He says, he sees the sign of, “the impending destruction of my personal American dream” (91).

It seems that America, too, was giving itself over a dangerous nostalgia at that time. America had the trauma of lost utopia. America wanted to bring its prestige back. It also longs for it’s harmony in the city and also among the people. After Twin Tower attack, there was something undeniably retro about the flags and the uniforms, about general addressing cameras in war rooms and newspaper headlines featuring such words as “duty and honor”. Changez, for the first time, admitted that he found America looking back. He says “I had thought America is a nation that looked forward; for the first time I was struck by its determination to look back” (115).

At the time when America itself is traumatized, it changes its strategy of viewing the Non-Western Islamic country and people who belong to it. The Non-Western Muslim immigrant students, who making America their dream shifted to it, of course, become victim of cultural trauma. At first, they become the victim of Americans’ stereotypical behavior to them. Changez, an intelligent student who has no connection with Muslim terrorist, is usually haunted by the trauma of Americans’ behavior. Time and again Changez’s office’s staffs talk about Muslim’s condition, as a whole Pakistan’s weak condition, which he does not like. He has a trauma of being associated with the race, like Muslim. When Wainwright, Changez’s colleague, asked him “are you worried man”, Changez tries to hide the matter by giving the false logic (94). In such cases, he tries to create the illusion that “all is well”. He tries to convince

himself and his colleagues that “Pakistan has pledge its support to the United States, the Taliban’s threat of retaliation were meaningless, my family would be just fine” (94).

Such kind of talking, that questions the Pakistan’s identity and which is associated with the whole Muslim community, creates anger and frustration in Changez. The trauma of being the reluctant fundamentalist in seen when he was in Erica’s home. While talking with Erica’s father, he is traumatized. Erica’s father believes that “Pakistanis have got serious problems with fundamentalism” (55). At the time Changez felt “bridle”. More than that, his trauma can be clearly seen when, again, he tries to clarifies the event by saying “yes, there are challenge sir, but my family is there, and I can assure you it is not as bad as that” (55).

Changez narrates the incidents after the September 11 attack. After the attack on Twin Towers, his team, which is in Manila, is unable to leave for USA, for several days, on account of flight being delayed. Even at the airport he is escorted by arm guards into room where he is made to stripe down to his boxer shorts. He has rather embarrassingly, chosen to wear a pink pair. He explains that he flies to New York uncomfortable in his own face “...I was aware of being under suspicion; I felt guilty and become self conscious” (74).

This kind of behavior, according to Changez, is not a white man’s personal treatment. At that time, such kind of stereotypical thinking was the national agenda of American politics. It becomes the Americans’ strategy to alienate the Muslims from all around the World. And Changez is the ultimate victim of such American politics. Changez says that Erica’s father’s statement “was a summary with some knowledge, much like the short news items on the front page of *The Wall Street*

Journal...typically American undercurrent of condescension- a negative chord with me” (55).

After the Twin Tower attack, all the Muslims of the world are supposed to be the terrorist and are treated differently. America creates a discourse and represents the Muslim as “terrorist”. Changez further complains that when they arrive at the airport, he is separated from his team at immigration. Other colleagues join queue for American citizens, he joins one for the foreigners. The officer who inspect his passport, he narrates “was a solidly built women with a pistol at her hip and a mastery of English inferior to mine; I attempted to disarm her with a smile” (75). After being inspected by the American officer at the airport, he is asked many questions. When he replies that he lives there, she rudely responses that is not the answer she expects. Thus, Changez is behaved as a terrorist.

Changez expressed his resentment against American politics, which ultimately creates violence in Eastern Muslim countries. Changez believes that America makes its “living by disrupting the life of others” (151). Changez believes that America’s constant interference in the affairs of others is insufferable. He said “Vietnam, Korea, the states of Taiwan, the Middle East and Afghanistan: in other major conflicts and standoff that ringed my mother continent of Asia, America played a central role” (156). Changez feels as if that Americans are getting sublime by creating violence and killing the innocent people. When Changez finds the bombing on the Afghani Taliban, he avoids watching on television news. He does not want to see his fellow Muslim being beaten and he finds the relation between America and Afghanistan to be “mismatch” (99). The American bombers are with their twenty first century weaponry where as Taliban are ill equipped and ill-fed tribesmen below. On this regard, Changez remembers a movie Terminator “but with a role reversed” (156).

Changez, here, supposes that the villains are becoming heroes and vice-versa. In the movie hero seems to be powerful where as in real life, the heroes-his fellow Muslims, are pitiable condition and the machines are 'casting' over them.

Here, Changez also associates America's interference on India Pakistan conflict. Changez believes that America is a selfish country. It only works for its self fulfillment. Changez, especially, dislikes Americans' nature of changing politics. He says that America should assist Pakistan in the conflict with India, with the sense that the attack on Pakistan is the attack on American alley. But this is not the condition. Changez narrates:

“despite the assistance we had given America in Afghanistan, America would not fight at our side’ . . . already, the Indian army was mobilizing . . . as we yet, we could hear the sounds of military helicopters flying low over head . . . in case all of our air were destroyed in a nuclear exchange (127).

Not only to the Americans, similar kind of negative sublime also felt by Changez in the event of twin tower attack. However, on the other side, Americans are traumatized by the event, Changez narrates that when he sees the scene of falling Twin Tower, he can not believe. He, at first, thinks that it could be film. But when he continued to watch, he realized that it is not fiction but news. Changez, seeing the event, expresses his happiness: “I stared as one- and then the other- of the Twin Tower of New York's world trade center collapsed. And then I smiled. Yes, despicable it may sound; my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased” (72).

With the above American concept of politics and its treatment towards Pakistan, it becomes clear that Changez is much traumatized. The trauma of nationalism can be clearly seen in Changez. The trauma of partition haunted him.

When Pakistani armed men had assaulted the Indian parliament, Changez has the fear that India might attack Pakistan. And his fear is supported by the fact that if India attacks Pakistan, America will not try to stop it. Changez says “I was confronting the possibility that soon my country could be at war” (121). Likewise, the ongoing deterioration of affairs between India and Pakistan, the assessment by experts of the military balance in the region and likely scenarios for battle and the negative impact standoff was beginning to have the economics of both nations. So, Changez has the trauma of being the citizen of weaker country, which can easily be affected by strong country like America and India. Thus, Changez expressed his trauma:

I wondered how it was that America was able to wreak such havoc in the world- orchestrating an entire in Afghanistan, say and legitimized through its action the invasion of weaker states by more power ones, which India now proposing to do to Pakistan- which so few apparent consequences at home (131).

Not only with Changez, but the trauma of partition can also be seen to the whole Pakistani people. When Changez decides to leave America, after being fired from Underwood Samson, he called his brother to inform him that he decided to move back to Lahore. At that time, Changez’s brother tries to stop Changez from coming back to Lahore. His brother knows the condition of Pakistan, which was growing worse. In the statement of Changez’s brother the trauma of partition can be clearly seen. Changez narrates that his brother tries to dissuade him. His brother says “the tension with India is mounting...and spouses and children of foreigners assigned to embassies and NGOs were leaving the country” (161). So, the “things are not good in Pakistan” (126). And the trauma of this is visible in the Pakistani side.

Changez's intense sense of nationalism is manifested in his hostile reaction to India. He criticizes India for preparing war against Pakistan as revenge against terrorist attack on Lok Sewa in December 2001. He defends the Islamist terrorist attackers and its possible reaction by India as an "Indo- American conspiracy" (126) against Pakistan, with "India as the aggressor and America as accessory . . . India could do all it could to harm us despite the assistance we had given America in Afghanistan, America could not fight at our side" (127). Changez's trauma rises when telling America's roles in Pakistan. He accuses America of "maintaining the strict neutrality between the two potential combatants, a position that favored, of course and at that moment in history- the more belligerent of them" (143).

It is obvious that such kind of trauma may affect an individual's personal life. As mind is haunted by such kind of trauma, there can be seen more internal problem on humans. The trauma may create anger in people or they act as an internally frustrated people. Changez tells us that the unnecessary questions asked by Jim, while giving interview, make him frustrated. When Jim asked Changez about his financial background and the strict rule in American offices, as in Underwood Samson, Changez feels inside panicking. The statement, Jim forwards, as "you are going to get creative here" is, Changez believes, America's over strictness (121). In such a condition Changez's trauma of being the citizen of poor country can be seen in his psyche. He says:

How does one value a factitious, fantastic company such as the one who has just described? Where does one even begin? [. . .] Possibly, ancient worriers did, some thing similar before they went into battle, ritualistically accepting their impending death so they function on unencumbered by fear [. . .] so I inhaled and shut my eyes (12-13).

Being worried about the situation of his fellow Muslim nation, Afghanistan, Changez can not sleep whole night on the day of the declaration of the war against Taliban. He complains that Afghanistan was our friends, “a fellow Muslim nation besides, and the sight of what I took to be the beginning its invasion by your country man caused me to tremble with fury” (100). This is Changez’s expression of solidarity with his race. When his colleagues asked him why he is late at work he pretends to be calm but he is no longer capable of self deception. So, he says:

My fury had ebbed, but must though I wished to pretend I had imagined it entirely, I was no longer capable so through self deception. I did, however, tell my self that I had over reacted, that there was nothing I could do and all this world events were, playing out on a single stage of no relevance to my personal life. But I remained aware of the embers glowing within me, and that day, I found- at which I was normally so capable of fundamentals (100).

Further, Changez is also a member of minority groups. He is distinguished from other people of dominant group on the basis of racial, cultural and class differences. So, the trauma of belonging to the minor race is there in Changez. While he was working in Underwood Samson he was discriminated and marginalized especially because of his racial and ethnic origin. Muslim race is marginalized race in America. And Changez feels the sense of domination by the other race, especially by the whites and Christians. While he was attending the interview for the job in Underwood Samson’s valuation firm, the interviewer asks him many irrelevant questions which infuriate him. He narrates the story of his interview as:

I was telling you about the interview with Underwood Samson, and how Jim had found me to be, as he put it, hungry. I waited to see what

he would say next[. . .] I would like to think that I was in that moment, outwardly calm, but inside I was panicking . . . I looked at Jim, but he did not seem to be joking (12).

Of course, Changez as a member of minority Muslim in America is harassed by the people there. Even his employer Jim thinks him to be “Hungry”. Changez is, thus, insulted, dominated and discriminated by the members of the dominant group who suppose themselves to be culturally and economically superior to him. Changez gets the political, economical, cultural and representational subordination as he often relates himself to be his own Muslim race and culture. Changez expresses his discontents with his inferior status in America. He can never assimilate and accommodate in America. He gets disoriented being marginalized in the environment of the foreign country. He remembers one more such occasion while he is with the colleagues on the way to his office, he is mired in traffic, unable to move, and he glances out the windows to see the driver of the jeep turning to his gaze. There is an “undistinguished hostility in his expression and his dislike was so obvious” (67). But he finds later, one of his colleagues saying him that he looks so “foreign”, Changez at that time finds himself much closer to the unknown driver than his colleagues. Here, Changez shares a sort of “Third World sensibility” with the driver (67). Though he does not say anything, he was sufficiently unsettled by such series of events. He says “I found it difficult to sleep that night” (68). Changez, as a member of minority group, is underprivileged in the USA. He is misbehaved, discriminated and suspected minority even by his colleagues, his employer and all the white as a whole.

The created trauma, through American political strategy and its unnecessary discrimination to the immigrants, like Changez, ultimately leads to the revenge from the victim side. Traumatic victim, like Changez, at last, starts to oppose American

strategy of false representation. Changez, though he is in America, wants an end to the American interference on World affairs. He believes America's pursuits of single minded goal, dressed up as self preservation, has terrible and far reaching consequences and thus Changez must do what he can do to oppose it. He charges that as a society the Americans were always willing to reflect upon the shared pain that united them with those who attacked. Further, he goes on accusing them of treating into myth, of their superiority, and acting out those beliefs on the stage of the world so that the entire planet was rocked by the repercussion of their traumas, not only at least his family. Although in the very beginning Changez claims "I am a lover of America", as the story progresses, it becomes ominously clear that he does not become entirely forthright (1). He is an anti-American and claims as: "it was right for me to refuse to participate any longer in felicitating this project of domination; the only surprise was that I had required so much time to arrive at my decision"(45). Certainly, Changez turns out to be an anti-American and opposes the American policy of domination while he was working at the American Underwood Samson valuation firm, he comes to realize that to help any American for its betterment is to support American policy of domination and thus he finds himself to be like the 'Modern day Janissaries' (151). Juan Batista, whom he meets in Chile, remind him of his situation comparing with that of Janissaries who were the Christians boys captured by Ottomans and trained to be soldiers in Muslim armies, at that time greatest army in the world. They used to be furious and utterly loyal. They had fought to erase their own civilization. They used to be taken in childhood so that it would have been so easy to devote themselves to their empire and later on they would destroy their own civilization. He comes to the resentful realization that life in America has made him a traitor to his own identity and his machinery for American interest. He feels shame

on what he is doing. Being panic, he makes a nasty and hasty decision to leave America forever. He does not have any remorse on the decision of leaving America forever but he regrets why he takes so much to come to that decision- “the only surprise was that I had required too much time to arrive at my decision”(46). In this regard, *Kirkus Reviews* reviews the novel as: “this is the story of leaving America; [. . .], in the shadow of 9/11, the young man’s life and the cultural identity all suffer profound global shift” (5). Changez leaves America because of his critical situation after September 11 attack. America creates a discourse about the Muslim as terrorist and thus he decides to leave America by sacrificing his love. This review highlights the discursive representation of the protagonist.

The situation in Pakistan, with American ought to attack Afghanistan in relation to Taliban, and the tension between them rising to dangerous heights, obviously affect him. Indeed, he resents American attitudes both on the smaller; and interpersonal scale, as well as on the global stage. Even as there are some who reach out to him, even when Jim, his American friend, extends a hand in friendship too, Changez finds he can no longer be a part of his establishment. He essentially saws up the branch he is sitting; assuring that he will have no other options. The pool of nostalgia proves powerful for him when he ends back in Pakistan. Still he explains why he is so much aggressive to America:

I was not at war with America. Far from it; I was the product of an American university; I was earning a lucrative American salary; I was infatuated with an American woman. So why did part of me desire to see America being harmed? I remained aware of the embers glowing within me (106).

Certainly, in spite of having everything that a young generally desires to possess- a beautiful girlfriend, money and career, Changez is intermittently dissatisfied with his situation in America. In some inner provinces of his heart, he has a sense of jealousy and a sense of revenge against American policy of domination and creating hegemony over the world. As a Muslim and Pakistani, he shares the feeling with those marginalize race in the USA. That is why, he hates America and a part of him desires America's downfall.

Thus, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* successfully depicts the traumatic condition of Non-western Muslim immigrants in America, especially after the September 11 attack. It focuses on the fact that how Muslim immigrants get themselves culturally, economically, socially, politically and religiously inferior in comparison to Americans. Changez's internal behavior, his effort of hiding the measurable condition of his people and family and his resentful reaction towards the Americans proves him to be a perfect traumatic character. On the other side, Hamid brilliantly presents Americans' trauma of bringing back its lost prestige. Americans' trauma could be visible in their resentful reaction towards the whole Muslim community. Erica's leaving of Changez proves that Americans' still take time to forget the September 11 attack. Similarly Hamid's ending is also crucial to the cultural trauma theory. Changez's leaving of his dream land and starting anti-American movement in Pakistan hints towards the possible consequences of cultural trauma from the victim side. So, the events of Hamid's novel and its characters always seem to be whirled around the cultural trauma.

IV. Traumatic Disillusionment

Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a sharp manifestation of the protagonist's experience of cultural trauma in his so called dream land, the present America. Cultural trauma, in Hamid's novel, results in the various kinds of economic, social, racial, political, cultural, power and inferiority complexes. The protagonist, Changez finds himself culturally, economically and racially alone in the foreign land. The novel particularly deals with the protagonist's disillusionment. The inferiority comes through Changez's comparative study of economic condition between America and Pakistan. More than that, the American politics that changes after Twin Tower attack is at the core of cultural trauma to the protagonist.

The start of Changez's education at Princeton marks the beginning of his American dream. Things look wonderful; everything looks in place. But everything changes with the horrific event of 9|11. Suddenly, hatred and abhorrence start to appear aplently. 9|11 brings to life a dormant volcano, which explodes with such a power that no place is safe from its volcanic bomb and searing lava. In this deteriorating situation, Changez finds himself alone in the middle nowhere with bombs falling on his uncovered head. Even, years before 9|11, Changez could smell the winds that precede the storm and he is rather forced to wear a mask. But when he discovers that he is a civilizational other, he tries to oppose American strategy so he turns to be an anti American. That is, his mask attempts to erase that unconscious of being an alien. With the passage of time, Changez finds it difficult to blend with the western culture. His trips to the colorful beaches and his efforts to blend himself just fade away into insignificance when compared with new wave of hatred that comes from 9|11. Similarly, his unsuccessful love with Erica haunts him. Despite his love Erica fails to free herself from the ghost of Christ, her former boy friend. So, all the

efforts on part of Changez fail to win her. With all this, Changez feels a severe longing for home. But that too is shattered by the horrific event revolving around Indo-Pak increasing hostilities. However, Changez's individual trauma turns to be a national one.

One of the main causes of cultural trauma revolves around Changez's sense of class origin and his struggle in Pakistan and in America for financial progress. He presents himself overwhelmingly a class conscious man. He compares the American's life style and those of his families. All the members of his household are working people; and that his family condition is not different from that of the old European aristocracy which was in the critical state at his movement of ascendance of the so called bourgeois.

Changez relates himself to Pakistan and his fellow marginalized Muslim race by expressing a profound sense of sympathy and affinity to the attackers of the World Trade Center. He resents America and American domination to the Muslim race and wants his fury against constant American interference upon Asian countries. He turns out to be an anti-American and a rebel by resisting what America does to his nation and race. Changez's the most controversial manifestation of his latent Islamist nationalist and anti- Americaness can be sensed in his expression of profound satisfaction on terrorist attack on September 11. Further, he realizes that any support from his side to any American agency would be a support for America. So he decides to leave America forever. It's an act of resistance, which is the basis of cultural trauma, against American policy of colonization and domination.

The next issue of cultural trauma examines the issue of the formation of multiple identities. Cultural trauma shatters an individual or nation's true identity and forms multiple identities through stereotypical representation. And that identity, after

all, turns to the collective level. As an expatriate, Changez always defends Pakistan. He removes the Pakistan's action in his narrative. Having identified himself with Pakistan and preserving Pakistan's innocence, Changez fulfills his responsibilities and intellectual honesty to his birthplace. Certainly, Changez can not efface his identity as a Pakistani. His national identity is determined by the contingencies of birth and upbringing.

Thus, Changez is a traumatized character. He, who starts his education at Princeton marks the beginning of his American dream, encounters different kinds of cultural traumas and struggle there to brush up the stain of his race, ethnicity and identity as a whole. This individual trauma of Changez leads him to the identity crisis. This trauma and the identity crisis are not only occurring in the individual level. After all Changez's trauma is the collective trauma of whole Pakistani people. It is the collective trauma of those Non-Western Muslim immigrants who are treated as inferior in their race, religion, status, culture and civilization in comparison to America. So, Changez is the symbol of the traumatic condition of Third World Muslim, in the aftermath of the Twin Tower Attack, in America.

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