

e-ISSN: 2536-4596

KARE- Uluslararası Karşılaştırmalı Edebiyat, Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi

KARE- International Comparative Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy

Başlık/ Title: Exploring Un/homely Lives in Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Yazar/ Author

Banu Akçeşme

ORCID ID

0000-0002-8217-9360

Makale Türü / Type of Article: Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Yayın Geliş Tarihi / Submission Date: 1 Aralık / December 2021

Yayına Kabul Tarihi / Acceptance Date: 29 Aralık / December 2021

Yayın Tarihi / Date Published: 31 Aralık / December 2021

Web Sitesi: <https://karedergi.erciyes.edu.tr/>

Makale göndermek için / Submit an Article: <http://dergipark.gov.tr/kare>

Uluslararası İndeksler/International Indexes

INDEX  COPERNICUS
I N T E R N A T I O N A L


DRJI


EuroPub


MLA
International
Bibliography

Index Copernicus: Indexed in the ICI Journal Master List 2018 Kabul Tarihi /Acceptance Date: 11 Dec 2019

MLA International Bibliography: Kabul Tarihi /Acceptance Date : 28 Oct 2019

DRJI Directory of Research Journals Indexing: Kabul Tarihi /Acceptance Date: 14 Oct 2019

EuroPub Database: Kabul Tarihi /Acceptance Date: 26 Nov 2019



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Yazar: Banu Akçeşme*

MOHSİN HAMİD'İN GÖNÜLSÜZ KÖKTENDİNCİ ROMANINDA EV/EVSİZ OLMA DURUMUNUN İNCELENMESİ

Özet: Bu makale, Mohsin Hamid'in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) adlı romanında Homi Bhabha'nın evsiz olma kavramını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Önemli postkolonyal teorisyenlerden olan Homi Bhabha, sömürgeci ile sömürgeleştirilenin kimlikleri ve bu iki taraf arasındaki ilişkiler hakkında yeni bakış açıları sunmuş ve müphemlik, öykünme, melezlik, eşik ve evsiz olma gibi anahtar kavramları tanıtarak postkolonyal teorilere ve çalışmalara önemli katkılarda bulunmuştur. Bhabha evsiz olma kavramını, Freud'un Almanca *unheimliche* kavramından yola çıkarak geliştirmiştir. Bu makale, evsiz olma kavramını, romandaki Changez ve Erica adlı karakterlerin kimlik ve aidiyet duygusunu, duygusal ve zihinsel tepkilerini ve mekânlarla olan ilişkilerini evsiz olma durumunu yaratan koşullara bağlı olarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bhabha'nın evsiz olma kavramı, melezlik kavramıyla yakından ilişkilidir. Bhabha'ya göre, saf, dokunulmamış, değiştirilmemiş ve diğer kültürlerin yabancı etkisinden etkilenmemiş hiçbir kültür (dolayısıyla kimlik) yoktur. Bu engellenemez kültürel melezlik süreci, hiçbir kültür, ulus ya da bölge sürekli ve tam olarak ev işlevi göremediği için hem evde hem de yabancı mekanda evsiz olma koşullarını yaratır çünkü ev bireyler için esrarengiz bir şekilde aynı anda hem tanıdık hem de yabancıdır. Romanda evsiz olma durumu, kendinde ötekinin varlığını fark eden, kendilerini evlerindeyken evde hissetmeyen veya garip ve tanıdık olmayan bir yerde kendilerini evlerinde hisseden fakat bu karmaşık durumla nasıl başa çıkacaklarını anlayamayan Changez ve Erica için çelişkiler ve zorluklar yaratır. Bu makale, Pakistan ve Amerikan kültürleri arasında 11 Eylül terör saldırılarının öncesinde ve sonrasında gelişen ilişkiler ağında, kültürel, tarihsel ve psikolojik olarak bastırılan duyguların geri dönüşü nedeniyle Changez ve Erica'nın evle olan tuhaf, karmaşık ve gelgitlerle dolu ilişkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Evsizlik, Melezlik, Kültür, Kimlik, Eşik.

EXPLORING UN/HOMELY LIVES IN MOHSİN HAMİD'S NOVEL *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST*

Abstract: This paper aims to explore Homi Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness in Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007). An influential postcolonial theorist, Bhabha offered new perspectives on the identities of and the relation between the colonizer and the colonized and he contributed to postcolonial theories, and studies by introducing key concepts including ambivalence, mimicry, hybridity, liminality, and unhomely. This paper intends to employ Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness to provide insight into Changez's and Erica's sense of identity and belonging, emotional and mental reactions and attitudes which are mostly influenced by their relation with space which generates the feeling of unhomeliness. Bhabha's notion of unhomely has been derived from Freud's notion of uncanny which has been translated from the German word *unheimliche*. Bhabha's concept of unhomely is closely related to his concept of hybridity. According to Bhabha, there is no culture (and thus no identity) which remains pure, untouched, unaltered and uncontaminated by the foreign influence of the other cultures. This inevitable process of cultural hybridity creates the conditions of unhomeliness since no culture, nation or territory can function as a home since home is uncannily familiar and strange at the same time for individuals. Unhomeliness creates complex situations and poses challenges for

* Doç. Dr., Erciyes Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, email: bakcesme@erciyes.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-8217-9360

Changez and Erica who feel unhomey at home or feel at home in a strange and unfamiliar context when they recognize the existence of the other in the self but fail to figure out how to handle this complexity. This paper sets out to explore Changez's and Erica's disturbed relations to home as they oscillate between homeliness and unhomeliness due to the return of the repressed when Pakistani and American cultures came into close contact before and after the blowback of the 9/11 terrorist attacks which destabilized the fixed boundaries.

Keywords: Unhomeliness, Hybridity, Culture, Identity, Liminality.

Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) is laden with the politics of home and identity with an emphasis on the process of self-identification. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* offers a kind of narrative that "house[s] unfree people".¹ It is based on a retrospective narration in which Changez, a Princeton graduate and an employee in a very prestigious company returns back to Pakistan following the 9/11 tragic event as a transformed man after having stayed in America for 5 years and the whole plot revolves around Changez's dramatic monologue with a silent and unnamed American guy in Lahore about his education, work experience, and his girlfriend Erica in America. This paper aims to examine the representations and manifestations of un/homeliness through Changez's and Erica's personal experiences which are closely intertwined with the historical, cultural, and national forces in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in the light of Bhabha's notion of unhomeliness. In the process of globalization; national, cultural, ideological, linguistic and physical borders and boundaries are constantly reshaped and rearranged and thus get blurry, which leads to confusion about the notion of home since one's sense of belonging, individual and collective identity become highly problematic. Therefore, gaining insight into the unstable, inconstant nature of un/homeliness can provide understanding and awareness about the true nature of emerging identities along with their complexities influenced by the transformative power of multiculturalism and transnationalism.

The focus will be placed on the exploration of the problematic aspects of the experience of un/homeliness due to the impossibility of maintaining a continuous and stable relationship with a particular place as home. The lived experience of un/homeliness at a certain place and time is never constant or unchangeable but always subject to the process of revision, reconstruction, and deterritorialization. Homi Bhabha

¹ Homi K. Bhabha, *Diaspora and Home: An Interview with Homi K. Bhabha*, 7 December 2017, <https://blog.degruyter.com/diaspora-and-home-interview-homi-k-bhabha/>.

challenges the myth of the fixedness and permanence of home since the place one accepts as home does not stay or function as a home forever. One may have several homes simultaneously or at different times. According to Bhabha, what makes a certain place function as a home is based on various factors including the decisions one makes, the circumstances and conditions one is embedded along with the mental and emotional landscape.

That is being iterated or articulated around the concept of home are certain needs, certain interests, certain passions and affects, which actually then create that life-world, that existential comfort that you associate with home. [...] There are very distinct forms of narrativity, choices, judgments, which evaluate certain locations, which create a home around certain locations. [...] There is a continual transvaluation, or a changing. That depends very much on decisions you make.²

Homi Bhabha is one of the leading key critical and intellectual figures in postcolonial theory and criticism to which he contributed important concepts such as hybridity, ambivalence, mimicry, and unhomeliness. Bhabha's conceptual framework provides insight into the processes in which the colonized can destabilize and reconstruct the existing power relations established by the colonizer through resistance and redefinition. Bhabha does not consider the colonized as the passive victim, unable to act and resist. He insists that the colonized has an active agency, capable of overthrowing the imposed identity characterized by subalternity, passivity, docility and backwardness.

Bhabha's definition of culture has central importance and determines the meaning of his other concepts and notions. Thus, his concept of unhomely cannot be understood without a reference to his conceptualization of culture. Homi Bhabha states that

Culture is often in its most interesting manifestations in a state of the "misfit"; to fit the different bits or parts of a particular cultural apparatus or experience together always creates a problem because the parts do not necessarily form a whole. [...] There are discordant elements; there are divisive elements; there are divergent elements.³

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

According to Bhabha, culture does not consist of harmonious elements that are well-matched and make up a unified whole. What characterizes the true nature of culture are “dialogical”, “conflictual”, contradictory, “competing”, “antagonistic” but at the same time “collaborative”, “innovative”, and “affiliative” components.⁴

Theorists like Edward Said, Chinua Achebe, and Homi Bhabha, who have explored the nature of the culture and the identity that developed during and after the process of colonialism, insist that binary oppositions do not suffice to explain the relations between nations and cultures because hybridity is the distinctive characteristic of the post/colonial culture and identity. Bhabha defines hybridity as what is “new, neither the one nor the other”.⁵ Hybridity, along with ambivalence that emerges around the questions of who I really am and where I really belong to, destabilizes the notions of the stable self, and safe and permanent home. Cultures inevitably influence, change and transform each other; thus, no culture can remain pure and untouched by the foreign influence of the other cultures. “In the colonial encounter, then, it is not just the colonized who are subject to western ways; the colonizers too are transformed”.⁶ Achebe draws attention to this reality and states that as a consequence of colonialism, “we lived at the crossroads of cultures. We still do today”.⁷ Huddart similarly maintains that the present situation of the world is marked by “paradoxical combination of violently proclaimed cultural difference and the complexly interconnected networks of globalization”.⁸ Ania Loomba also highlights the fact that the relations in the post/colonial contexts produce intricacies and entanglements: “Colonialism was not an identical process in different parts of the world, but everywhere it locked the original inhabitants and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history.”⁹

For Bhabha, there is not a certain and definite answer to the question of ‘What is your cultural identity?’ because he does not regard culture and cultural identity as fixed, stable and unchangeable. Both Franz Fanon

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Psychology Press, 2004), 178.

⁶ Pnina Werbner, ‘The Limits of Cultural Hybridity: On Ritual Monsters, Poetic Licence and Contested Postcolonial Purifications’, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 7, no. 1 (2001): 133–52 (136).

⁷ Chinua Achebe, ‘Dead Men’s Path Author’s Perspective’, in *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (Doubleday, 1990), 13.

⁸ David Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha* (Routledge, 2006), 1.

⁹ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (Routledge, 2005), 2.

and Homi Bhabha highlight the “dangers of the fixity and fetishism of identities”.¹⁰ Bhabha has been intrigued by the state of being and living “on the move between and beyond the confines of cultures, nations and all those other contexts that traditionally are thought to generate a feeling of home and belonging”.¹¹ He is specifically interested in “cultural misfits” who do not “fit into the readily available categories of civil societies”¹² rather than the people whose roots get “stuck in the celebratory romance of the past” or who are “homogenizing the history of the present”.¹³

Bhabha himself has been referred to as “Mister In-Between”¹⁴ because of the hybrid and unstable nature of his identity. Changez, who is more concerned with “the mutualities and negotiations across the colonial divide”,¹⁵ can also be regarded as Mister-in-between, unable to define who he is and where he exactly belongs to during the unexpected journeys he has taken into the homely and unhomely:

Such journeys have convinced me that it is not always possible to restore one’s boundaries after they have been blurred and made permeable by a relationship: try as we might, we cannot reconstitute ourselves as the autonomous beings we previously imagined ourselves to be.¹⁶

Changez’s contradictory and complex feelings and reactions can be more obviously observed as he oscillates between the ambivalent experiences of homeliness and unhomeliness which turn him into a “cultural misfit”. Changez gradually emerges as a being whose existence embodies both the homely and unhomely: “Something of us is now outside, and something of the outside is now within us.”¹⁷ Valerie Kennedy draws attention to the implication of the name Changez which suggests change and maintains that Changez ambivalently both reinforces and challenges Orientalist stereotypes of Pakistan, and of the East¹⁸ which can be taken as the revelation of his problematic relationship

¹⁰ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 9.

¹¹ Homi K. Bhabha, *Diaspora and Home: An Interview with Homi K. Bhabha*.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 9.

¹⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *Diaspora and Home: An Interview with Homi K. Bhabha*.

¹⁵ Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (Verso, 1997), 116.

¹⁶ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (Harvest Books, 2008), 197.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Valerie Kennedy, ‘Changez/Cengiz’s Changing Beliefs in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*’, *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 20, no. 6 (14 December 2018), <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.3321>, 6.

with the home whose meanings and boundaries also constantly change along with Changez's sense of the self.

When the boundaries of home become blurry and ambiguous because of its inclusion of the unhomely, it is never possible to reestablish the sense of homeness again. "As soon as the expansion of the home is exposed to outside influences or the outside world and the privacy of the home is invaded, a strange feeling of uneasiness is evoked".¹⁹ Bhabha points out to the traumatic experience resulting from the "loss of one's recognisable self": "The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow and suddenly you find yourself taking the measure of your dwelling in a state of 'incredulous terror'".²⁰ Changez's agitation is aggravated by his mutable self which defies the notion of the fixed and stable essence of the self. Greta Olson maintains that Changez has attained and performed different selves and identities including Pakistani Prince, meritocrat, Chris, and Anti-American activist in his process of self-identification.²¹ The multiplicity of the self and identity unsettles and disturbs the safety and steadiness of home, which becomes an inseparable part of the unhomely. The relation between Changez and Erica is the symbolic representation of the togetherness of irreconcilable forces, the homely and unhomely. Even when Changez returns to Pakistan for good, he does not give up on his attachment to Erica as the embodiment of America who has become an integrated part of his mind and psyche, which brings about the feeling of estrangement and dislocation:

My inhabitation of your country had not entirely ceased. I remained emotionally entwined with Erica, and I brought something of her with me to Lahore—or perhaps it 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.²²

¹⁹ M. H. Oroskhan and E. Zohdi, 'An Exploration of "Unhomely Moments" in Sadegh Hedayat's *Stray Dog*', *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities* 24, no. 1 (2016): 495–504 (497).

²⁰ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 9.

²¹ Olson, Greta, 'Questioning the Ideology of Reliability in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*', in *Narratology and Ideology: Negotiating Context, Form, and Theory in Postcolonial Narratives*, ed. by Divya Dwivedi, Henrik Skov Nielsen, and Richard Walsh Columbus (Ohio State UP, 2018), 156–72.

²² Mohsin Hamid, 195.

Homi Bhabha provides an insight into the dual nature of the hybrid identity in which the homely and unhomely coexist. Bhabha gets the idea of unhomeliness from Sigmund Freud's concept of the "uncanny" which is the translation of "unheimlich" whose opposite is "Heimlich". Freud points out that Heimlich "belongs to two sets of ideas, the one relating to what is familiar and comfortable, the other to what is concealed and kept hidden".²³ Similarly, Bhabha explains that home has two aspects which are related to the patterns of emergence and return. One aspect has

[...] something to do with the normalized, the naturalized, the inevitable, the original. It's there – the "thereness" of your existence, even more than the "hereness" of your existence. It is always there; this is my home. I understand this landscape. I know these people. I know the language, and so on. [...] And the other [...] is the kind of Conradian idea that home is what you return to. So, there are these two moments of temporality, these two narrative moments – coming out of the home and somehow allowing yourself to imagine, whether you can or you can't, that you can go back: so emergence and return are complicit with the concept of home.²⁴

Bhabha broadens Freud's notion of unheimlich and elaborates on this concept in his essay "The World and the Home". Unhomely should not be taken as a reaction or a pattern of sentiment. It is rather an unavoidable and undeniable condition or a state that develops as a result of cultural hybridity. Colonial and postcolonial contexts gave rise to the identities that emerge as a mixture of the familiar and unfamiliar and the feeling of unhomeliness leads to "extra-territorial" conditions, "cross-cultural initiations" and "inbetween reality".²⁵ The unhomely suggests dynamic, unstable, ever-changing, and ambivalent identities, selves and relations while the homely aspect of the identity implies stability, coherence, and certainty and "ideas of fixity, boundedness, and nostalgic exclusivity are traditionally implied by home".²⁶

Bhabha offers unhomeliness as an alternative to the binary opposition between homeness and homelessness. According to Bhabha, "being unhomed or feeling unhomely" should not be understood as

²³ Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (Penguin Classics, 2003), 132.

²⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *Diaspora and Home: An Interview with Homi K. Bhabha*.

²⁵ Homi Bhabha, 'The World and the Home', *Social Text*, no. 31/32 (1992): 141–53 (148), <https://doi.org/10.2307/466222>

²⁶ Wendy Walters, *At Home in Diaspora: Black International Writing* (Univ of Minnesota Press, 2005), xvi.

homelessness. It is more related to the sense of “dislocation” that develops when the boundaries between the outside world and the domestic sphere get confused: “to be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the ‘unhomely’ be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres”.²⁷ Unhomeliness does not necessarily refer to physical loss, absence or abandonment of or departure from home. It can rather be identified as mental, psychological, and sentimental displacement and estrangement from home, and thus from what is familiar. As Tyson suggests, “to be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee”.²⁸ It is an uncanny feeling oscillating between self and other as Kristeva proposes. Kristeva suggests that we are even foreign to ourselves since the other is the part of the self and they cannot exist independently of each other.

Homi Bhabha focuses on the works of literature to examine the manifestations of unhomeliness. He suggests that “in the House of Fiction, you can hear, today the deep stirring of the unspoken, of the unhomely”.²⁹ Russell also draws attention to the fact that both Freud and Bhabha explore *unheimlich* through aesthetics and narratives and she illustrates the experience of *unheimlich/unhomely* lives through Joseph Campbell’s pattern of the hero’s journey in which the hero “begins in the ordinary world, from where the hero is called to adventure” and he crosses the threshold “from the familiar into a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces”.³⁰ During the course of his adventures, the hero is challenged by the trials, comes across guiding figures who provide support, friendship and help, “who accompany the hero to the point of apotheosis, which the hero then undergoes alone”.³¹ “The transformed hero then journeys back towards the threshold, re-entering or resurrecting in the ordinary world with an elixir, treasure, or boon to take home”.³² Homi Bhabha also puts the emphasis on the pattern of the

²⁷ Homi Bhabha, ‘The World and the Home’, 141

²⁸ Lois Tyson, *Using Critical Theory: How to Read and Write About Literature* (Routledge, 2011), 250.

²⁹ Homi Bhabha, ‘The World and the Home’, 141.

³⁰ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New World Library, 2008), 227; Annette Russell, ‘Journeys through the *Unheimlich* and the Unhomely’, *RoundTable* 1, no. 1 (24 May 2017): 3, <https://doi.org/10.24877/rt.15>.

³¹ Annette Russell, 3.

³² *Ibid.*

return after one goes beyond oneself “in a spirit of revision and reconstruction”³³ since after being exposed to the unhomely in the familiar or to the familiar in the foreign, there emerges the necessity of “the relocation of home and the world”, which creates the sense of estrangement.³⁴

Russell argues that a hero should be unhomed in order to grow and develop. Both Changez and Erica cross the threshold, literally and symbolically move inside and outside the cultural territories of Pakistan and America and feel unhomely both in their motherland and in a foreign culture and then return their home as a psychological and mental exile. These are the moments the border between the world and the home gets blurry. The feeling of unhomeliness causes Changez and Erica to establish ambivalent relations with the land, culture and human and provides the main stimulus for their action, behaviour, and mental and emotional reactions. The experience of the unhomely has been overwhelming, threatening, “painful and frightening” for both characters.³⁵ After their interaction with the unhomely, they are no longer fully themselves nor the other since the unhomely confuses “the borders between imagination and reality, death and desire, past and present [...] The pain of estrangement and dislocation is apparent”.³⁶

Changez is more courageous and ardent in his confrontation with the unhomely. His obsession with Erica reveals his desire to negotiate and reconcile with the otherness of unhomely lives. He willingly enters into the world of liminality and returns home as a transformed man whereas Erica’s process of unhoming results in a failure because of her persistent resistance to the merging with the unhomely. Both Erica and Changez go through complex cultural situations where they recognize the world in the home and the home in the world with a “tremendous terror”³⁷ which brings out an attempt to redraw the domestic and private space. As they fluctuate between the experience of homeliness and unhomeliness, they revise their attachments and commitments and reconstruct their sense of belonging. In this process, Erica’s and Changez’s un/homely lives have been influenced by certain factors including cultural hybridity,

³³ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁵ Annette Russell, 14.

³⁶ Fadia Suyoufie, ‘The Uncanny in Ahlām Mustaghānmī’s ‘Ābir Sarīr’, *Journal of Arabic Literature* 36, no. 1 (1 January 2005): 28–49 (33), <https://doi.org/10.1163/1570064053560611>.

³⁷ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 9.

cosmopolitanism, globalization, meritocracy, and an urge for reconciliation with the other.

Cultural hybridity is one of the determining factors that leads to the ambivalence around the feeling of un/homeliness since in the context of cultural hybridity, the homely and unhomely are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they coexist and become an integrated and inseparable part of each other. Cultural hybridities that emerge in the moments of cultural interactions and "historical transformations" are unavoidable.³⁸ Mohsin Hamid makes a lot of references to cultural hybridity that can be observed in every layer of life in Pakistan and the USA. In Pakistan, for instance, the buildings date back to the British colonial rule and both geographically and architecturally function as a bridge between the past and the present states of the city. What-was-once-homely has been replaced by what is unhomely which has assumed the status of the normal and familiar in Pakistan. The female students of European origin who attend the National College of Arts appear in jeans at the cafe in Lahore and they look completely different from the traditionally dressed Pakistani women. However, it is not these girls who seem unhomely but it is the Pakistani man with beard in his Pakistani garment who looks out of place in this district of Lahore.³⁹ The transformation of the cities in Pakistan displays that the unhomely have already been embedded into the very structure of Pakistan and the cities are westernized as they grow into metropolitan cities as Changez explains to the silent American listener:

I was telling you about Manila. [...] Since you have been to the East, you do not need me to explain how prodigious are the changes taking place in that part of the globe. I expected to find a city like Lahore [...]; what I found instead was a place of skyscrapers and superhighways. [...] Manila's glittering skyline and walled enclaves for the ultra-rich were unlike anything I had seen in Pakistan.⁴⁰

The celebration of cosmopolitanism and "open-mindedness"⁴¹ that comes along with it is another factor that renders the experience of homeliness possible for Changez in New York.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹ Mohsin Hamid, 25.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

It was a testament to the open-mindedness and— that overused word— cosmopolitan nature of New York in those days that I felt completely comfortable on the subway in this attire. Indeed, no one seemed to take much notice of me at all, save for a gay gentleman who politely offered me an invitational smile.⁴²

The coexistence of diverse elements in a given culture facilitates the integration of the unhomey into the body of home in the multicultural context. What makes Changez feel at home when he arrives in New York is the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere and the general socio-cultural attitude that promotes the tolerance for the differences and multiplicity. Changez encounters taxi drivers speaking Urdu, he can go and eat at a restaurant called Pak-Punjab Deli that serves the local Pakistani cuisine in New York:

[...] moving to New York felt—so unexpectedly—like coming home. But there were other reasons as well: the fact that Urdu was spoken by taxicab drivers; the presence, only two blocks from my East Village apartment, of a samosa- and channa-serving establishment called the Pak-Punjab Deli; the coincidence of crossing Fifth Avenue during a parade and hearing [...] a song to which I had danced at my cousin's wedding.⁴³

When he gets into the public transportation, he notices that his “skin would typically fall in the middle of the colour spectrum”.⁴⁴ Since he is treated as a local citizen, he does not feel himself marginalized or excluded subaltern in New York:

On street corners, tourists would ask me for directions. I was, in four and a half years, never an American; I was immediately a New Yorker. [...] I tend to become sentimental when I think of that city. It still occupies a place of great fondness in my heart, which is quite something.⁴⁵

Changez feels integrated into “the system, pragmatic and effective”, which he thinks is quite empowering and “exhilarating”.⁴⁶ However, that Changez feels homely in New York causes him to feel unhomey and out of place in Pakistan.

⁴² Ibid., 48.

⁴³ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 4, 15.

In addition to cultural hybridity, “systematic pragmatism” and “meritocracy” which is required by “professionalism”⁴⁷ in the USA shake up the traditional notion of home since the boundaries of home are expanded to such an extent that it accepts and welcomes the World as long as it promises and offers the most useful contribution to the capitalist economy and applies itself “single-mindedly to the achievement of that objective”.⁴⁸ In the novel, Jim who overcomes his outsidersness through his faith in pragmatism and meritocracy, encourages Changez to follow his footsteps: “We’re a meritocracy. [...] We believe in being the best. You were the best candidates at the best schools in the country. That’s what got you here”.⁴⁹

Cultural imperialism and the globalization of the culture also play an important role in turning the unfamiliar and strange into the familiar. When Changez went to the Seventy-Seventh Street which is located in the centre of the Upper East Side sparkling with its gorgeous and exclusive shops, and charming and rich women in short skirts walking their little dogs, he felt “surprisingly familiar” and he owed his sense of familiarity to the films in which this street appeared as a setting.⁵⁰ Since American culture has been globalized through the Hollywood Film industry, it has gained the status of the familiar for the strangers like Changez.

Putting a white mask on a black skin in an attempt to seek approval and recognition from the other is the expression of a strong urge that encourages one to make oneself at home at a place where one does not really belong to. Since Changez is aware of the fact that he would not be accepted as the person who he really was, he was engaged into acting-out and pretence. At Princeton which was a dream that came true for Changez, he conducted himself in public as if he were “a young prince, generous, and care-free”.⁵¹ Princeton inspired in him the feeling that “he were the movie star and everything is possible”.⁵² He meticulously strove to create the image of the “polished, well-dressed” young man with “sophisticated accent” for himself.⁵³ Changez, in order not to seem out of place in his contact with the high class, developed a good rapport and

⁴⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 41.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 39.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 48, 49.

⁵¹ Ibid., 12.

⁵² Ibid., 3.

⁵³ Ibid., 9.

paid close attention to the Western register and code of conduct “I spent the afternoon deciding what to wear. I knew her family was wealthy, and I wanted to dress as I imagined they would be dressed: in a manner elegant but also casual”.⁵⁴ Acquiring an American identity was the destiny he endeavored to achieve, which he assumed would make him a respectable gentleman in the eye of the World. Jim is an inspiring figure for Changez that makes him believe that he can make himself adapt to the unhomely.

It was a good feeling, and it felt even better when I saw how the hotel staff were responding to him; they had identified Jim as a man of substance, and the smiles and attention he received were impressive to behold. I was the only non-American in our group, but I suspected my Pakistaniness was invisible, cloaked by my suit, by my expense account, and—most of all—by my companions.⁵⁵

Changez even hid his true origin and pretended to be an American during his business trip to Manila.

I attempted to act and speak, as much as my dignity would permit, more like an American. The Filipinos we worked with seemed to look up to my American colleagues, accepting them almost instinctively as members of the officer class of global business—and I wanted my share of that respect as well [...] and I learned to answer, when asked where I was from, that I was from New York.⁵⁶

Although what he did sparks in him a strong sense of guilt and abomination, he revealed no sign of the expression of shame.

According to Homi Bhabha, unhomeliness is a postcolonial experience in a postcolonial space which frees people from the strict borders and boundaries of the homely identities and lets the unhomely people step inside the homely territory.⁵⁷ Hence, the experience of unhomeliness can be liberating for the otherized colonial subject since it arouses “the stirring of emancipation”⁵⁸ with the obtainment of the knowledge that s/he is not inherently evil, “backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded”.⁵⁹ This awareness leads to the rejection of the identity imposed

⁵⁴ Ibid., 55.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 82.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Homi Bhabha, ‘The World and the Home’, 142.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 151.

⁵⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage, 1979), 207.

by the colonizer as can be observed in Changez. Changez consciously repudiated to feel unhomely in the USA by overthrowing the colonizing stereotypes and rejected to make himself fit into the images of the colonized as produced by the colonizers. His sense of homeliness does not hinge on the physical boundaries of home but on his attachments, connections, and aspirations. In New York, what made him feel homely was his business merits that ensured him a well-paying job and a woman he passionately desired. Moreover, his great potential and capacity for achievement and his competitiveness and ambition for success were highly admired, which made him feel he was welcome, included, accepted in New York. He strove hard to make sure that the impression he left on people would not be backwardness or primitiveness. His mannerism, "natural politeness" and "sense of formality" have been immensely appreciated especially by his American colleagues. "[L]ike Pakistan, America is, after all, a former English colony, and it stands to reason, therefore, that an Anglicized accent may in your country continue to be associated with wealth and power, just as it is in mine".⁶⁰ Changez did not position himself as the otherized subaltern but ambivalently as an integrated part of the life in New York. He is "the outsider-within status" with "an ambivalent, transgressive, fluid positioning of himself and his work" "that moves back and forth across a boundary which acknowledges that I can be black and good and black and bad and that I can also be black and white."⁶¹

Fluidity of identity with a lack of fixed core and essence also creates a sense of being divided between the homely and unhomely. Changez took up the position of the "inwardness from the outside" in the USA and "represents the outsideness of the inside" in Pakistan.⁶² In the introduction to *Location of Culture*, Bhabha points out to the need to think and act beyond "the narratives of originary and initial subjectivities."⁶³ Ambivalence that both the colonizer and colonized experience about their self-identity results from the disappearance of cultural authenticity that is accompanied with cultural displacement, which leads to the experience of unhomeliness. In this sense, unhomeliness is the condition of the modern world.⁶⁴ "In that displacement the border between home

⁶⁰ Mohsin Hamid, 42.

⁶¹ Homi Bhabha, 'The World and the Home', 151, 152.

⁶² Ibid., 152.

⁶³ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 1.

⁶⁴ Homi Bhabha, 'The World and the Home', 144.

and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other".⁶⁵ This is the case with Changez who feels himself as a being of two hemispheres.⁶⁶

I lacked a stable core. I was not certain where I belonged—in New York, in Lahore, in both, in neither—and for this reason, when she reached out to me for help, I had nothing of substance to give her. Probably this was why I had been willing to try to take on the persona of Chris, because my own identity was so fragile. But in so doing—and by being unable to offer her an alternative to the chronic nostalgia inside her— I might have pushed Erica deeper into her own confusion.⁶⁷

According to Homi Bhabha, unhomeliness is "disorienting", "alienating" and "disturbing" since the recognition of unhomely within the territory of home creates the experience of uncanny which leads to confusion.⁶⁸ Homi Bhabha in his essay *the World and the Home* refers to Nadine Gordimer's heroines' experience to illustrate the moment of unhomeliness: "Suddenly the home turns into another world, and the narrator notices that 'it was as if everyone found that he had unnoticingly entered a strange house, and it was hers'".⁶⁹ Changez goes through the same frustrating experience of unhomeliness when he returns to Pakistan for a short holiday as he vacillates between his newly acquired American identity and his authentic Pakistani identity. The more homely he feels in the Western context, the more unhomely and estranged he feels in his own home culture. When he abhors the shabbiness of his house and poor conditions of his surrounding, he spitefully realizes that he perceives his home and culture through the condescending lens of Americanness. Changez's failure to feel homely in his own country creates a feeling of shame and self-humiliation.

I was struck at first by how shabby our house appeared, with cracks running through its ceilings and dry bubbles of paint flaking off where dampness had entered its walls. [...] in the dim light of the hissing gas heaters our furniture appeared dated and in urgent need of reupholstery and repair. I was saddened to find it in such a state—no, more than saddened, I was shamed. This was

⁶⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *Diaspora and Home: An Interview with Homi K. Bhabha*.

⁶⁶ Mohsin Hamid, 169.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁶⁸ Homi Bhabha, 'The World and the Home', 143.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

where I came from, this was my provenance, and it smacked of lowliness.⁷⁰

This feeling of unhomeliness in Lahore is not constant but replaced by its opposite when Changez reconciled with the homeland. His achievement as a New Yorker in the USA “did not, could not, make me forget such thing as how much I enjoy the tea in this, the city of my birth.”⁷¹ When he insightfully reflected on his experience of unhomeliness, it occurred to him that it was not the house but himself that had changed in his absence and he was looking at himself, his family, his home, and his own people with the eyes of a foreigner: “[N]ot just any foreigner, but that particular type of entitled and unsympathetic American who so annoyed me when I encountered him in the classrooms and workplaces of your country’s elite”.⁷²

The feeling of unhomeliness leads to emotional and mental reterritorialization. When Changez came to the understanding that “a different way of observing is required,”⁷³ he abandoned his American gaze and revised his image of Pakistan and home culture in a positive way:

[I]ts enduring grandeur, its unmistakable personality and idiosyncratic charm. Mughal miniatures and ancient carpets [...] an excellent library abutted its veranda. It was far from impoverished; indeed, it was rich with history. I wondered how I could ever have been so ungenerous—and so blind—to have thought otherwise, and I was disturbed by what this implied about myself: that I was a man lacking in substance.⁷⁴

Changez went through a continuous oscillation and “traumatic ambivalences” between the past achievement of the East and the present glory of the West, and between the inherited pride in his origin and the adopted sense of the superiority of the Western identity.

We were not always burdened by debt, dependent on foreign aid and handouts; in the stories we tell of ourselves we were not the crazed and destitute radicals you see on your television channels but rather saints and poets and—yes—conquering kings. We built the Royal Mosque and the Shalimar Gardens in this city, and we

⁷⁰ Mohsin Hamid, 140.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 141.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

built the Lahore Fort with its mighty walls and wide ramp for our battle-elephants. And we did these things when your country was still a collection of thirteen small colonies, gnawing away at the edge of a continent.⁷⁵

While he was living in New York, the comparisons between the present state of the home as marked by regression, backwardness and decline and that of the unhomey as marked by progress and improvement made him resentful and shameful. Thousands years ago, Pakistan had cities with underground sewers while the ancestors of the Europeans who colonized America were “illiterate barbarians”. The cities in Pakistan are now unplanned and muddy whereas “the universities in America could afford individual endowments greater than their national budget for education.”⁷⁶

While he was on his way back to USA after a short visit to Pakistan with the other “fittest and brightest” Pakistani people on the plane, he was filled with self-contempt. His feeling of unhomeliness in his own birthplace triggered the process of self-reflection and self-criticism which caused him to grow protective and possessive towards his own culture and cultural identity. When he emotionally and mentally turned against the unhomey culture, the veil that concealed the real feelings he had for the other was removed. Changez had repressed his feeling of being out of place in America, as put forward by his boss Jim whom Changez resembled to the Great Gatsby. Jim saw a younger version of himself in Changez since he observed that they both had gone through the same experience: “You’re a watchful guy. You know where that comes from?” I shook my head. “It comes from feeling out of place,” he said. “Believe me. I know.”⁷⁷ The lack of sense of belongingness is not that easy to overcome or to be fixed by success in the business life or material gain. Once Jim confessed that “I never let on that I felt like I didn’t belong to this world. Just like you.”⁷⁸ Although Jim feels ok with his life-long pretension that he has been included inside the unhomey, Changez feels quite disturbed and ashamed for having such a desire.

In the course of the events, Changez revised and redefined the boundaries and meaning of home as a consequence of the accumulative effect of his experiences and he developed a critical distance and attitude

⁷⁵ Ibid., 115-116.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 38.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 48.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 81.

for the unhomely. He came to the realization that the reason why he gained acceptance and recognition in New York was because he was thoroughly fulfilling the expectations and demands of the World and he was transfigured himself into the person America wanted him to be. Only the best and brightest foreign students were given visas and scholarships and in return, they were expected to contribute their talents and skills to American society they were joining.⁷⁹ Changez observed that in his workplace, what seemed to be cultural diversity which made him feel homely in New York was in fact the imposition of uniformity and conformity that rejected the otherness of the unhomely.

Two of my five colleagues were women; Wainwright and I were non-white. We were marvellously diverse ...and yet we were not: all of us, Sherman included, hailed from the same elite universities—Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, Yale; we all exuded a sense of confident self-satisfaction; and not one of us was either short or overweight.⁸⁰

Changez also gained a critical attitude towards American imperialist foreign policy which endorsed economic, political, and military power over the Eastern cultures through direct interventions in their affairs. He could not remain indifferent to America's bombing of Afghanistan since it would sooner or later, directly or indirectly influence his homeland.

Afghanistan was Pakistan's neighbour, our friend, and a fellow Muslim nation besides, and the sight of what I took to be the beginning of its invasion by your countrymen caused me to tremble with fury. I had to sit down to calm myself, and I remember polishing off a third of a bottle of whiskey before I was able to fall asleep.⁸¹

Changez started to feel strong distrust and hostility for globalization and he grew suspicious of global capitalism he was exposed to in business life. He has been estranged from his dream job after the realization that finance is a primary means through which America exercises power and exploitative domination by constantly intervening in the affairs of others. America now turns into the unhomely place for Changez. With this epiphany, he decided to return home by giving up on "the city of the possibility", its "magical vibrancy and sense of excitement."⁸² His

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 179.

decision to go back home is compensation for the self-reproach and guilt he strongly feels when he prefers America to his home.

Indeed, I would soon be gone, leaving my family and my home behind, and this made me a kind of coward in my own eyes, a traitor. What sort of man abandons his people in such circumstances? And what was I abandoning them for?⁸³

Eventually, he has been transformed from a “capitalist, pro-US-American fundamentalist to ethical, secular humanist, activist, and critic of US-American foreign policy and of global capitalism.”⁸⁴ Changez has devoted the rest of his life to the mission of stopping America “in the interests not only of the rest of humanity, but also in [its] own.”⁸⁵

Cultural hybridity and fluidity of self-identity are not always celebrated or promoted or readily accepted as an unavoidable reality in the USA. They have been resisted through stereotypes and prejudices that consolidate differences and distinctions, which can be considered a process of minorization to otherize and marginalize whoever/whatever is regarded as unhomey. When cultural hybridity is welcome, the unhomey is received well in the home. When the cultural hybridity is resisted, the home also rejects unhomey lives. To Homi Bhabha, the process of minorization makes culture “a misfitting apparatus.”⁸⁶ He defines minorization as

a structure of alterity; sometimes it is a structure of stereotypy; sometimes it is the reflection of a hegemony; sometimes it is the promise of heterogeneity. So, this whole process of minorization as part of the very nature of cultural ethics, cultural politics, and cultural semiosis is the ill-fitting nature of the cultural, if you like, the culture.⁸⁷

In the novel, Changez’s feeling of being at home in the USA has been disturbed when he is exposed to minorization. Erica’s inquiries about Pakistani culture reveal the prejudices and stereotypes that condition and determine the typical Westerner’s perception of non-Westerns as the unhomey others who must be kept at bay. As a consequence, the daily activities as simple as having a picnic in the park is seen as something quite foreign to eastern people by Erica.

⁸³ Ibid., 145.

⁸⁴ Valerie Kennedy, 6.

⁸⁵ Mohsin Hamid, 190.

⁸⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, *Diaspora and Home: An Interview with Homi K. Bhabha*.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Do people have picnics in Lahore?" she asked me. [...] "So this must seem very foreign to you, then," she said. "No," I replied, "in fact it reminds me of when my family would go up to Nathia Galli, in the foothills of the Himalayas. There we often used to take our meals in the open—with tea and cucumber sandwiches from the hotel.⁸⁸

The dinner with Erica's parents can also be given as an example to illustrate how minorization and stigmatization prevent one from developing a sense of home in the world. Although Changez initially felt at home in the penthouse where Erica was living with her family, Erica's father continuously reminded him of his foreign origin with his questions about Pakistan, which Changez took as "typical American undercurrent of condescension."⁸⁹ The Western gaze perceives the Eastern culture as a monolith.

Economy's falling apart though, no? Corruption, dictatorship, the rich living like princes while everyone else suffers. Solid people, don't get me wrong. I like Pakistanis. But the elite has raped that place well and good, right? And fundamentalism. You guys have got some serious problems with fundamentalism.⁹⁰

The sudden transition of his feelings from homeliness into unhomeliness after Erica's father's superior and sneering attitude uncovered his inferiority complex and caused cultural displacement. Erica and Changez left the dinner together and shared a taxi in which Changez abstained from disclosing his national identity as a result of his self-estrangement. "I could hear our driver chatting on his mobile in Punjabi and knew from his accent that he was Pakistani. Normally I would have said hello, but on that particular night I did not."⁹¹

Changez has been enlightened by the discovery that the places he has been to are not that easy to locate since they are continuously changing and it is in the nature of the city/culture/country to be unsteady because the way one feels and the position and function one has in one place cannot be pinned down and finalized in the stiffened forms. Thus, he did not view home as a provider of traditional anchoring:

⁸⁸ Mohsin Hamid, 67.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

Yes, I was happy in that moment. I felt bathed in a warm sense of accomplishment. Nothing troubled me; I was a young New Yorker with the city at my feet. How soon that would change! My world would be transformed, just as this market around us has been.⁹²

The 9/11 terrorist attacks brought about this radical transformation by creating ambivalence and confusion concerning his position at home and in New York. This catastrophic event functions as a turning point in the story since it initiates the process of decolonization of the mind and the return of the repressed feelings and emotions for Changez. When he watched the news about the collapse of the twin towers, he surprisingly discovered that what he felt was happiness and relief rather than pity and grief. Moreover, the events and the treatment he was exposed to in the aftermath of the explosion encouraged Changez to take on his Pakistani identity with pride and self-respect.

Changez's familiar world of America turned into an unhomey space, that was threatening and strange after the 9/11 attacks. Although American culture was offering a warm welcome especially for bright and talented others, after the terrorist attacks, America's inclusive cultural attitude was abandoned and Americans started to conduct acts of oppression, exclusion, and violence against the Muslims, which created a sense of unhomelessness. Upon his return to America from the holiday in Pakistan after 9/11, Changez was also treated as the menacing other and he was detained under the suspicion of potential danger at the airport where he was escorted by the officers of the armed forces and asked to take off his clothes which led to the feeling of bitterness and humiliation. Systematic stigmatization made him feel excluded and marginalized. Changez heard the rumors in circulation at the Pak-Punjab Deli that Pakistani cabdrivers were exposed to physical violence: "[T]he FBI was raiding mosques, shops, and even people's houses; Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into shadowy detention centers for questioning or worse."⁹³ He was also disturbed and frustrated by the tales of the discrimination and dismissals Muslims suffered from in the business world.⁹⁴ However, initially, he could not bring himself to produce any action or reaction since he did not want to seem that his "loyalties could be so divided."⁹⁵ When he realized that his idealization of Americanness

⁹² Ibid., 51.

⁹³ Ibid., 107.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 136.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

was merely an illusion and had nothing to do with the realities, he abandoned his gaze of Americanness and reversed his look back at America by assuming the lenses of Pakistan. Rather than hiding his Pakistani identity, he now self-assertively and provocatively displayed his cultural origin particularly through his physical appearance. He did not shave his two-week-old beard despite his mother's warning and the possible challenges it would create during the time of uncertainty and chaos.

It was, perhaps, a form of protest on my part, a symbol of my identity, or perhaps I sought to remind myself of the reality I had just left behind; I do not now recall my precise motivations. I know only that I did not wish to blend in with the army of clean-shaven youngsters who were my coworkers, and that inside me, for multiple reasons, I was deeply angry."⁹⁶

America as a nation revised and restructured the boundaries between the private and the public, the home and the World, self and the other during the time of confusion that followed the 9/11 event. All the distinctions and separations were again rigidified. American citizens embellished the whole country with the flags to reinforce the national consciousness and promoted the myths of her "difference", and her assumed "superiority" to protect her power image.⁹⁷ Americans acted with the reflex of the protection of the self through the strategy of exclusion on the basis of differences:

It is remarkable, given its physical insignificance—it is only a hairstyle [...] a beard worn by a man of my complexion has on your fellow countrymen. More than once, traveling on the subway—where I had always had the feeling of seamlessly blending in—I was subjected to verbal abuse by complete strangers, and at Underwood Samson I seemed to become overnight a subject of whispers and stares.⁹⁸

This nostalgic regression into the binary oppositions came under attack and criticism in the novel.

It seemed to me that America, too, was increasingly giving itself over to a dangerous nostalgia at that time. There was something undeniably retro about the flags and uniforms, about generals addressing cameras in war rooms and newspaper headlines

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

featuring such words as duty and honor. I had always thought of America as a nation that looked forward; for the first time I was struck by its determination to look back. Living in New York was suddenly like living in a film about the Second World War; I, a foreigner, found myself staring out at a set that ought to be viewed not in Technicolor but in grainy black and white.⁹⁹

Heimlich, in its second definition, refers to what is kept secret, “so that others do not get to know of it or about it and it is hidden from them.”¹⁰⁰ What is homely is always threatened by what is hidden, repressed, and unspoken. Russell suggests that “with secrets concealed in the domain of the familiar, heimlich slips away from the cosy intimacy of the safe home, reverses its meaning, becomes strange, unreliable, or even deceitful, taking on an eerie or insidious element.”¹⁰¹ Thus, in the unhomely, “there is a stirring of the unspoken”, a discourse of “enunciation” and “unspeakable thoughts unspoken.”¹⁰² To put it differently, unhomely emerges because of what is unspoken, unsaid and unanswered in the realm of the homely. In this sense, unhomely is related to the unconscious since it results from the repression of the familiar truth and reality through the process of estrangement and defamiliarization. Thus, the unhomely renders another world visible by offering a “journey through unknowable and unreasonable fear [...] that lurks in the subconscious of everyone.”¹⁰³ This journey initiates “the process of ceasing to be dark, the process of revelation or bringing to light”, that is experienced as unheimlich.¹⁰⁴ Bhabha argues that “To ‘un’-speak is both to release from erasure and repression, and to reconstruct, reinscribe the elements of the known.”¹⁰⁵

The 9/11 event leads to psychological and mental excavation thanks to which Changez released what has been culturally, historically and personally suppressed. His reaction to the 9/11 attacks can be considered as an uncanny that comes out as the return of the repressed and this was the first time he gained insightful awareness about his true feelings:

⁹⁹ Ibid., 130-131.

¹⁰⁰ Sigmund Freud, 129.

¹⁰¹ Annette Russell, 2.

¹⁰² Homi Bhabha, ‘The World and the Home’, 152.

¹⁰³ Roberta Seelinger Trites, ‘The Uncanny in Children’s Literature’, *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2001): 162–162 (162), <https://doi.org/10.1353/chq.0.1363>.

¹⁰⁴ Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester University Press, 2003), 108.

¹⁰⁵ Homi Bhabha, ‘The World and the Home’, 146.

I turned on the television and saw what at first I took to be a film. But as I continued to watch, I realized that it was not fiction but news. I stared as one—and then the other—of the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center collapsed. And then I smiled. Yes, despicable as it may sound, my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased. [...] I was caught up in the symbolism of it all, the fact that someone had so visibly brought America to her knees. Ah, I see I am only compounding your displeasure. I understand, of course; it is hateful to hear another person gloat over one's country's misfortune. But surely you cannot be completely innocent of such feelings yourself.¹⁰⁶

Initially, he could not understand why he wanted to see America harmed although he was the product of an American university, which granted a very promising and rewarding job with a well-paid salary and he was dating an American woman.¹⁰⁷ However, later he discovered that the idea that America could be brought down to her knees was inspiring and satisfying since the image of America as invincible with her absolute power was shattered and the distinction between the self and the other lost its meaning. Rather than compassion, he felt a strong sense of hatred for America as the return of the repressed.

Changez's sexual intercourse with Erica also unleashed the repressed both in Erica who functions as the embodiment of America herself and in Changez who represents the East that has internalized the inferiority complex and strives hard to attain whiteness that contradictorily causes self-contempt and guilt. Changez's attempt to win Erica is metaphorically an act to win and penetrate into America whose cultural achievement and progress have been idealized in the colonized mind of the East. On the other hand, Erica's feeling of discomfort and unease during the moments of the sexual intimacy is a result of the hidden cultural fear for miscegenation: "[T]hat—seemingly despite herself—her body had rejected me."¹⁰⁸ The physical contact between Erica and Changez aroused a feeling of strong abhorrence in the silent American audience in Lahore as well:

I felt her skin break out in goose bumps, and I pulled her to me, embracing her gently and giving first her forehead, and then her lips, a kiss. She did not respond; she did not resist; she merely

¹⁰⁶ Mohsin Hamid, 72-73.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

acceded as I undressed her. At times I would feel her hold onto me, or I would hear from her the faintest of gasps. Mainly she was silent and unmoving, but such was my desire that I overlooked the growing wound this inflicted on my pride and continued. I found it difficult to enter her; it was as though she was not aroused. She said nothing while I was inside her, but I could see her discomfort, and so I forced myself to stop.¹⁰⁹

They could share physical intimacy only when he asked her to pretend as if he were Chris. He willingly gave up on his authentic self by putting the mask of whiteness and this self-denial also brought up the feeling of unhomeliness.

It is a common pattern that the unhomely characters have double selves living between the lines. The process of mirroring helps one to recognize the person he should/not become. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* has doublings and mirror figures whose main function is to help the main characters release the repressed fear, which renders the other world become visible. Changez's encounters with his doubles were disorienting and unsettling especially during the moments he was feeling unhomely in his own culture. When he was in the Philippines for business, Changez identified himself with the taxi driver who looked into his eyes with strong hatred apparently without any good reasons. His exchange of gaze with the taxi driver in the Philippines contributed to the process of his self-criticism which brought an epiphany for him:

I was riding with my colleagues in a limousine. We were mired in traffic, unable to move, and I glanced out the window to see, only a few feet away, the driver of a jeepney returning my gaze. There was an undisguised hostility in his expression; I had no idea why. We had not met before. But his dislike was so obvious, so intimate, that it got under my skin. I stared back at him, getting angry myself—you will have noticed in your time here that glaring is something we men of Lahore take seriously.¹¹⁰

He speculated on the possible reasons for the expression of anger and hatred of the taxi driver. His hatred maybe results from his resentfulness for the privileges implied by his suit and expensive car or he is merely not fond of Americans. Changez finally finds out that he has something in common with the taxi driver, that is "Third World sensibility". This

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 102.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 66.

moment of emotional identification leads to displacement and estrangement from his sense of Americanness.

Then one of my colleagues asked me a question, and when I turned to answer him, something rather strange took place. I looked at him—at his fair hair and light eyes [...]—and thought, you are so foreign. I felt in that moment much closer to the Filipino driver than to him; I felt I was play-acting when in reality I ought to be making my way home, like the people on the Street outside.¹¹¹

Juan-Batista, whom Changez met in Chile, acts as a mentor with the same function of mirroring in the novel. Juan-Batista brought up the example of janissaries to Changez's attention to point out to the parallelism between them.

They were Christian boys," he explained, "captured by the Ottomans and trained to be soldiers in a Muslim army, at that time the greatest army in the world. They were ferocious and utterly loyal: they had fought to erase their own civilizations, so they had nothing else to turn to."¹¹²

Changez felt thankful and grateful to Juan-Batista since he removed the veil that had hidden the reality (Hamid 178). He noticed that he was a modern-day janissary, a servant of the American empire at a time when it was invading a country with a kinship to mine and was perhaps even colluding to ensure that my own country faced the threat of war. Of course, I was struggling! Of course, I felt torn!¹¹³

As for Erica, she does not feel at home in America and she cannot be anchored in any place in the world either since she fails to adapt herself to this ever-changing boundaries and meanings. Her strong attachment to her late-boyfriend displays her desperate need for stability, and constancy to gratify her sense of security and hope. Erica has not been feeling at home in the USA since the death of her boyfriend. His death can be regarded as a metaphor for the loss of pure and authentic self and identity and thus his death brings about nostalgia for the myth of the purity of the nation, uncontaminated identity and culture, and the world which is divided into the self and the other. Erica suffers from the pressure of her unconscious because of the repressed feeling which causes her to perceive the existence of the non-Americans as a threat to

¹¹¹ Ibid., 67.

¹¹² Ibid., 172.

¹¹³ Ibid., 173.

the stability of the self; thus her confrontation with the unhomely at home leads to discomfort, disturbance, and frustration which she never manages to overcome. For Erica, there is no return to the “settled and independent life”.¹¹⁴

Since she feels both physically and mentally unhomely at home, she seeks an anchor where she can restore and satisfy her sense of homeness in the unhomely. To do so, Erica frequently asks Changez to tell her about his home. “You give off this strong sense of home [...] This I’m-from-a-big-family vibe. It’s nice. It makes you feel solid.”¹¹⁵ For Erica, Changez is the embodiment of home she has permanently lost and she is desperately in need of the feeling of homeliness again. This situation creates an unsolvable complexity for Erica since Changez’s foreignness, and strangeness make her more intensely feel unhomely in the home culture. Going through “the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history”, Erica ended up in a clinic in a secluded countryside where she is separated from the rest of people and where she could live in “her mind without feeling bad about it.”¹¹⁶ She has completely withdrawn into the protective confines of her own domestic and private shell since she could not handle the complexity of the outside reality. When Changez pays a visit to Erica in the clinic, she comes to the understanding that it is not possible to avoid the unhomely and she has to either learn to live with it or destroy herself. Since nothing can be restored back to what it was before, that is, the unhomely cannot be driven away from the home, Erica without the safety and comfort of home to exist herself, puts an end to her life.

To conclude, Hamid problematizes the essentialist oriental discourse that persists in the fixity of cultural and national identities that are based on so-called inherent differences. The state of un/homeliness emerges when two cultures interact and the resulting hybridity creates ambivalence. Changez, like the writer Hamid, is a mixture of Eastern and Western cultures and seeks reconciliation in the space of liminality as he constructs a hybrid identity and he displays willingness to transcend the restrictive boundaries of both home and foreign cultures. The unstable relation between Changez and Erica represents the relation between the self and the other, the West and the East as characterized by conflicting feelings and attitudes including sympathy, respect, hostility, suspicion,

¹¹⁴ Homi Bhabha, ‘The World and the Home’, 145.

¹¹⁵ Mohsin Hamid, 22.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 151.

distrust, and loyalty. Huddart maintains that Changez as the representative of the East functions as a colonial doubling that disturbs the self-image of the West. Changez's effort to win Erica results from his desire to transform her into a homeland for him so that he can overcome the unhomeliness of his unhomely life. All throughout the novel, he has oscillated between the feeling of homeliness and the unhomeliness both in the USA and in Pakistan, which reflects the fact that the notion of home is not fixed or stable but can easily be replaced by the unhomely depending on the decisions and circumstances. Although Changez claims that "I am a lover of America",¹¹⁷ he has a problematic relationship with the USA. After the realization that he feels alienated and unappreciative of his cultural heritage and national achievement because of the Americanness of his own gaze, he reterritorializes his self-identity by reconstructing his personal history from his Pakistani perspective as a mentally and emotionally decolonized and un/homed person.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 1.

Bibliography

- Achebe, Chinua. 'Dead Men's Path Author's Perspective'. In *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *Diaspora and Home: An Interview with Homi K. Bhabha*, 7 December 2017. <https://blog.degruyter.com/diaspora-and-home-interview-homi-k-bhabha/>.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 2004.
- Bhabha, Homi. 'The World and the Home'. *Social Text*, no. 31/32 (1992): 141–53. <https://doi.org/10.2307/466222>.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 3rd ed. edition. New World Library, 2008.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*. Translated by David McLintock. Penguin Classics, 2003.
- Hamid, Mohsin. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Harvest Books, 2008.
- Huddart, David. *Homi K. Bhabha*. Routledge, 2006.
- Kennedy, Valerie. 'Changez/Cengiz's Changing Beliefs in The Reluctant Fundamentalist'. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 20, no. 6 <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.3321>.
- Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. Routledge, 2005.
- Moore-Gilbert, Bart. *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics*. Verso, 1997.
- Olson, Greta. 'Questioning the Ideology of Reliability in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*'. In *Narratology and Ideology: Negotiating Context, Form, and Theory in Postcolonial Narratives*. Edited by Divya Dwivedi, Henrik Skov Nielsen, and Richard Walsh. Columbus., 156–72. Ohio State UP, 2018.
- Oroskhan, M. H. and Zohdi, E. 'An Exploration of "Unhomely Moments" in Sadegh Hedayat's *Stray Dog*'. *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities* 24, no. 1 (2016): 495–504.
- Royle, Nicholas. *The Uncanny*. Manchester University Press, 2003.
- Russell, Annette. 'Journeys through the *Unheimlich* and the Unhomely'. *RoundTable* 1, no. 1 (24 May 2017): 3. <https://doi.org/10.24877/rt.15>.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Vintage, 1979.
- Suyoufie, Fadia. 'The Uncanny in Ahlām Mustaghānmi's 'Ābir Sarīr'. *Journal of Arabic Literature* 36, no. 1 (1 January 2005): 28–49. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1570064053560611>.
- Trites, Roberta Seelinger. 'The Uncanny in Children's Literature'. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2001): 162–162. <https://doi.org/10.1353/chq.0.1363>.
- Tyson, Lois. *Using Critical Theory: How to Read and Write About Literature*. Routledge, 2011.
- Walters, Wendy. *At Home in Diaspora: Black International Writing*. Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2005.
- Werbner, Prina. 'The Limits of Cultural Hybridity: On Ritual Monsters, Poetic Licence and Contested Postcolonial Purifications'. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 7, no. 1 (2001): 133–52.