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Intimate Others: Utopia and Heterotopia in the Reluctant Fundamentalist and the Submission

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ABSTRACT

The Submission and The Reluctant Fundamentalist invest in the strategic ambivalence that characterizes heterotopias. Steering away from trauma studies I concentrated on the possibilities the concept of heterotopia offers to understanding the multilayered content and symbolism of the two post 9/11 novels. Heterotopia as a Foucauldian concept established spaces that are 'other' in relation to a normal space. I extend that other space to include Muslims as belonging to a heterotopic garden from which they challenge an Islamophobic and divisive discourse that is affiliated to power and uses the popular media and grievances of the 9\11 families to further cut off Muslims from contribution to mainstream society.

1. Introduction

9/11 has created contested spaces not just in real life but in fiction. The spaces sought by the victims of the attack and the victims of its fall out. The ambivalence of the idea of heterotopia is productive as it allows a symbolic space or design to both divide and unite. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Muhsin Hamid and *The Submission* by Amy Waldman, the two male protagonists Mohammad Khan and Changez are infatuated by the American dream. Both bought the success story of the American dream, but their religious and cultural origin and affiliations stood in the way. They came at a time when Americans were trying to grapple with 9/11 and being Muslim was a mark not just of difference but of collective guilt. The otherness of Mohammad Khan who is nominally Muslim and Changez who was utterly Americanized becomes an issue that prevents them from entering or constructing that space. To have access to that space they had to 'pretend' to stand in disavowal of their original identity so that the 'hallowed space' physically and metaphorically can allow them in. Foucault defines heterotopias as "In the so-called primitive societies, there is a certain form of heterotopia that I would call crisis heterotopias, i.e., there are privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis" (18). Post 9/11 America is a space that fights to define itself in relation to itself and others, heterotopia becomes a space of contestation of identity where identity is procedural, conflictual and consensual. The two Muslim protagonists of both novels are ambivalent about their identity and use that ambivalence to circumvent the master discourse that seeks to eliminate difference. In an article dealing with the same two novels treated here, Seval argues that,

> The rapidity with which discourses on respect for otherness were replaced after 9/11—almost on a global scale—by those that come close to fascism puts the validity of the idea of liberal tolerance in question. As the image of the Other is defined in increasingly radicalized terms, it becomes equally difficult for the subject, that considers its self as liberal, and the "tolerated" Other to place themselves within the shifting parameters. (101)

Although Seval is right about the view of the master discourse that seeks hegemony through othering, she allows no space for the othered to talk back to that discourse. The assumption that that discourse is total fails to appreciate the heterotopic space from which the 'other' can challenge the center. The social ordering of heterotopia in post September 11 becomes intolerant of ambivalence and seeks to eliminate it which puts Khan and Changez on the defensive. In *The Submission* when it turned out that the winner of a contest to design a 9/11 memorial place is a Muslim, pressure groups related to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack challenge the winner and want him to withdraw. The elimination of ambivalence means the purging of otherness from any contribution to the memorial garden. A Muslim's contribution to the memorial would introduce an element of ambivalence and therefore challenge the center. The memorial garden is essentially a heterotopia of crisis where the families of the victims are supposed to find comfort:

> Frank, Sean's father, was on the phone with a reporter: "Yes, we plan to fight this until our last breath. What? No, sir, this is not Islamophobia. Because phobia means fear and I'm not afraid of them. You can print my address in your newspaper so they can come find me." A pause. "They killed my son. Is that reason enough for you? And I don't want one of their names over his grave." Another pause. "Yes, we found his body. Yes, we buried him in a graveyard. Jeez, you're really splitting hairs here. It's the spot where he died, okay? It's supposed to be his memorial, not theirs. Is there anything else? I've got a long line of calls to take . . ." (*The Submission* 56)

However, it emerges also as an ambivalent space once a Muslim is revealed to be its architect. The memorial becomes a heterotopic space where the divisive and simplistic discourse of us versus them is contested. The ambivalence resides in the Muslim concept of a garden which is introduced to the Americans through a streak of orientalism: the lascivious Muslims and the seventy virgins. The heterotopic space symbolized by the memorial garden is contested and becomes conflictual. The remains of the terrorists and the victims occupy the same heterotopic space. Fox news chimes in in the controversy surrounding the revelation of the winner of the contest of the memorial design. Reports of angry mobs denouncing Khan's memorial garden get full time: "A second affirmed: "Their remains are in that ground, too. He's made a tomb, a graveyard, for them, not the victims. He would know that the Arabic word for tomb and garden are the same." "He's trying to encourage new martyrs-see, here's a taste of where you'll get if you blow yourself up," a third chimed in" (Waldman 116). Khan is accused of designing that garden to commemorate the terrorists not the victims. The accusation is revealing of the divisions and conflictual nature of identity where the exclusionary discourse of Americanness tries hard to eliminate ambivalence of any sort: a Muslim cannot be part of the memorial: it is where Americans come to terms with the death toll not Muslims to whom the attackers belong. The contestation is further complicated when some American Muslims discuss their grievances. The discourse of exceptionalism that views American victims as the only victims and ignores Muslim victims creates a racist master narrative. But it never goes unchallenged.

> "But does America want to live in peace with Muslims?" a man named Ansar, who ran a foreign-policy lobby, asked in a more challenging tone. "Since we're talking about memorials, where is the memorial to the half million Iraqi children killed by U.S. sanctions? To the thousands of innocent Afghans killed in response to this attack, or the Iraqis killed on the pretext of responding to this attack? Or to all the Muslims slaughtered in Chechnya, or Kashmir, or Palestine, while the U.S. stood by? We keep hearing that it takes three hours to read the names of the dead from this attack. Do you know how long it would take to read the names of half a million dead Iraqi children? Twenty-one days." (Waldman 79-80)

A similar feeling of injustice pervades *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Changez in the *Reluctant Fundamentalist* is shaken by his new reality, of being racially profiled when he came back to the US from Manila where he was on a business mission for his company:

> What left me shaken, however, occurred when I turned on the television myself. I had reached home from New Jersey after midnight and was flipping through the channels, looking for a soothing sitcom, when I chanced upon a newscast with ghostly night-vision images of American troops dropping into Afghanistan for what was described as a daring raid on a Taliban command post. My reaction caught me by surprise; Afghanistan was Pakistanis neighbor, 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" (114).

Yet the Muslim protagonists of both novels Khan and Changez take a more nuanced attitude not less so because of their mixed and ambivalent attitude towards identity which makes them a source of ambivalence that challenges the social order and confuses boundaries. In *The Badlands of Modernity*, Hetherington explains that, "A key part of this process of social ordering within modernity which lies behind this attempt to achieve social order overcoming ambivalence, involves a translation of the utopian ideal of a good society into the practice of ordering space. This ordering of social ambivalence and its social agents was a spatial process all about the demarcation of a society through its internal boundaries" (64). The heterotopic space provided by the architectural design of the garden by Mohamed Khan is a place where ambivalence is strategic. It is used to counter the policing and exclusionary discourse that views all Muslims as culpable and terrorists while trying to create a synthetic garden that brings everybody together. This goes subtly against the conscious power discourse choice's to imposes a simplistic view of the world. The complexity of human phenomena is reduced through a binary discourse characteristic of orientalism as defined by Edward Said. You are either with us or against us declared the then Bush administration. The desire to eliminate ambivalence is paramount especially if the authors of that exclusionary discourse of power are about to engage in preemptive wars. The strategic ambivalence of heterotopia extends to almost everything. On his way home one day, Khan avoids the subway, having become a well-known controversial figure- and takes a taxi. The Pakistani driver makes a revealing observation about the Empire State Building:

> But Faisal was quiet most of the way. Only when they swung onto the Brooklyn Bridge and saw the Empire State Building lit up red and white, like a parfait, did he speak. "The first two years I lived here," Faisal said, "whenever I saw green lighting on the Empire State Building, I thought it was for Islam. I told everybody back home; half of Matlab still thinks it's true. Then I found out it was for the Jets!" He started laughing, and despite his mood, Mo did, too. "But for those two years, I couldn't believe how much this country loved Islam." (Waldman 2011)

Space here offers itself as a tapestry of ambivalence where it is interpreted in a cultural specific way that created belonging. Total understanding or allegiance undermines space as an open tapestry of deferred meaning. Very much like the design of the garden memorial, it challenges simple division and allows for an ambivalent multiplicity that carries many possibilities of reconciliation and division.

2. Muslim paradise and American garden

The 9/11 terrorist attacks have shaken the Americans. To come to terms with the shock, there was a proposal to create a memorial in the place of the two towers. A competition was declared for the design and it turns out that Mohammad Khan, A Muslim was the winner. His design was in the real spirit of a Western heterotopia: a garden: “Gardens are fetishes of the European bourgeoisie," Ariana said, pointing to the dining-room walls, which were papered with a panorama of lush trees through which tiny, formally dressed men and women strolled. Ariana herself was, as usual, dressed entirely in a shade of gruel that she had patented in homage to and ridicule of Yves Klein's brilliant blue. The mockery of pretension, Claire decided, could also be pretentious.” (*The Submission* 5).

> Together, Jensen and Elsner help us understand how art can be the vessel of a group’s simultaneous assertion of itself and critique of its world; by asserting its own identity in word, image, and space, it defines itself over and against others. Scott’s theory of hidden transcripts helps to account for marginality and the social dynamics of dominance and subordination. It describes the way discourse operates in situations where social groups’ power is unbalanced, and the ways the subordinate group’s speech is constructed in such a way to speak to itself but remain hidden from and unheard by the dominant group. And finally, Saindon describes the way art connects with heterotopian space and contributes to heterotopia by reframing and redoubling already heterotopian spaces. (Smith 50)

On the other hand, Khan’s assignment to attend a bet to build the American embassy in Kabul creates a new tension. A Muslim garden appears on the road during Khan’s tour in Kabul. It brings in a stereotype of Muslim suicide bombers killing themselves for a paradise full of virgins.

> "The way of all fucked-up third world countries," his seatmate said.
>
> There was a garden draped with grapevines, a small apple orchard, and a swimming pool full of Europeans and Americans dive-bombing one another. Chlorine and marjoram and marijuana and frying butter mingled in an unfamiliar, heady mix. "Wonder what the Afghans think of this," one of the architects said, waving his hand to take in the bikinied women and beery men. *"They're not allowed in,"* said Mo's seatmate from the van. "Why do you think they checked our passports? It's better if they don't know what they're missing." "Hot chicks and fruit trees: they're missing their own paradise," said someone else at the table-Mo hadn't bothered to remember most of their names. "I'm surprised they're not blowing themselves up to get in here." "Some of them don't have to," his seatmate from the van said, his eyes on Mo. (Emphasis Mine 52)

The American earthly paradise in Kabul is a stereotype of the Muslim paradise. Both occupy different heterotopias. The heterotopia of the here and now mundane pleasure-centered paradise and the heterotopia of an otherworldly paradise. The Imperial presence is the subtext of that conversation. After all, the American presence is the function of American imperialism that superimposes its western-styled paradise on a totally different landscape of a conservative Kabul. It is meant as a mock-heroic feat of the Muslim paradise. Orientalism that views Muslims as inherently violent and motivated by a desire to live in a hereafter heterotopic and lascivious garden. The subtext is that the Western secular here and now garden is what Muslims should follow. The very imposition of a libertine bikini occupied garden in the heart of a very conservative Muslim country is a show of symbolic force exercised by the master discourse in a civilization that is secular and pleasure-oriented.

Yet the Muslim Garden appears to be very real to families of Muslim victims in the Twin Towers. Inam a Bangladeshi illegal immigrant whose body was created along others who were killed in the Twin Tower attack is relegated to a Muslim ‘garden’. His wife asks the Imam: "Why did my husband suffer so? she asked. "It was written," he said, as she knew he would. The burning

lnam might have suffered was nothing next to the torment of the hellfire, which was forever, the cleric continued. If lnam was a believer, she could rest easy-he was in the garden now. His pain here had been momentary; his bliss would be everlasting." The 'Garden' " (Waldman 80). Foucault argues that,

> As an example I shall take the strange heterotopia of the cemetery. The cemetery is certainly a place unlike ordinary cultural spaces. It is a space that ishowever connected with all the sites of the city, state or society or village, etc., since each individual, each family has relatives in the cemetery. In western culture the cemetery has practically always existed. But it has undergone important changes. Until the end of the eighteenth century, the cemetery was placed at the heart of the city, next to the church. In it there was a hierarchy of possible tombs. There was the charnel house in which bodies lost the last traces of individuality, there were a few individual tombs and then there were the tombs inside the church. These latter tombs were themselves of two types, either simply tombstones with an inscription, or mausoleums with statues. This cemetery housed inside the sacred space of the church has taken on a quite different cast in modern civilizations, and curiously, it is in a time when civilization has become 'atheistic,' as one says very crudely, that western culture has established what is termed the cult of the dead." (5)

This shifted and the grave is secularized and is replaced by the memorial garden. The memorial garden as a heterotopic space reflects cultural change. The anonymity of death is replaced by the intentional engraving of the victims name for posterity to know and even experience what happened on 9/11. The grave is replaced by a site of collective memory that is premised on othering Islam as the main culprit in what happened. That makes the fact that the design for that memorial Garden by a Muslim even more 'sacrilegious'. In *The Submission*, the Garden is a heterotopia, the picturing of which is used to mediate our relationship with the dead. It is like a graveyard, it is a mirror which reflects the state of crisis where Americans were trying to come to terms with the 9/11 crisis. That space is 'sacred' but the emergence of a Muslim as the one who designed the memorial Garden complicates matters. Smith explained that, "When heterotopias are performing their function of mirroring hegemonic space and simultaneously critiquing and subverting it, there will be some method of conveyance for this critique, some sort of symbolic language employed, whether it be a verbal language employing words, alphabets, and the like, or some other expression of semiotics, such as art" (41).

The heterotopic space is a reflection of the Americans way of coming to terms with a crisis:

"Graveyards," Claire said, an old tenacity rising within her. "Why are they often the loveliest places in cities? There's a poem-George Herbert-with the lines: 'Who would have thought my shrivel'd heart / Could have recover'd greennesse?' " A college friend had written the scrap of poetry in a condolence card. "The Garden," she continued, "will be a place where we-where the widows, their children, anyone-can stumble on joy. My husband ... "she said, and everyone leaned in to listen. She changed her mind and stopped speaking, but the words hung in the air like a trail of smoke. (Waldman, 5)

> Mo nodded, blankly, before Claire's words latched on to him. The names on the Garden's walls had become, for him, just another design element, but they were the dead; they were the faces that had been plastered on every surface right after the attack, that first draft of a memorial. His architect's detachment wobbled at the image of a boy seeking his father in the Garden. Mo and Claire were almost the same height. He looked into her eyes and cleared his throat. "How old is he? I hope it will help him." (112)

A Muslim is the epitome of otherness who cannot be trusted with creating the heterotopia which serves as a sacred place as well a place of exclusion. It is where the self is reflected as otherness and where 'Muslim others' are barred from. Islam becomes a heterotopic space as well. It is a space where western societies dumb their negative selves, a subterranean self were westerners

see their vices enacted: the ruthless and meaning less killing of innocent people or as Edward Said once argued how Islam served as a "sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Orientalism 3). A mirror not of a utopian self but a mirror of a dystopia: everything the Western unconscious deems deviant. Islam served as a heterotopia of deviance. In this sense, heterotopia becomes a liminal space where the 'incarcerated other' challenges the hegemonic discourse of normality. Muslim subjects in the novel are excluded by the imperial discourse that characterizes them as 'terrorists or terrorist sympathizers" through art and narrative the two characters try to break out of marginality imposed by that discourse that places them in a heterotopia of deviance.

> as if it had never been otherwise, history was liquid, unfixed. Claire reached for the Times Arts section, wondering if anyone had weighed in on the design itself. With so much else to report after Khan's press conference, the papers had made only generic references to his garden. But today she saw, stripped across the top of the Arts section, "A Lovely Garden-and an Islamic One?" A cavity opened within her. According to the paper's architecture critic, the elements of Khan's garden she loved-the geometry, the walls, the four quadrants, the water, even the pavilion-paralleled gardens that had been built across the Islamic world, from Spain to Iran to India to Afghanistan, over a dozen or more centuries. There were pictures of the Alhambra in Spain, Humayun's tomb in India, and a diagram of the typical chahar bagh, or foursquare garden, next to the diagram of Khan's design from the press packet. They were remarkably similar. The critic called the gardens one of many rich art forms produced by the Islamic world. He wrote:

The ambivalence in the gardens as a memorial challenges the unitary discourse of powerful America that desires to define itself against its others who happen to be its own citizens. Elimination of ambivalence can only remind us of the Nazis in their attitude to minorities such as gypsies and Jews. The garden comes to provide an incremental common space of what is beautiful and enduring about human life regardless of the passage of time. It is a continuum of beauty stretching back in time providing a common language that gives space and meaning to life especially following the tragic events of 9/11. The ruminations of a reporter in the novel are an interesting part of the debate and a reflection of the heterotopic displacement of Islam:

> One does not know, of course, if these parallels are exact, or even intentional-only Mr. Khan can answer that, and perhaps even he was unaware of the influences that acted upon him. But the possible allusions may be controversial. Some might say the designer is mocking us, or playing with his religious heritage. Yet could he be trying to say something larger about the relationship between Islam and the West? Would these questions, this possible influence, even be raised if he were not a Muslim?" (Waldman 115)

3. Medieval castles and modern heterotopias

Architecture in *The Submission* becomes a metaphor for Americas attempt to manipulate spaces in a way that divides rather than bring together different people and identities. It is a space of fortress America. An apt image is mentioned by one of the architects in a meeting at Mo's work. "Henry began with history-Crusader castles, high atop Plateaus…." (43). The reference is to the medieval military campaign launched by western countries against Muslim lands with the stated aim of recapturing the Holy Lands. This heterotopia of imperial control is transposed to modern times in post 9/11 America. The symbolic meaning being confirmed is over-determined especially that the Bush administration used the word 'crusade' in the reference to the invasion of a Muslim country. The castle is a heterotopic space of imperial control. The use of the words such as crusade and crusaders castle bring in a historical dimension to the meaning of heterotopia. Heterotopia is no longer a spatial relation to other spaces but a spatiotemporal relationship that involves America as representative of the historical Eastern-Western conflict. That historical projection hundreds of years back turns Muslims into one total lot that stretches back to an ancient past. The comparisons made

between the American embassy as a medieval castle effectively introduces medievalism as a symbol of the bloody conflict worthy of that period. That discursive twist brings modern, ambivalent Muslims face to face with a militant America. Khan is sent on a mission to Kabul by his company to compete for the bid to build an American embassy to be styled as a crusader's castle. The embassy as a crusader's castle that excludes outsiders yet be in the middle of their lands is what defines the new heterotopias of control: a military and political body in a foreign land to create a sense of order for the wounded pride of the center. The new space was meant to respond to the new need for security. Thus, that defensive heterotopic space in Kabul was meant to make the point by using architecture as both a materially impregnable place as well as a symbol of Western imperial control. That stands in total contrast to the memorial garden erected in zero ground with its architectural beauty. Khan, the American Muslim architect "... daydreamed through monotonous talk of "defensive perimeters" and "pre-engineered design solutions" and imagined defying the guidelines to submit an embassy design copied from a Crusader castle. The location lacked height, but he could suggest building a hill, a promontory-a true "Design Against Terrorism" right in the middle of the city . ..." (46). It is a Focauldian Panoptican where control is exercised over the threatening 'other' and this time it is inside the ther's territory. The control this time is preemptive.

4. The body as a grave: utopia/heterotopia of the dead

Likewise the garden in the *Reluctant Fundamentalist* serves as an idyllic space where Changez and Erica meet before she slumps into apathy and a heterotopia of crisis, although the name of her dead boyfriend occurs several times. The garden here is a reminder of a severed connection between her and Chris, a connection that bordered on insanity. Even with the strong loving presence of Changez, Erica could only enjoy a utopia/heterotopia of here dead boyfriend.

My patience was rewarded the weekend before I left for Manila, when Erica asked me to join her for a picnic lunch in Central Park and I discovered that we were not to be met by anyone else. It was one of those glorious late-July afternoons in New York when a stiff wind off the Atlantic makes the trees swell and the clouds race across the sky. You know them well? Yes, precisely: the humidity vanishes as the city fills its lungs with cooler, briny air. Erica wore a straw hat and carried a wicker basket containing wine, fresh-baked bread, sliced meats, several different cheeses, and grapes- a delicious and, to my mind, rather sophisticated assortment. (67)

In the *Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Hamid introduces us to a world of the American dream where efficiency and competence are supreme through the hero of his novel Changez. Changez, a Princeton educated Pakistani embracing the American dream, hopes to use the margin as a way of getting recognition in spite of the clear otherness that marks him being 'brown' and Pakistani. According to Hetherington,

In effect, margins have come to be seen as sites of counter-hegemonic resistance to the social order. 'Other places' have become the space of Other voices. In marginal spaces, people not only raise their voices to be heard but are seen to live different, alternative lives, openly hoping that others will share in their vision or at least accept their difference (see Hetherington 1996b). In sum, the major theme of cultural geography over the past few years has been the valorizing of margins in terms of their importance as sites of resistance, protest and transgression. (7)

Both characters somehow retreat to the margins post 9/11. That marginality allows the two protagonist to maneuver. In his protracted conversation with the American friend he creates his 'space' in his city. Changez immerses himself in the New York business world with its emphasis on efficiency at a break-neck speed:

Focus on the fundamentals. This was Underwood Samson's guiding principle, drilled into us since our first day at work. It mandated a single-minded attention to financial detail, teasing out the true nature of those drivers that determine an asset's value. And that was precisely what I continued to do, more often than not with both skill and enthusiasm. Because to be perfectly honest, sir, the compassionate pangs I felt for soon-to-be-redundant workers were not overwhelming in their frequency; our job required a degree of commitment that left one with rather limited time for such distractions. (112)

He falls in love with an American woman called Erica who is left psychologically impaired by the death of her American boyfriend Chris. The world that follows is gothic and heterotopic and falls within Foucault's crisis heterotopia. I quote Foucault once more:

But these heterotopias of crisis are disappearing today and are being replaced, I believe, by what we might call heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed. Cases of this are rest homes and psychiatric hospitals, and of course prisons, and one should perhaps add retirement homes that are, as it were, on the borderline between the heterotopia of crisis and the heterotopia of deviation since, after all, old age is a crisis, but is also a deviation since in our society where leisure is the rule, idleness is a sort of deviation." (18)

For Changez, America expresses itself as a utopia for him, yet after years of living and working in America, it becomes a heterotopia through his relationship with Erica. Erica symbolizes the soulless space in America. As a woman who is fixated on the death of her past boyfriend, she is a walking dead. In order to win her love, Changez occupies the heterotopia of the living dead. While having an affair with her, Changez had to occupy a space of heterotopia and impersonate the character of her dead boyfriend:

I don't know what's wrong with me. I held her in my arms, and as we lay there, she told me I was the first man she had been with since Chris. indeed, other than Chris. Her sexuality, she said, had been mostly dormant since his death. She had only once achieved orgasm, and that, too, by *fantasizing* of him. I did not know what to say. I wanted to console her, to accompany her into her mind and allow her to be less alone. So I asked her to tell me about him, how they had come to kiss, how they had come to make love. You really want to know? she asked. I replied that I did, and so she told me. (Emphasis Mine 103)

It is only through ambivalence that he is able to achieve sexual union with Erica which symbolizes integration into American value system. It is only through strategic ambivalence that he manages to get closer to her. Yet, Erica slumps back into a heterotopia of crisis and psychological disease. The heterotopia of crisis which marks post 9/11 America is reflected in Erica's inability to make normal relationships with living people. She can only fantasize. A few days before committing suicide, she was admitted to a mental institution where Changez visits her for the final time:

> "What I had to understand about Erica, the nurse told me, was that she was in love with someone else. She knew it would be tough for me to hear, but I had to hear it "regardless. It did not matter that the person Erica was in love with was what the nurse or I might call deceased; for Erica he was alive enough, and that was the problem: it was difficult for Erica to be out in the world, living the way the nurse or I might, when in her mind she was experiencing things that were stronger and more meaningful than the things she could experience with the rest of us. So Erica felt better in a place like this, separated from the rest of us, where people could live in their minds without feeling bad about it." (Hamid 151)

Erica is obsessed with the dead and is more comfortable in the heterotopia of the deceased which offers her an augmented reality that is more meaningful to her than the ordinary experiment of life which Changez offers her.

In my bed she asked me to put my arms around her, and I did so, speaking quietly in her ear. I knew she enjoyed my stories of Pakistan, so I rambled on about my family and Lahore. When I tried to kiss her, she did not move her lips or shut her eyes. So I

shut them for her and asked, “are you missing Chris?” She nodded, and I saw tears begin to force themselves between her lashes. Then pretend, I said, I pretend I am him. I do not know why I said it; I felt overcome and it seemed, suddenly, a possible way forward. I what? I she said, but she did not open her eyes. Pretend I am him, I said again. And slowly, in darkness and in silence, we did. I do not know how to describe my experience of what happened next; I cannot, of course, claim that I was possessed, but at the same time I did not seem to be myself. It was as though *we were under a spell, transported to a world where I was Chris and she was with Chris*…. (Emphasis Mine)

Love with Erica take place in a heterotopia of deviance, a romantic affair is reduced to a necromantic affair. Changez is seduced into the American dream by the promise of success. Changez experiences conflictual feelings and responses to the ever-expanding gap between his world and the American world he immersed himself in. Heterotopia replaces utopia as he gets closer to the achievement of his American dream. The body of Erica is much like America is a heterotopia that disallows strangers who can only belong through a deviant ambivalence: Perhaps, by taking on the persona of another, I had diminished myself in my own eyes; perhaps I was humiliated by the continuing dominance, in the strange romantic triangle of which I found myself a part, of my dead rival; perhaps I was worried that I had acted selfishly and I sensed, even then, that I had done Erica some terrible harm (Hamid 121).

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, heterotopia becomes a space for contesting the competing discourses around the 9/11 attacks and their aftermath. *The Submission* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* invest in the strategic ambivalence that characterizes heterotopias. Steering away from trauma studies I concentrated on the possibilities the concept of heterotopia offers to understanding the multilayered content and symbolism of the two post 9/11 novels. Heterotopia as a Foucauldian concept established spaces that are ‘other’ in relation to a normal space. I extend that other space to include Muslims as belonging to a heterotopic garden from which they challenge an Islamophobic and divisive discourse that is affiliated to power and uses the popular media and grievances of the 9\11 families to further cut off Muslims from contribution to mainstream society. Yet, the protagonists of the two novels use strategic ambivalence to undercut that populist discourse of power. Khan, in *The Submission* by Amy Waldman creates a garden that carries consciously or unconsciously reflect a complex uncategorizable character that is neither totally Muslim and neither totally American. On the other hand, Changez in The Reluctant Fundamentalist Pakistani American shows extreme ambivalence about his Muslim identity and immerses himself in the utopic space of America. Yet he awakes to a new reality regarding his love, Erica who draws him to a heterotopic world of necrophilia. The whole of America becomes a foreign heterotopia when he leaves back home to Lahore reversing his dream and telling his story to a certain American diplomat at a Café.

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