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Navigating (In)Authenticity: A Comparative Study of Heideggerian Modes of Existence in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and the Reluctant Fundamentalist

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Abstract

Heidegger's corpus on philosophy focuses on key concepts such as individual choice, the role of "they" (the sociocultural forces) in shaping that choice, the significance of human responsibility in dealing with the circumstances he has been placed in, and the resulting (in)authenticity as a mode of existence. By connecting his philosophical reflections to the everyday mode of existence of an ordinary individual, Heidegger adopts an approach that transcends spatial and temporal constraints and assumes universal relevance across cultures, thereby advocating reconsideration of the role of social expectations and personal resolutions in shaping one's course of life. Literary works that incorporate these ideas through characters caught in webs of choices and compulsions offer meaningful insights. Given the universal scope of philosophical perspectives, the researcher re-examined themes of alienation and (in)authenticity in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1962)* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007)* through the Heideggerian lenses, evaluating the importance of global human perspectives that are often overlooked when studying literature within specific historical and geographical contexts. Furthermore, the study compares the selected works by deploying Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* to identify potential analytical gaps connected to particular contexts that a Eurocentric approach might miss. Thus, the study holds great significance for readers, as it underscores the importance of listening to inner voices when making life choices. It also elaborates on the difference between human needs and wants, and on how their failure to be addressed sensibly contributes to feelings of guilt, alienation, and dissatisfaction.

Keywords: Existence, Dasein, Choice, Authenticity, Inauthenticity, Alienation, Universalism

Territorial Inequality and the Literary Narratives

A significant contrast in perspectives on universally relevant themes is a key feature of literature from the Global North and South. Despite adhering to similar production and representation standards, authors from these regions produce works that reflect their indigenous identities, positioning them as counterparts. For example, Elizabeth's *(Pride and Prejudice, 1813)* desire for personal space and mutual understanding in marriage differs from Celis's *(The Colour Purple, 1985)* primary need to be recognised as human by her husband. Likewise, Captain Ahab's *(Moby Duck, 1851)* psychological trauma and sociocultural context after becoming disabled sharply contrast with Animal's, who, with a twisted spine *(Animal's People, 2007)*, faced the daily

challenge of finding food. These differing outlooks stem from contrasting economic, historical, sociopolitical, and geographical backgrounds. Countries in the Global North, with advanced economies and rapid technological growth, set standards against which the resources and knowledge of the Global South- marked by colonial histories, unrest, and instability are judged. This organizational pattern results in the political and cultural dominance of the Global North, often marginalizing or undervaluing indigenous art, knowledge, and alternative perspectives offered by the South (Mignolo, 2007). Geopolitical inequalities have led to the creation of an epistemic rift in the wake of disciplines that emerged at a later stage of knowledge building. Southern scholars view the theoretical tools developed by the West as inadequate and misrepresentative because of different cultural and political contexts. They argue that the essence of the indigenous literature is likely to be distorted when interpreted through Western frameworks, hence creating the risk of intellectual colonization of non-Western narratives. Contrary to this, the indigenous perspectives can help protect the integrity of native literature (Thiong'o). These critiques have propelled the development of Indigenous theoretical approaches, but some challenge this stance for dismissing the relevance of universal human experiences- such as alienation, inequality, identity struggles, marginalization and oppression- that transcend borders. Within this conflicting theoretical scenario, the concept of global citizenship and disciplines like Philosophy still struggle to expand knowledge across borders and cultures.

Philosophy's historical opposition to notions such as absolute truth, fixity and essentialism broadens its scope as both an academic discipline and an analytical tool. The centrality of human life within the philosophical corpus offers a rich scope for investigating the nature of diverse human experiences that simultaneously carry a universal significance. The close alliance between Philosophy and Literature as analytical tools to understand the diverse aspects of existence and realities surrounding it has facilitated human understanding of life and the conditions they mostly face. "The philosopher is also a writer, and the act of writing cannot be separated from philosophical thinking" (Derrida, 1982, p. 40). The connection between philosophy and literature is therefore complex. According to Terry Eagleton, criticism, which is a traditionally popular method to study literature, is itself a practical manifestation of Philosophy (1996). However, philosophy is not often cited when exploring themes like alienation, guilt, angst, authenticity, and identity that run through diasporic, postcolonial, trauma, and disability literature, challenging the human spectrum of perception and understanding. These themes are usually analyzed using theoretical tools crafted explicitly for these contexts. The interpretive and analytical approaches to studying Literature having roots in the Global South are generally more distant from using Philosophy as a reading lens because of its dominant Eurocentric outlook. This disconnect also arises from historical contexts prioritizing sociopolitical, cultural, and historical perspectives in literary analysis, often overshadowing deep philosophical approaches. Although Freud's Psychoanalysis, Viktor's logotherapy, and Marx's capitalism are popular methods often used in these areas, philosophy rarely serves as the main analytical perspective. A likely reason for this reluctance to engage with philosophical analysis of literary texts produced in the Global South is the dominance of philosophical frameworks rooted in the Western canon of thought.

Critics from the Global South usually contend that a Eurocentric philosophical perspective, with little or no exposure to the human experience in the South, may not adequately represent the unique viewpoints and indigenous character of texts from the Global South. Furthermore, the rise of postcolonial studies has raised serious questions about the reliability of Eurocentric theoretical frameworks for analyzing the literature of the Global South. Scholars like Spivak have expressed important concerns regarding Western theoretical systems. In her foundational essay, *Can the*

Subaltern Speak? (1988), she criticized the limitations of Western philosophical approaches for their failure to align with the epistemologies that develop in the Global South. They suggest a tendency to "speak for" the non-European while filtering their voices through Western perspectives. However, some critics from these regions also support using these philosophical tools, as they can help identify liminal and interstitial spaces in Global South literature, where new frameworks can be constructed with local, global, or local relevance. In his research on African literature and culture, the British-American philosopher and theorist Kwame Anthony Appiah recommends using Western philosophical approaches, as this cosmopolitan perspective can enrich understanding across cultures. "We should see Western and African philosophical traditions as part of a wider conversation in which one tradition can often illuminate and enrich the understanding of another" (1992, p. 174). Aijaz Ahmad also favours adopting Western frameworks to achieve greater theoretical clarity about local ideologies. According to him, an outright rejection of these frameworks may risk ignoring fundamental global realities of oppression and struggle (1992). By tailoring these frameworks to cultural contexts, a "strategic essentialism" (qtd in Ritzer & Ryan, 2012, p. 193) can create a space where hybridity, resistance, and negotiation work more effectively to serve indigenous objectives. Applying a philosophical framework to the study of literary texts that categorically represent the Global North and South can help evaluate the validity of these claims.

This study explicitly focuses on the critical reading of the protagonists' lives in the selected texts representing the Global North and the Global South, using Heidegger's concept of (in)authenticity as a lens. The concept is of significant importance in the study of literature, where characters embark on a quest to understand the nature of their Being. His philosophical interpretation of existence, modes of existence, and the significance of human intention and action in revealing their true selves sparks an engaging debate as it examines fictional characters who break the boundaries of convention and enter realms of deviance and experimentation.

Since the central part of Martin Heidegger's philosophical body of work explores the fundamental questions relating to human existence and its contours, one may explore it as a reading lens to study literature in the global human context, irrespective of any cultural and geographical divide. In his seminal work, *Being and Time (1927)*, Martin Heidegger reflects on the profound question of *being*, its corporality and the transformative essence. While examining the philosophical dimensions of existence, he initiates an interesting debate on the scope of "to be" (existence) and supplements it by concentrating on the peculiar mode of human existence he calls *Dasein*. "*Dasein* is an entity that does not just occur among other entities. Instead, it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very *Being*, that *Being* is an issue for it" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 32). Since humans are the only living entities that not only question the nature of their Being but also actively shape it, Heidegger presents them as the best examples of *Dasein*. According to him, *Dasein* is material and dependent on time. He rejects the idea of *Dasein's* existence "in" time; instead, he makes it appear dynamic, craving change and destined to transform (1927/1962). The lived experiences of the past and the present, combined with a keen awareness of finitude that accepts death as the ultimate reality, work together to shape and define a mode of existence for *Dasein*. Heidegger classifies these modes of existence into two primary states: the "authentic" and "inauthentic." According to him, inauthentic existence is a way of living that *Dasein* adopts when it conforms to the prearranged code of life accepted by society. Conversely, authentic existence refers to the unique way of living that *Dasein* creates for itself, shaped by its highly individualized view of life. (1927/1962).

The Trans-Spatial Tendencies of Literary and Philosophical Tropes

Whether created in the North or South, the literature explores themes of existence, authenticity, alienation, identity, oppression, and redemption. from Oedipus to Macbeth, Raskolnikov to Estragon, Jenny to McMurphy, and Changez to Andrew, the lives of these characters are torn between anxiety and desire as their being is oriented towards questioning the general nature of existence and is perturbed by their experiences while searching for the correct answers. They seem haunted by the urgency of finding answers to these questions and are often engaged in conflict with themselves as well as the circumstances that surround their quest. The tension between the calls of *they* (society) and conscience creates a poignant atmosphere in which emotions such as angst and guilt arise, acting as forces that either nurture or eliminate their anxieties. The struggle of the characters to attain an authentic existence while confronting dilemmas of identity, success, freedom and inauthenticity can be understood as part of *Dasein's* trajectory towards culminating selfhood within the Heideggerian context. A comparative study of literary texts from diverse cultural, historical, and political backgrounds can be valuable in further exploring these issues across different contexts. The present study thus deploys textual analysis as the research method to study Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1962)* and Mohsin Hamid's globally acclaimed novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007),* as literary manifestations of Heidegger's take on an individual's struggle with (in)authentic modes of existence.

Hamid has emerged as a powerful voice among Pakistani diasporic writers in the post-9/11 literary scene. With his keenly crafted, realistic style, sharp proclivity for magical realism, deep understanding of the complexities of the human psyche resulting in conflict and fascination with authentic and innovative narrative techniques, he has earned recognition as a writer who engages readers on a personal level. The interconnectedness and fluidity of the modern world in Hamid's work establish him as a writer capable of capturing the essence of the turbulent times we share on the planet. With his profound sense of empathy, he demolishes the boundaries between real and fictitious, thus making his readers relate to his characters on a personal level. His characters, therefore, become the emblems of the universal human condition. To do justice to the role of representing universal human emotions, struggles and frustrations, we see characters placed in situations that demand an exposition of their status as beings for whom the question of *Being* is always complex. They rarely end as they begin, and their journey between these extremes creates room to interpret them as Heidegger's *Dasein* struggling with (in)authenticity. Thus, when viewed as *Daseins*, Hamid's characters are engaged in struggles against internal and external conflicts, constantly striving to reach the true essence of their *Being.*

Ken Kesey holds a significant place among American writers as a literary genius. His works offer a strong critique of power structures inscribed in social institutions, which push individuals into the quagmire of social conformity and obedience. Kesey's avant-gardism, which exposes the institutional desire to control individuals by producing uniform, docile bodies, sets his image as a writer who favours individual agency and cultural pluralism. He was one of those literary giants among American men of letters whose personality and literary compositions both embodied the spirit of the age he lived through. While exploring the patterns of human psychology, Kesey seems to blur the dividing line between the normal and the abnormal, offering a fluid space where public and private definitions and explanations for right and wrong float freely, allowing the readers to

reflect on their significance in their personal lives. In his book *The Western Canon (1994)*, Harold Bloom describes Kesey as a unique writer who can dramatise the struggles of those who seek authenticity despite societal pressures and refuse to conform, even at high personal cost. The ever-present conflict between individuals' desire for agency and the oppressive social structures plays the role of a catalyst in the constrained lives of Kesey's characters, who are seen striving recklessly to overcome their fear of society by reclaiming their identities as independent subjects. This regenerative journey offers scope for a comparative analysis by deploying Heideggerian concepts of authentic and inauthentic existence.

According to Heidegger, *Dasein* is always surrounded by the possibility of falling prey to the pressure of societal structures or the external influences he calls "das Man" or "they." These external forces ("they") condition *Dasein's* mind and prescribe what and how it sees the world around (Heidegger, 1927/1962). The pervasive influence of "they" often blurs the difference between the apparent and actual nature of man's needs. Under the influence of "they," *Dasein* mistakenly prioritizes its material needs over its higher needs, which involve exploring the Self and putting its discoveries into practice. Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" places self-actualization at the top to fortify its significance for the ideal of self-accomplishment. "What a man can be, he must be" refers to the desire for self-fulfillment in a man, namely, to the tendency for him to become actually what he is potentially (Maslow, 1943, p 46). However, *Dasein's* pledge to comply with normative guidelines draws his attention. It distracts it from the process of self-realization that may, in the long run, lead to the sublime yet distant ideal of self-actualization.

Dasein's Temporality and Its Implications for the Protagonists

The tension between authentic and inauthentic existence is experienced differently by Changez in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and McMurphy in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. We may attribute this difference to their distinct temporal orientations. According to Heidegger, "Temporality makes up the primordial meaning of Dasein's Being, and it is in terms of temporality that the authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole can be presented existentially". According to him, authenticity involves recognizing one's temporal existence, which means engaging in meaningful action in the present (fallenness) while integrating the past (thrownness) and future (projection). *Dasein's* ascent to authenticity is conditioned on combining past, present and future meaningfully (1927/1962, p. 374). Viewing Changez and McMurphy through this lens of temporality allows for an insightful understanding of their trajectories toward an authentic mode of *Being*. Changez's "thrownness" (past) as a Pakistani and Princeton graduate initially projects him as an aspirant of the American Dream of success and worldliness in the pre-9/11 era, a period that signals a phase of inauthenticity in his life. However, the later period, where he is a disillusioned post-9/11 individual questioning American idealism and eager to embrace his political identity as a Pakistani, can be interpreted as his rise to authenticity and personhood. His political awakening fully integrates his past, present, and future possibilities, positioning him for authentic existence where death is always imminent. Similarly, McMurphy was thrown into society and later into a psychiatric ward with rigid, dehumanizing rules; his past and present depict him as a non-conformist. This can be viewed as an expression of his authentic self. Nevertheless, as the narrative proceeds, we notice a decentralization of interests in McMurphy, qualifying him as a potential candidate for authentic existence he has yet to descend into it fully. The evolution in his character is indicated through a shift from "I" to "We," along with the camaraderie he develops with fellow patients, which can be seen as his movement away from a self-centered definition of authenticity towards a selfless pursuit of it. McMurphy's initial motive for playing a game in the hospital ward was personal amusement and advantage. However, witnessing his fellow patients in

a state of perpetual suffering and helplessness awakens in him a spirit of collective good leading to an integration of his past, present, and future possibilities, ultimately positioning him on the plane of pure authenticity, though at the cost of his life.

While Changez's existential anxiety stems from his foreignness in a capitalistic society, McMurphy's arises from his inability to assimilate within the native repressive social structure. Changez's sense of true self gains clarity when confronted with others in an exotic sociocultural context. However, McMurphy presents an individualized sense of self from the very beginning of the narrative. Despite this apparent contrast, they seem to endorse each other's situations when viewed as dependents of "they." Heidegger's emphasis on the role of "they" depicts it as a force that intimately collaborates to delay *Dasein's* encounter with its authentic self. The early phase of Changez's life in America, where he strives to assimilate into American corporate culture as a Princetonian and later as a professional, can be interpreted as a response to the calls of "the they." His identity as a Pakistani and his Indigenous cultural background complement his authentic self. However, we see him attempting to betray these aspects to fit into the American scenario. His acute desire to adapt to a foreign lifestyle and his growing need for external validation contaminate his self-perception. The inversion of priorities reflected in assertions like, "I wanted my colleagues to like me, and I sought to earn their respect through the quality of my work" (Hamid, 2007, p. 45) reinforces the idea of a self that subjects itself to social "hailing," initiating the process of "interpellation." The subsequent experiences of his tangled self can be interpreted as the outcome of his choice for Changez.

Kesey's McMurphy, on the other hand, appears to grapple with a struggle for authenticity rooted in his clearly defined sense of individuality, which conflicts with the sociocultural context in which he was born and raised. Unlike Changez, he is not wrestling with the impositions of his inauthenticity, which is masked as a choice to live in a foreign country. Instead, he contends with a system that seeks to undermine his individuality by imposing a life of discipline and compliance. Since "to become authentic, Dasein must free itself from the they, but this involves a constant struggle because the They seeks to level down all potentialities-for-Being to the least common denominator" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 127), McMurphy seems unwilling to sacrifice his authenticity under the "hailing" of societal demands embodied in the character of Nurse Ratched and fights hard to resist the "interpellation" of the code of discipline designed by others to condition his mind and subjugate his body. Contrary to the defiance that McMurphy shows in the face of the oppressive hospital system, the other patients are interpellated into a posture of submission and denial of agency. Their lives are mechanized to reinforce the constraining influence of "they". "The Big Nurse can set the wall clock at whatever speed she wants by just turning one of those dials in the steel door; she's given to turning it up slow in the morning, tearing the feel of the morning clean out of you... Then she turns it up fast, and you can't keep up." (Kesey, 1962, p. 55). The compulsion for an inauthentic existence strips the patients of their true identities.

Dasein's infatuation with "they" and unconscious willingness to subordinate his authenticity to "the they" obscures his sense of responsibility. "It remains indefinite who is 'really' responsible. The "they" presents every judgment and decision as its own while disburdening the particular *Dasein* of its responsibility" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 165). *Dasein's* judgment remains suspended under the all-pervading influence of societal structures embodied in persons and institutions. Changez's growing infatuation with Americanness makes him oblivious to the responsible role he is meant to play in countering the influence of "they," i.e., his company and Erica. His weakening ties with his native country reveal themselves as natural signs of his

alienating self. He is prepared to abandon Pakistaniness to pursue his efforts to Americanise himself. In doing so, he confirms his status as an upholder of the norms of immediate society, a *Dasein* who embraces alienation by opting for an inauthentic mode of existence. "I did not think of myself as a Pakistani, but as an Underwood Samson trainee" (Hamid, 2007, p. 78). The elusive nature of the affair with Erica, "the heavy-handed, allegorical figure", parallels Changez's overly romanticized connection with American society. His desire to win Erica was an extension of his need to validate the calls of "the they." "But at that moment, my thoughts were not with my country, but with Erica's hand resting on mine" (Hamid, 2007, p. 80). The significant turn in the sociopolitical landscape of his native country and its direct impact on his immediate family become insignificant to Changez in the company of Erica. His budding fascination with her can be interpreted as an expression of his growing alienation, the ultimate pit for *Dasein* while pursuing an inauthentic mode of existence. "When Dasein is absorbed in the world of its concern that is, at the same time, in its Being-with-one-another in the 'they' it is not itself." This state of alienation equates to a state of otherness. However, the other is not an external entity, but one's true self. "Everyone is the other, and no one is himself" (Heidegger, 1927/19762, p. 128). The suspension of Changez's alienation results from the conflict between his need to endorse the demands of an inauthentic existence and his surging desire for authenticity. It operates at two levels in Changez's life: alienation from his indigeneity and, later, from his ideal of Americanness. Initially, it resembles a choice, an outcome of the desire to adapt himself to the foreign culture and norms to acquire a new corporate identity, a descent into the realm of inauthentic existence. However, the post-9/11 context adds a new dimension. The initial state of alienation that Changez experiences in pre-9/11 America intensifies when coupled with the interstitial experiences of angst and guilt in the changed American scenario. "When I returned home ... I realized how deep and wide the chasm was that divided me from the Americans" (Hamid, 2007, p. 95). With this second phase of imposed alienation, Changez's homecoming begins and it can be interpreted as his transition to authentic existence in the Heideggerian sense.

Sense of Finitude as Prelude to Authenticity

The Heideggerian concept of death or finitude is highly relevant to the discussion of Changez's trajectory from an inauthentic to an authentic mode of existence. Confrontation with death or finitude is inevitable for *Dasein* to ignite in it a love for authentic living.

> Death is a possibility of being which Dasein itself has to take over in every case. With death, Dasein stands before itself in its own most potentiality-for-Being. This is a possibility; the issue is nothing less than Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Its death is the possibility of no longer being able to be there (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 290).

The sense of finitude or an acute realization of death as the ultimate end of human life is an essential attribute of *Dasein's* trajectory toward authenticity. Death is *Dasein's* "ownmost, non-relational, insuperable possibility" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 294). The intense realization of death is a mandatory condition for boarding the plane of authentic existence. The confrontation with finitude or limitations of one's existence endows *Dasein* with an "anticipatory resoluteness", an attribute that overpowers his fears, liberates his soul, and sets it on an authentic journey. Heidegger's theorization of death can be used as a metaphor for Changez's withering fascination with Americanness, the death of the desire to adapt to American life and culture, and the end of efforts to escape his native identity. The trajectory from an endorser of the norms of American society to its challenger marks the climax of Changez's narrative, altering his status from a fascinator to a traitor.

A unique attribute of Hamid's characters is their willingness to confront the dilemma of inauthenticity. The alienation into which characters are forced for being "Other" opens a new dimension for the subjectively oriented way of life. While tormented by the intensity of this alienated self, the characters recognize the absurdity of their situation. The space between the authentic and the inauthentic, where alienation is conceived, also becomes a haven for guilt and the subsequent emergence of epiphany a sudden realization of the need to heed the call of conscience. "Conscience summons Dasein's self from its lostness in the 'they'" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 57). Changez understands the futility of his attempts to Americanise himself. He acknowledges his guilt for abandoning his Indigenous identity by growing a beard, an act that signifies his reconnection to the personalized idea of doing. "I had heard tales of the discrimination … but I chose to ignore them … my beard was, perhaps, a form of protest on my part, a symbol of my identity" (Hamid, 2007, p. 120).

According to Heidegger, authenticity, or the authentic mode of existence, defies the demands of an inauthentic life symbolized by social norms and institutions. By choosing a subjectively designed and approved mode of living, *Dasein* resolutely rejects the socially prescribed codes of "they". Authenticity implies actualizing one's uniqueness, a responsible expression of personal preferences defined and directed by inner voices, indifferent to social pressures and attractions. An authentic existence requires recognition and demonstration of one's uniqueness, genuine expression, and exploration of the possibilities that arise while traversing the road of individuality. *Dasein* is not born with an inherent idea of its authentic self. Its materiality, the primary condition of its *Being*, and the inevitability of the circumstances he faces shape his notion of "Self". His uniqueness is either attributed to dialogue with or struggle against what significant others wish to see in him (Taylor, 1989). When examined in the context of diasporic identities, the notions of an authentic self and existence become pretty complex. The notion of "Self" is complex when studied in diasporic contexts. Though nourished by cultural pluralism, it does not sever ties with the indigeneity and individuality that come along. Since diasporic *Dasein* is exposed to a variety of experiences, it undergoes multiple transformations before culminating in (in)authentic existence. He must liberate his indigenous self as a prerequisite to achieving his authentic self. Upon entering the corporate culture of the "Other," Changez initially decides to rely on his exotic charm and native identity as a Pakistani as a marker of distinction among his peers. "I was aware of an advantage conferred upon me by my foreignness... an exotic charm that made me stand out in the eyes of potential employers" (Hamid, 2007, p. 40). However, the pride in his "exotic charm" and indigeneity that wins him a position with Samson Woods is soon substituted by an overwhelming desire in Changez to erase his indigenous identity. The resolution to stay committed to the norms of the "Other" captures *Dasein's* whole attention, weakening its ties with authenticity. Instead, we see it yielding to the parameters of accomplishment and success set by the "Other."

We can see a marked difference in the way the notion of "Self" is conceived by the diasporic and natives while traversing the paths of personhood. The nature of sociopolitical circumstances and the Institutional structures play a key role in shaping the idea of "Self" for people living in their homeland. McMurphy's sense of Self appears to align with existential philosophy, as a continuous expression of defiance markedly influences it. His rebellious acts become a gateway to pursuing authenticity and autonomy. His bold revolt against the hospital's discipline, personified by the authoritative Nurse Ratched, symbolizes his unfaltering passion for independence and freedom. Moreover, his self-assured manner also motivates the other patients in the ward to react against the inhuman treatment they have been subjected to. The proposed fishing trip transforms into a pilgrimage for genuine self-expression. The remark, "You're not crazy, are you? Well, I didn't say

you were. But you are, though. You're just not the same kind of crazy as the rest of us. You're crazy in the ways I like" (Kesey, 1962, p.205) exemplifies the awakening of "Self" among McMurphy's peers.

We can notice considerable fluctuations in the character of Changez in terms of his inclinations, preferences and inspirations. This expression of inconsistency not only introduces an interesting angle to Changez' character, but also opens an interesting dimension in which the concept of (in)authenticity itself can be problematized. Changez's inclination towards inauthenticity and the subsequent retreat question the validity of dividing existence into two categorical modes. There are numerous points in Changez's narrative where he breaches the dominant modes by stepping into the interstice, a transitional space between authentic and inauthentic living. While Heidegger does not explicitly discuss the interstice or in-between space, however, the relevant concepts like angst, alienation, and finitude incorporated by Heidegger in his thesis facilitate our understanding of the nature of *Dasein's* experiences in the interstice. We often see Hamid's characters facing intense psychological setbacks while inhabiting the interstice. An analytical focus on this phase of their lives contributes immensely to understanding the implications of their trajectories as Heidegger's *Daseins*. Changez's fascination with American culture, its diversity and inclusivity was the first stage of his journey towards inauthenticity. "I was immediately a New Yorker, and at home in this environment of countless languages, ethnicities, and orientations…able to convince anyone that I belonged in Manhattan" (Hamid, 2007, p. 33). His desire for integration stemmed from a profound realization of the pluralism inherent in American society, making it easier for people to navigate their lives. One may assert that his fascination with Americanness, owing to its diverse and pluralistic orientation, symbolized an aspect of his unique, thinking "Self" seeking an ideal space where individual differences are insignificant. Since *Dasein's* authenticity operates at both individual and social levels, it also implicates one's trueness to a personalized code of life that may or may not receive eternal validation. We may interpret it as his expression of authenticity clad in inauthenticity.

Changez's affair with Erica also reveals his preference for an inauthentic mode of existence as he pursues his dream of integrating into American society. His willingness to adopt the persona of Erica's late fiancée during their intimacy symbolizes his readiness to replace his identity in pursuit of the American dream of success and fulfilment. She represents the beauty and fragility of American life, which ultimately reveals itself to Changez. She becomes a means for Changez's emotional and metaphorical journey from the desire of assimilation to alienation. In this way, she also serves as a pivotal point where Changez's desire to change the course of his life surfaces most intensely. His farewell to Erica parallels his departure from the ideals of success and dignity he associates with American culture and society. "I resolved to leave … my sense of self-worth was in my own hands and not subordinated to the will of others." (Hamid, 2007, p. 190)

In *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Kesey's protagonist, Randle McMurphy, contrasts with Hamid's Changez, as he is caught against his will in an oppressive environment from the start of the narrative. He is forced to adapt to an inauthentic mode of existence offered to him within the confines of a ward in a mental hospital. The repressive hospital apparatus embodied by Nurse Ratched constantly works to control the individuality of the ward patients by subjecting them to conform to hospital rules. The novel presents a miniature picture of the dehumanizing aspects of authority and control that seek to rob individuals of their uniqueness and force them into an inauthentic mode of existence. "Discipline is a technique for achieving the subjugation of the body," writes Foucault in *Discipline and Punishment* (1977, p. 194). Through fear, surveillance,

and constant policing to maintain discipline in the hospital, the authorities successfully subjugate not only the bodies but also the minds of the patients. Their bodies are conditioned to act and respond in a given manner, and their minds are trained to think according to the hospital's policy. When viewed through a Heideggerian lens, the hospital transforms into "they", a socially designed structure and a "particular system of power/knowledge" that confounds individuals interpreted as "anomalous" (deviants) by a broader system designed and operated on the principles of normalcy. The role of choice is significantly emphasized by Heidegger in his thesis on *Dasein* and his "fallenness" to or resistance against "the they." Despite the societal pressures regarding norms, ideals, and obligations that work subconsciously in *Dasein's* life, the option for choice always remains available to him. He may try to align his choices with his inclinations to shape his mode of existence, which can be authentic or inauthentic. According to Heidegger, inauthenticity is a practical manifestation of subconscious influences, a kind of interpellation that *Dasein* undergoes while living with "the they." In the inauthentic mode, *Dasein* remains delusional about its choices unless confronted with an epiphany that again manifests as a desire and choice for authenticity (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Hubert Dreyfus argues that external influences do not operate continuously and unconsciously. Pervasive societal structures and cultural contexts directly and heavily shape *Dasein's* choices. (1991) Changez's choice to adapt to American society can be interpreted in this light. The choices he makes, whether consciously or under subconscious influences, navigate his journey to a meaningful existence. He was a product of a society where success was measured by money, status, and power. In his society, America was considered a dream place to realise the ideals of success and prosperity. He came from a declining but once elite family in Pakistan and believed that his accomplishments in America would serve as a gateway to restoring his family's lost status. "This is a dream come true. Princeton made everything possible for me, and I was determined to be worthy of it" (Hamid, 2007, p. 60). Chief Bromden's choice for a dumb and deaf life in the mental hospital in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest was the result of rejection that mutilated his sense of Self and pushed him to an inauthentic life. "It wasn't me that started acting deaf; it was people that first started acting like I was too dumb to hear or see or say anything at all." (Kesey, 1962, p. 105)

However, the dignity and uniqueness of Hamid's *Dasein* lie in its ability to counter its "Other" with a resolution to reorient his Being, since being is not a static entity. It always has the agency to transform. Changez's sense of alienation continues to aggravate in the post-9/11 scenario. His eagerness to replace the primary markers of his indigenous identity, such as his style of conversation and way of living, serves as a practical demonstration of his alienated self. "I ignored as best I could the rumours I overheard at work … I attempted to act and speak, as much as my dignity would permit, more like an American" (Hamid, 2007, p. 55). *Dasein's* desperate attempts to maintain his space in the American corporate circle deepen his sense of alienation. "I was a modern-day janissary, a servant of the American empire … willing to betray himself to survive" (Hamid, 2007, p.160). The sense of finitude or an acute realisation of death as the ultimate end of human life is an essential attribute of *Dasein's* trajectory toward authenticity. Death is *Dasein's* "ownmost, non-relational, insuperable possibility" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 294). Heidegger calls the confrontation with death a mandatory condition for boarding the plane of authentic existence. The confrontation with finitude or the limitations of one's existence endows *Dasein* with an "anticipatory resoluteness", an attribute that overpowers his fears, liberates his soul, and sets it on an authentic journey.

The moments of authenticity continue to visit Changez despite the overwhelming influence of the inauthentic mode of existence he is trying to adopt. His spontaneous reaction upon seeing the

planes hit the World Trade Centre reveals the tensions surrounding his identity and sense of self. He was neither shocked nor displeased to see the emblems of American pride and superiority crumbling to the ground. Instead, a smile spread across his face, the first explicit sign of the rebellion his soul had long planned. "I smiled … my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased" (Hamid, 2007, p. 120). His smile had a cathartic impact on his *Being*, oscillating for a long time between satisfaction and fascination. It symbolized the zenith of his conflicts, a transgressive "jouissance" (Butler, 1997), the forbidden pleasure directing his path to authenticity. We may interpret this sensation of "jouissance" against a power regime that considers itself "super" as an expression of Changez's self-awakening from slumber. The scene symbolizes the cultural divide between the Global South and the Global North, specifically America, the leading country of the Global North. It further underscores the connection between indigeneity and authenticity. Resistance against normative frameworks that evoke jouissance can be interpreted as genuine expressions of self (Butler, 1997). The scene also represents the eternal cultural rift between the Global South and the Global North. Moreover, it reestablishes the connection between authenticity and indigeneity. By contrast, McMurphy and his fellows experience "Jouissance" while rebelling against a power structure that was the product of their native system, the symbolic order represented by Nurse Ratched. Their trajectory to authenticity thus culminates in struggle, not against a foreign culture, but against a system that was their own yet alien. "For the first time, the patients felt they were men, not machines" (Kesey, 16, p. 103).

Conclusion

We may conclude the discussion by restating that Changez trajectory from self-centered adherent of norm to authentic autonomous subject, and McMurphy's transformation from an individual focusing on the self-interest to someone more concerned about collective interest while overcoming the controlling emotions of fear, fascination, and repulsion, establish their status as Heidegger's *Daseins* choosing authenticity and self-satisfaction to anxiety that comes with inauthentic mode of *Being*. Their stories entail the idea of Dasein's temporality and its oscillation between need and want before culminating in authenticity. They are seen trapped within the confined and comfortable zones of inauthenticity, into the situations where McMurphy's reckless bravado for personal gain and Changeze' polished assurances of global capitalism Having operated within the confined or comfortable zone of inauthenticity, McMurphy, driven by reckless bravado for personal gain, and Changez, with polished assurances of global capitalism, demand a reorientation of their priorities and a clear stance regarding the status of their existence. Thus, turning their present into a crucible for truth quite inadvertently. Changez's withdrawal from assimilating into American culture and McMurphy's rebellion are not just acts of personal defiance, but more profound and meaningful acts of rebellion against institutional and ideological pressures. Hence, when seen through Heidegger's designed lens of (in)authenticity, the characters of Changez and McMurphy mirror common human dilemmas and the general nature of human struggles, which intersect through choices, sacrifices, and the pursuit of satisfaction; thus reasserting the global significance of philosophical perspectives.

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