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Application of Salad Bowl Theory and Melting Pot Theory on the Short Story "My Son The Fanatic" by Hanif Kureishi

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Abstract

Religion is always a topic of discussion for those people who have migrated from their society to the other society. Even they are Muslims, Jews, Christians or belongs to any other religion; it is very hard for them to follow their religion in a new society. When a person or family migrates from one country to the other country, they always face a change in the customs and traditions of that very society. Now for such person or family there is two type of theories in this world; first is Salad Bowl Theory and Second is Melting Pot theory. It is a universal rule that in a new place either one should adopt the customs and traditions of that society or continue life with the same customs and traditions as he /she has learned in his/her community. This research deals with the story of a family who has migrated from Pakistan to London.

Keywords: Salad Bowl Theory, Melting Pot Theory, Immigrants, Culture, Custom, and Tradition

1. Introduction

This story is about a father who is worried about the change in behavior and attitude of his son. The story revolves around two major characters; Parvez, the father, and Ali, the son. This family belongs to Lahore, Pakistan, but migrated to London. The family is in London for more than twenty years. After several years father feels a change in his son that he is throwing away his belongings and even left his girlfriend without any reason. First, he shares this problem with his male friends and then with a prostitute named Bettina. His male friends suggested him that, "Ali was taking drugs and selling his possessions to pay for them." After a complete search of son's room, he finds nothing unusual or any drugs.

Bettina told him that don't take tension and just observe your child and find physical changes in Ali. After the observation of few days, Parvez comes to know that Ali has grown a beard. After some days early morning Parvez comes to know that Ali is saying his Fajar prayer. After a complete satisfaction that his son is not taking any drugs, he decided to talk with his son about his future plans and this sudden change in his life. Both met in a hotel, but Parvez got nervous and started drinking alcohol. There began an exchange of hard sentences from both sides and Parvez left the place. After few days Bettina and Parvez were driving in the taxi and met Ali, they offer him to sit with them. On the way again there started an exchange of words between Ali and Bettina. Bettina feels insulted and left the taxi, while it was running. After reaching home, Parvez got nervous and moved into his son's room. Ali was saying the prayer at that time, and Parvez started beating him even Ali bleeds. Ali did not show any resistance, but in the end, Ali asks his father "Who is fanatic now."

2. Research Questions:

- What are the various effects of migration on the immigrants?
- What are the problems of immigrants in other society?
- What type of changes in behavior and attitude immigrants faces?

3. Objectives:

- To find out the various effects of migration on immigrants.
- To find out the problems of immigrants in other society.
- To find out the different type of changes in behavior and attitude in the immigrants.

4. Methodology

This research is related to the short story "My Son The Fanatic" by Hanif Kureishi. This research is analytical as well as descriptive in nature. The researchers have analyzed the short story by applying the Salad Bowl Theory and Melting Pot theory on it. Data is collected after a deep study of the dialogues of the two main characters; Parvez and his son Ali.

5. Literature Review

Frank Bean and Gillian Steves (2003) observed that "the modern American welfare state was the heels of what was then the largest surge in immigration in American history."

Nina Bjornsson (1999) asserts that "the fear, at times bordering on hysteria, of immigrant blood tainting the national body of the white, Anglo-Saxon majority is an unreasonable response to an illusory threat."

Winthrop Jordan in *White Over Black* (1968) has pointed out that, "As America grew from a colony into a republic, the dichotomy of slave versus free, black versus white started to emerge and European immigrants started to see themselves in opposition to "black" and "slave."

Stuart Hall (1997) states, "The retreat of many cultures towards "closure" against foreigners, intruders, aliens, and "others" is part of the same process of purification."

Lisa Lowe (1996) has argued, "cultural productions emerging out of the contradictions of immigrant marginality...would illegitimately locate the immigrant before history or exempt the "immigrant from history."

Gilbert Muller (1999) argues that "For immigrants, the United States is the "promised land" where dreams come true and where such newcomers "embrace democratic vistas and transcend national meanings: opportunity, social mobility, self-reliance, the dreams inherent in their new Promised Land."

Mae Ngai (2004) asserts that "Alien citizens are "persons who are American by virtue of birth in the United States, but who are presumed to be foreign by the mainstream of American culture and, at times, by the state."

George Sanchez (1993) states, "Ethnicity was not a fixed set of customs packed in a suitcase with other belongings brought from the mother country, but rather a collective identity that emerged from daily experience in the United States."

6. Analysis of the Short Story:

Salad Bowl Theory and Melting pot theory both are about the identity or lost of identity.

6.1. Salad Bowl Theory:

When we cut few vegetables into small pieces and mix them in a bowl, then it is known as the salad. But the important thing about the salad is that all the ingredients didn't lose their identity even they can be seen clearly and easily can be judged that which piece of vegetable is this. According to Salad Bowl Theory, immigrants continue their life with the same customs and traditions as they were practicing in their country. There is no need to lost their original identity in a new country.

6.2. Melting Pot Theory:

Crucible is a big pot in which we melt different metals at very high temperature. When we mix two or more metals at

very high temperature a new product can be produced. The new product entirely differs from the ingredients of the product even we can't separate the parts of the new product. For example when we mix milk, sugar and few beans of coffee in a pot and boil it on a particular temperature new product forms which differ from the ingredients and we are unable to separate the components from a mug of coffee. Same is the case of Melting Pot theory, according to this theory immigrants should adopt the culture and customs and traditions of a new country. To survive in a new country, it is paramount to lost their original identity.

Now when we analyze the dialogues of the two main characters of the short story we come to know that one is the follower of Salad Bowl theory and second is the follower of Melting Pot theory.

6.3. Analysis of the Data:

In the very start of the story, father is worried about his son that he is giving away his fashionable dresses and also left his girlfriend.

"Parvez found a torn shopping bag that contained not only gold toys but computer disks, videotapes, new books, and fashionable clothes..... Also without explanation, Ali had parted from the English girlfriend."

A father who is Muslim and a follower of Islam is worried about his son that he has left his girlfriend. This shows that Parvez is for making girlfriend who is not allowed in Islam. This is also a sign that Parvez is no more following his religion and the teachings of Islam.

Parvez is a taxi driver. First, he hesitates to tell the condition of his son to his friends, but one night after returning from a film show he tells whole the story to his friend.

" 'I can't understand it! ' he burst out. 'Everything is going from his room. And I can't talk to him anymore. We were not father and son - we were brothers! Where has he gone? Why he is torturing me? "

Now Parvez's friend told him that it is quite clear that

"Ali was taking drugs and selling his possessions to pay for them. That was why his bedroom was being emptied."

Now Parvez contacts with his friend Bettina, a prostitute. They know each other for three years.

"He could talk to her about things he'd never be able to discuss with his own wife."

This shows that in his life Parvez has more importance for a prostitute then his real wife.

After this Bettina told him that it is not a matter of worry, such type of change in behavior and attitude is common in the young generation. Bettina gives him pictures of different kinds of pills, syringes, powder, etc. which were used by young generation as drugs. Parvez searches the room of Ali in his absence and observes him while eating and check his body temperature while touching him. But after the observation of several days, he reported Bettina that there is nothing abnormal, and there are no signs of drugs in Ali's room. After few day when Parvez comes home late at night, he listened to the alarm from Ali's room. He immediately moves to Ali's room and peeps into the room from a hole in the door. Here Parvez comes to know that Ali is saying his Fajar prayer and after this, he started reciting Koran.

Here Parvez recalls his life when he was in Lahore and thinks about the punishment given by Maulvi. When all the

taxi drivers and Parvez sit together, they discuss local mullahs

"In fact, they made jokes about the local mullahs walking around with their caps and breads....."

In all the religions it an evil practice to make jokes of religious scholars or leaders, even in Islam it is considered as a sin.

Now Parvez is fully satisfied from his son and decided to take a night with his son to talk about different matters and to told him stories about their family in Pakistan. Now Parvez tells his worst experience of life to Bettina that, while sitting in the hotel with his son the waiter, whom Parvez knew, brought in front of Parvez his usual whisky-and-water. Parvez got nervous and started drinking whiskey; meanwhile, he also asks questions about his upcoming exams. Here Ali made a face and asked his father

"Don't you know its wrong to drink alcohol?"

Parvez explains his son that

"Surely it wasn't a crime to have a drink when he wanted one?"

Ali replies

"But it is forbidden."

Parvez replies

"I know."

Ali responds

"And so is gambling, isn't it?"

Parvez replies

"Yes. But surely we are only human?"

In almost all the religions alcohol is not allowed but in many Western countries, it is a legal business. Here Ali is trying to convince his father that his habit of drinking alcohol is wrong and against the sayings of Islam but Parvez is making lame excuses for drinking alcohol. This made Parvez drink more and more whiskey, and he starts drinking one after the other glass. It is important to note that Parvez is worried about his son that either he is taking drugs or not, but he used to drink alcohol and many other versions of alcohol.

In the middle of the meal, Parvez got so nervous that he lost his temper and threw a plate on the floor. He did not bear it that his son tells him the difference between right and wrong.

Parvez asked Ali

"When have I had time to be wicked?"

Ali explains

"Parvez had not, in fact, lived a good life. He had broken countless rules of the Koran."

When Parvez asked his son Ali to give an example where he had broken the rules of the Koran? Ali asked his father

"If he didn't relish pork pies?"

Here Parvez becomes answer less when Ali reminded him that he ordered his wife to cook pork by saying to her,

"You're not in village now. This is England. We have to fit in."

This line clearly shows that Ali is a follower of Salad Bowl theory while Parvez is a follower of Melting Pot theory.

Ali said to his father, the problem is this,

"You are too implicated in Western civilization."

Parvez replies

"But we live here!"

Ali said

"The western materialists hates us, how can you love something which hates you?"

While Ali was delivering these words, Parvez looks out of the window to check as if he is still in London or not.

Here Ali concludes by saying

"My people have taken enough. If the persecution doesn't stop, there will be jihad. I and millions of others will gladly give our lives for the cause."

When Parvez asked the reason for giving his life, Ali replies

"For us, the reward win be in paradise."

Ali urged his father to mend his ways. Paevaz paid the bill and left the place.

Back at home Ali sat on rear seat as if he were a customer. While watching through rear view mirror, Parved said

"But I love England; they let you do almost anything here."

This is the wish of Parvez which he wants to fulfill in life while living in England. He wants to enjoy his life in drinking alcohol where there is no objection to selling and drink alcohol.

Parvez told Bettina that, he feels he has lost his son. Finally, he tells Bettina that

"I'm going to tell him to pick up his prayer mat and get out of my house. It will be the hardest thing I've ever done, but tonight I'm going to do it."

After few days while talking to his son Pervaz said

"While I am here on earth I want to make the best of it. And I want you to, as well!"

Ali asked his father what is meant by "make the best of it"?

Parvez said

"For a start...you should enjoy yourself. Yes. Enjoy yourself without hurting others."

Ali said that "Enjoyment was a bottomless pit."

Parvez said

" But. Don't mean enjoyment like that, I mean the beauty of living."

Ali said that all over the world our people are oppressed.

Parvez said

"I know, not entirely sure who our people were. But still - life is for living!"

Ali said

"Real morality has existed for hundreds of years. Around the world, millions and millions of people share my beliefs. Are you saying that you are right and they are all wrong?"

A few evening later, Bettina was riding in Parvez's car when they passed by Ali and Bettina said, I would like to talk to him. Parvez turned the taxi near Ali and said, come on boy, I drop you up to the home. Ali gets inside the cab and sits on the rear seat. First Bettina said gently to Ali, **"Where have you been?"** Ali said, **"The mosque."** When Bettina asks Ali about his college life, Ali said, **"Who are you to ask me these questions?"** Bettina inadvertently laid her hand on Parvez's shoulder and said, **"Your father, who is a good man, is very worried about you. You know he loves you more than his own life."** Ali said, "You say he loves me," Bettina said, "Yes." Ali immediately replies, **"Then why is he letting a woman like you touch him like that?"** She said, **"What kind of woman am I? that I should deserve to be spoken to like that?"**

Prostitution are signs of evil society and making friendship with a prostitute is not allowed in Islam and also in Pakistani culture.

Here Ali turned to his father and said, let me out of the taxi,

before Ali left the taxi Bettina left the taxi while it was running. Parvez stopped her and shouted after her many times, but she had gone. When both son and father reached home, Ali went into his room. Everything for Parvez became tasteless; he was unable to read the newspaper, watch television or even sit down, but he kept on drinking alcohol. At last Parvez went in Ali's room, where he was praying. Parvez was so mad that he started beating Ali while he was praying. In the course of this action Ali bleeds, he neither covered his face or made any resistance. There was no fear in his eyes, he only said, "**So who's the fanatic now?**"

These are all the main dialogues of Parvez and Ali. After reading the story it is quite clear that in start both father and son were the follower of Melting Pot theory, but with the passage of time there comes a change in Ali, and he becomes the follower of Salad Bowl theory.

7. Conclusion:

Now, the question is either Ali is fanatic or Parvez? When we look at the title of the story, we come to know that Parvez is making an objection that his son is fanatic but when we read the final line of the story it is quite clear that Parvez is fanatic. When we apply Salad Bowl Theory and Melting Pot Theory on both son and the father, then the father is a representation of Melting Pot theory while son is a representation of Salad Bowl theory. Parvez wants to lose his identity while Ali does not want to lose his identity.

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