Hi everyone, the theme I am going to talk about today is globalization.

Globalization, as we know, is usually perceived as an advantage, as it helps people cross borders, learn about new cultures, as well as promote technology and economy in many places. However, in the RF, Hamid also reveals the obstacles and contradictions that can appear in the process of globalization.

Before analyzing the theme of globalization in *the Reluctant Fundamentalist*, we need to know what dose the term “globalization” means.

According to Roland Robertson, Globalization refers to "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole"

So globalization just means becomes one.

In *the Reluctant Fundamentalist*, there are many evidences referring to this concept of being one.

[click]

The first one shows that even there is no alcohol In Pakistan, they do have familiar ‘carbonated soft drinks’, which originated from the US, so the soft drinks here can be a symbol for the America capitalist economy and this evidence here shows that the capitalist economy has already been around the globe.

[click]

The next one shows us that even terrorism is globalized, in 9-11, bin Laden was not restrained only in Saudi Arabia or Afghan any more but came to the US, threatening the life of more people.

Another element related to globalization in this novel is Underwood Samson.

Underwood Samson can be a symbol of American global capitalism. It intervenes other companies in other nations, and thus plays the role of negatively influencing other countries’ economy. This very action is referring to the impact of globalization on nations and the increase in the gap between developed countries and underdeveloped or undeveloped countries: Pakistan keeps declining, while the US flourishes. As what Changez says when he first saw the company of Underwood Samson:

[in-text]

Hamid uses this kind of comparison between the US and a third world country to criticize globalization. Because globalization cannot help evenly distribute the products and resources, instead, it makes the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Also,

[in-text]

The diversity of his colleagues there also implies the power of globalization. Which gathers people of different nationalities and genders together. However, it also means that in New York, people’s national and racial identity hardly matters, and they are assimilated in this new world order, which is the negative side of globalization.

Besides the company, even the narrator Changez himself is a product of globalization.

Initially, as a Pakistani, he went to the US to receive international education in Princeton, which also shows the globalization of education resources. During his stay in New York, Changez feels comfortable in that globalized environment, as he says:

*“it was a testament to the open-mindedness and—that overused word—cosmopolitan nature of New York in those days that I felt completely comfortable on the subway in this attire.*

Also, when he is deputed to Manila, he admits,

*“I attempted to act and speak, as much as my dignity would permit, more like an American” (74)*

Changez was so willing to fit in the environment of globalization in the US that he seemed to be a perfect example of globalization at that time.

However, the World Trade Center collapsed and 9-11 broke out.

[in-text]

Changez’s initial reaction is to smile. The smile implies the contradiction inside Changez, as well as the contradiction between other peoples and nations in the world of globalization.

After a while Changez went to Lahore and while he was expressing his feelings, the difficulties in the globalized world are shown clearly.

*“I recall the Americanness of my own gaze when I returned to Lahore that winter when war was in the offing.…I was saddened to find it in such a state-no, more than saddened, I was shamed…the house had not changed in my absence. I had changed; I was looking about me with the eyes of foreigner… (138)”*

*This kind of feeling shows the cultural difference as well as the conflict in values, which can also cause some side-effects of globalization.*

Finally, he decided to leave. In those last days in the US, he met Juan who told him the janissaries:

*“They were Christion boys, captured by the Ottomans and trained to be soldiers in a Muslim army… They were ferocious and utterly loyal: they had fought to erase their own civilizations, so they had nothing else to turn to. (172)”*

Interestingly Changez declared himself as a modern-day janissary. That shows his situation in globalization clearer. Just like janissaries, he had abandoned his own culture to embrace the US. With globalization, national culture and identity seem under threat of extinction

There are still so many problems and obstacles in the process of globalization.

I always believe that it is globalization that make Changez, a true believer in American dream, to become an anti-American.

Just like Changez’s father can never understand the purpose of Underwood Samson, and just like Muslins think ill of US’s imperialism and the US hates Islamic fundamentalism, we would probably never reach a cultural globalization, nor a political globalization.

Even though it does, it will be hard to imagine what the world will be like when everyone in the world becomes the same, pursuing the same goal and live in the same way.

That is probably also the least thing Hamid wants to see. And only after knowing the irreconcilable contradiction in globalization can we really understand the tragedy in the novel.