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## **Treatment and Response of 9/11: Trauma, Displacement and Question of Identity in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist***

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### **Abstract**

Mohsin Hamid is famous novelist who has written two celebrated novels *Moth Smoke* (2000), and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007). This paper looks into depiction of life and journey of central character Changez whose strive in his after 9/11 episode accumulated in United State of America. This paper also examines how the novelist has represented the situation of before 9/11 and after 9/11 in America for non-natives American people. Through the narrator Changez, Mohsin Hamid tries to show effects and results of terror how change the situation and life of Changez. Changez has not done anything wrong, but he was rebuked and the 9/11 episode has destroyed his peaceful life and his relationship also. The people from developing cultures imitate and adopt the American culture with the thinking of that they would accept, but they are canned as inferior as other. It explores the issues of hybridity and identity between native and non-native American people, through the analysis of the novel in the light of 9/11 episode in America.

**Keywords:** Terror, Trauma, Cultural Conflict, Hybridity, Identity, Destruction

The political affairs of the Middle East and South Asia and the relationship of the United States with many countries in these regions have gives an unrefined object for many fictional works in the past. But 9/11 and its consequences has given ascend to a rising sub- genre of novel as a inventive reaction to the attacks on Twin Towers; as a reaction to the distorted relationship flanked by the East and the West and the dispute of these attacks on countries that have come under direct American attack. These novels discover a predicament that has possessed the West since the attack on World Trade Centre, namely, the psychology of the people who were conscientious for the attacks. According to Gramsci: "One might almost

says that he has two theoretical consciousness: one that is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbs" (Gramsci 333). In postmodern scenario East and West are not only two stipulations, but it also dealing with binaries of the post modern society. Said has expressed his views on "Eastern world as helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (Said 21). Europe has outlined the history of the Eastern countries. Western countries only impended their component with annoyance in Eastern countries. It's unfeasible to consider the East without probing the discussion of West about East. Western conversations of dominance obligatory serenity in East- a peace consists of annoyance. East is an intellectual phenomenon; East is relegate of "romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (Said 5). These phenomena are the creation of West, adjective of West- the ruler, for East-the ruled. The relationship between East and West "is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of complex hegemony" (Said 5).

This compound correlation of East and West is depiction in Moshin Hamid in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The novel explores the complexity between many binary aspects such as- the geographical proportions of America and Pakistan; relationship and love, patriotism; a person strives in-between career and family; distorted boundaries and dilemmas of past and present; and betwixt the period of before 9/11 and after 9/11. Changez Khan, central character of the novel express these compound spheres and in his autobiographical narration express negative completions of Western supremacy in every situations dealing in his life. Changez Khan reveals as an implausible narrator and he discovers his life story to an impartial American soldier. The novel is in the structure of dramatic monologue. Changez Khan's desperate attempts to justify his procedures signify the enthusiasm of East to get the trample of prevailing domination (West) and American soldier's mimic subsistence indicates the innate indiscernible supremacy that explores the stamp of reality existence of raising aspects. This middle does not conclude with these bi-polar complexities, bit it goes multi-layered. There are many concealed events with this novel. The author does not make certain the reader in any way about the genuineness of the narrator, the listener does not speak anything throughout the narration and reader never gets any other interpretation except the narrator. He concealed the fundamentalist in him under the incredible appeal of his communal personality to be got received in dominant supremacy. He initiates sensitivity empathy with the American Culture, which ended the whole thing potential for him. "In return, we were expected to contribute our talents to your society, the society we were joining. And for the most part, we were happy to do so. I certainly was, at least at first" (2). He is trades to the scholarship and visas, which brings him near to the dominant supremacy

and these financial reimbursements recite him novel connotations of life and instructs him innovative ethics. He is delimited with these deficient patchy metaphors of West ascendancy. Said states:

One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the orient is viewed.... If the world has become immediately accessible to a Western citizen living in the electronic age, the Orient too has drawn nearer to him, and is now less a myth perhaps than a place crises-crossed by Western, especially American interests. (Said 26-27)

His acceptance of western culture and life style raised question of his position and origin in Western country. "I said I was from Lahore, the second largest city of Pakistan, ancient capital of the Punjab, home to nearly as many people as New York, layered like a sedimentary plain with the accreted history of invaders from the Aryans to the Mongols to the British" (7). The most recent totaling to this composite aggregation of self is of course the impact of American culture, about which Changez is unsure. Changez Khan memorizes his nation's past, where he feels shame on his campus jobs; incongruously it provided evidence his authorize to come into in Underwood Samson. His job in the company frees him from the troubled materialist desires but composes him other aware to his past. "Now our cities were largely unplanned, unsanitary affairs, and America had universities with individual endowments greater than our national budget for education. To be reminded of this vast disparity was, for me, to be ashamed" (34). He attempts to construct contradict supremacy by referring the splendid past of his country, but by accommodating the customs of American consistency he commends the supremacy. He tries to bond his faction with the grandeur of the company. Even in his magnificent voyage, indication of Erica's father of Pakistan in critical terms distresses him. Erica also annotations on his being sensitive about the orientation of his nation and how he turns into lively abruptly when he converses about the place from where he came. Rather than focused on his job he considers upon the concern of India- Pakistan relationship. The title replicates the reluctant personality of the confound psyche of the central character. The consistency of the realtor and the proceedings described by him hobble between the follow of existent, illusory and hyper-real; annoyed the trail of each other and blend together in each other without traces of their own.

Erica, the love attention of Changez, panics from the isolation and lives her life in 'pride' as she is a lioness. She is "friendly in disposition" (9), but always "lost in unsaid thoughts" (9). Her adjoining is her shelter from the gloomy recollections of her past. The tempting 'old world' consists of Eric envelop her exposed gorgeous body (in form of shirt), her procedures (in form of surrounding and aloofness) and her unconsciousness (memories of Eric). In her perceptive of Erica, Changez views that: "something broken' in her 'like a tiny

crack in a diamond that becomes visible only when viewed through a magnifying lens; normally it is hidden by the brilliance of the stone” (23). Changez accomplishes to get her love but he always consider existence of an opponent with whom he never can contend. Changez views her aloofness from her contiguous and vanished in some isolated world. An implicit existence surrounded her and crafts a space between her and the other world. Unable to conduit that space Changez tries to cloak as Chris. He steps into the dead man shoes. Changez was “desperate to extricate her from the maze of her psychosis” (44), but he desolately unsuccessful. This relationship in its center represents East- West examples of correlation. It asks for 'mimicry'- a path of the devastation of 'self'. The indifferent-skeptic relationship of the listener with the narrator is a creation of the regrettable past event (9/11); whereas narrator wishes to narrate the events of his life to the listener, for whom he is 'other' and vice versa, his wish to narrate myriad emphasize anguish of the Muslims is representative of all guiltless sufferers. The past arrived to disturb more manifestly to Changez after 9/11. His initial response on the fall of Twin Tower was of an enjoyable smile and his hidden love for his country and hatred for America gets collided with his supremacy interests. As he observes:

I was in my room, packing my things. I turned on the television and saw what at first I took to be a film. But as I continued to watch, I realized that it was not fiction but news. I stared at one and then the other –of the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center collapsed. And then I smiled. Yes, despicable as it may sound, my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased. [...] But at that moment, my thoughts were not with the victims of the attack [...] no, I was caught up in the symbolism of it all, the fact that someone had so visibly brought America to her knees. (72-73)

9/11 gives Changez the amplify visions and he abruptly experiences a number of infinitesimal splinters all around him. Changez gets a new curve of apparition and overwhelmed by his own detections about the economic construction. His blinders start coming off. He starts questioning himself. To which country does he belongs- America, Pakistan or neither. He accomplishes on an end that he has no steady center, core and has a brittle identity. Encounter with John Bautista hurried Changez's conclusion. He felt like a modern day janissary-“Christian boys captured by the Ottomans and trained to be soldiers in a Muslim army.... Ferocious and utterly loyal: they had fought to erase their own civilization” (63). In his last days in America he flaunts his beard as provocation and felt fuelled by the rhetoric of media. He tries to break the myth of self proclaimed American superiority by his small counter actions. He starts working as a University lecturer and teaches his students; about financial model of America. He turns into a counselor dispersals consciousness of imminent domination of America. He and his companions form one kind of

anti-America nonorganized group and by his discussions seek to explain to about America and its strategies. In one of his conversation he explores: “no country inflicts deaths so readily upon the inhabitants of other countries, frightens so many people so far away, As America” (76). The communication of American soldier and Changez Khan conclude as it begins with incredulity and deferment; and hurriedly conclude without any absolute end.

*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* appears as an anxious effort of the East in common and Muslim in meticulous to get a trample of gratitude from the West in the commencement, but conclude as an effort to produce a counter supremacy. Changez Khan narrates a story of enchantment and disenchantment of East towards West. It is a story of two uniformly past conveyed individuals, who are apprehensive. The environment of brutality and annoyance is formed. Hamid has reveals dilemma of a person who rides in betwixt two countries and two cultures. Hamid explores the protagonist predicament of sense of loss and betrayed after the 9/11 episode in United State of America.

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