



Changez's Internal Conflict: A Postcolonial Reflection on Identity and the Critique of Western Dominance

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the internal conflict in Changez of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid (2007) as an expression of post colonial identity conflicts and criticism of Western supremacy. The paper is based on the postcolonial theory and uses the concept of Orientalism proposed by Edward Said, the ideas of hybridity, mimicry, unhomeliness introduced by Homi K. Bhabha, and the ideas of colonial alienation introduced by Frantz Fanon to outline the split identity of Changez. The story of Changez illustrates how racial bias, cultural alienation, and geopolitical tensions disorient the bicultural individuals, especially during the post-9/11 period. The results emphasize that hybridity does not make people harmonious but disjointed, estranged, and psychologically unstable. The fact that Changez cannot balance his two identities is manifested by postcolonial realities of exclusion and belonging and puts his story in the context of global challenges of identity politics, colonial legacies, and Western hegemony resistance.

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid (2007) has emerged as a focus point of postcolonial literary work, especially because of its sensitive exploration of identity, exile, and cultural ambivalence during the post 9/11 era. The novel creates a trail of a young Pakistani, Changez, who at first adapts to the American environment of elites by studying and making a living at work but over time becomes alienated and eventually starts condemning the western dominance. His struggle is similar to the experiences of other postcolonial subjects who have to deal with the issues of mimicry, hybridity, and resistance. The query of the identity formation in the context of transnationalism has been a focus of scholars in the novel. According to Farooq, Kiran,

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and Khan (2022), the temporal displacement of Changez is manifested through his changing selfhood, as his identity is being renegotiated with reference to the relational and cultural frames after 9/11. Likewise, Chaudhary and Ahmed (2020) emphasize that male protagonists in Hamid are the bearers of neo-colonial contradictions, as the initial access is provided by imitating the Western standards, but eventually, it confirms exclusion. These discussions indicate that the identity crisis that Changez faces is not only an individual crisis but is symbolic of a bigger postcolonial problem.

Hybridity is a major motif in the novel that is also foreshadowed. Mehmood, Khuram, and Javaid (2021) argue that Changez has a hybrid identity, which is formed in a post-9/11 environment, and he is an insider and outsider, the situation that Bhabha describes as the unhomely. This point of view is furthered by Helendra (2017), who states that Changez opposes essentialist categories of identity by disrupting Western normative structures. Similar accents are put forward by Ahmed (2022), who states that ambivalence of Changez can be attributed to the distrust and closeness to American modernity. Cultural displacement is another vital aspect of the conflict that Changez goes through. As Bangash (2022) remarks, the way Changez feels like a foreigner in his country demonstrates the fact that postcolonial people tend to be placed in the in-between zone and feel alienated by both cultures. This is also echoed by Akcesme (2022), who uses the concept of unhomeliness developed by Bhabha, in which Changez lives in a state of psychological dislocation. This is reminiscent of the corpus-assisted discourse analysis by Khan, Khan, and Mortaza (2022), which reveals that the identity of Pakistani in the novel is linguistically constructed using the terms of suspicion, otherness, and belonging.

Power and dominance is another aspect criticized in the novel. Naseem et al. (2021) explore the story in New Historicist terms, showing how the conflict of Changez as its narrator demonstrates the presence of the unequal cultural and political hierarchies. The same observation is made by Patan et al. (2022), who emphasize that intercultural interactions between Changez and American characters demonstrate stereotyping, othering, and unsuccessful acculturation. All these works emphasize the dual nature of this novel, both a narrative of personal change and a postcolonial diatribe against Western hegemony. To sum up, this study explores the inner struggle of Changez as a postcolonial commentary on identity and a commentary on the domination by the West. Placing Changez in theories of mimicry, hybridity, ambivalence, and cultural displacement, this study is a part of an ongoing discussion of how the postcolonial subject is negotiated in the context of imperial power.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), Mohsin Hamid explains the story of Changez, a Pakistani hero whose Westernizing admiration turns into disenchantment due to the postcolonial identity crisis in the globalized world. The clash of values that arises between Changez and the American corporate world leads to his inner conflict between trying to fit in the new system and still being a person of His culture and nationality. This strain escalates following 9/11, in which the Western gaze turns him into a revered professional and a suspected outsider, which underscores the weaknesses of tolerance in the predominant culture. Although a few papers have been conducted to understand *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, based on hybridity, displacement, and orientalism, a minor focus has been given to the way in which the inner conflict of Changez reflects as both an issue in his own life as well as a metaphor of the Western hegemony. His split personality is not just a cultural identity issue, but also a critique of neo-colonial hegemony, economic exploitation, and orientalism clichés, which discriminate against the postcolonial subject. The main issue, however, is to comprehend that the inner struggle of Changez reflects the postcolonial process of being ambivalent, unhomely, and resistant, and that his ultimate denial of the West expresses a larger opposition to imperial rule. This study explores these dimensions to unveil how Hamid constructs Changez as a reflection of the postcolonial subject, who negotiates the identity amongst inequalities of the world and hierarchies of cultures.

1.3. Significance of the Research

The importance of this study lies in the fact that it is one of the many postcolonial literary works that have been shaped to forge a predictive aspect on the coming of Changez in terms of his internal conflict as a collective struggle. Although previous studies have discussed hybridity, orientalism, and cultural displacement in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the psychological aspect of identity conflict is the point of focus in this research to criticize Western dominance. Placing the experiences of Changez through the prisms of Homi Bhabha hybridity and unhomeliness, and Edward Said orientalism, this paper illuminates how the postcolonial subjects can find their place, be alienated, and resist the neo-colonial authority. In addition to literary analysis, there is also the modern meaning associated with it: it enhances our knowledge of the ways in which post-9/11 global politics have influenced the image of Muslim identities and changed the boundaries of cultures. The results can thus be applied to scholars in the literature field, cultural studies, and postcolonial theory seeking to investigate the points of identity, power, and resistance.

1.4. Research Objectives

- To examine how ambiguity in the novel produces anxiety and suspicion, mirroring Western perceptions of postcolonial subjects after 9/11. To analyze Changez's internal conflict as a representation of postcolonial identity formation, hybridity, and unhomeliness in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.
- To examine how Changez's conflict functions as a critique of Western dominance, particularly through themes of orientalism, cultural alienation, and neo-colonial capitalism.

1.5. Research Questions

1. How does Changez's internal conflict in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* reflect the complexities of postcolonial identity and cultural displacement?
2. In what ways does Changez's struggle serve as a critique of Western dominance, particularly in the context of orientalism and global capitalism?

1.6. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how Changez's internal conflict in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* reflects the challenges of postcolonial identity and serves as a critique of Western dominance. By applying postcolonial theories—particularly Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, and unhomeliness, along with Said's theory of orientalism—this study seeks to uncover how Changez's divided self mirrors the broader struggles of formerly colonized subjects negotiating belonging and exclusion in a globalized, neo-colonial world. Ultimately, this research aims to demonstrate that Changez's personal conflict is not merely psychological but deeply political, offering critical insights into the cultural dislocation, power hierarchies, and resistance strategies faced by postcolonial individuals in the aftermath of 9/11.

1.7. Delimitations of the Study

This paper is narrowed down to the novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid (2007) and the main character Changez. It does not go to other novels by Hamid, or to comparison with other characters in other texts in the postcolonial genre. Its scope is limited to examination of how the inner struggle of Changez is a postcolonial commentary on identity and the same is a commentary on the domination of the West. It is based on the postcolonial theory and specifically the ideas of mimicry, hybridity, and unhomeliness presented by Homi K. Bhabha, and the theory of orientalism discussed by Edward Said, backed up by the modern scholarly views. Other methods that do not fit within the postcolonial paradigm, like the psychological or strictly historical interpretation are not allowed, since the paper favors a literary and cultural approach.

The study is geographically restricted to the life experiences of Changez in both Pakistan and the United States, in which the two settings are used to determine how these environments influence his ambivalent identity. The time frame is concentrated on the post 9/11 period, where the event re-established the cultural boundaries, and heightened the global sense of Muslim and Pakistani identity. This simplicity of the analysis allows the study to offer a narrow-focused, coherent, and manageable framework of analyzing the internal conflict of Changez as reflective of postcolonial identity struggles, and as a literary critique of Western dominance.

2. Literature Review

The critical literature on *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid reveals that the conflict within Changez is closely associated with the problem of hybridity, postcolonial identity, and anti-Western dominance. Dr. Toqeer Ahmed focuses on the psychological aspect of the lives of Changez, as bicultural people, such as Changez are torn between adapting to the Western values and not losing their culture. According to Ahmed, the process of changez trying to fit into American society via Princeton education and corporate life is interrupted by racism and rejection which make his identity crisis harder. This reflects the wider truth of postcolonial subjects, who trade in hybrid subjectivities at the expense of emotional stability. Instead of harmonizing, hybridity establishes tension, fragmentation and alienation, which are at once a produce of struggle, as well as a place of resistance. Avirup Ghosh develops this opinion and concentrates on the emotional dislocation of Changez after 9/11 is over. This is because Ghosh holds that the American Dream, which had been a source of hope to Changez, fails miserably due to suspicion, hostility, and racial prejudice. The alienation worsens when Changez returns to Pakistan where he is alienated by his time in the West and is never at peace with his own culture. It is this in-betweenness as Ghosh explains it, that defines the nature of the postcolonial subject, neither accepted wholly in the West, nor quite at home in their own country. Such liminality

as culture brings out unstability of identity in a globalized world that is defined by colonial events and present day geopolitical fears.

Muhammad Iqbal analyzes the identity crisis of Changez using the theoretical concepts of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha. He places Changez in the Third Space where identity has not been determined but rather to negotiate between two conflicting cultural systems. To Iqbal, the path taken by Changez in America since he was full of hope and ambition to disappointment after the 9/11 event is a classic example of how racism and xenophobia can unsettle the hybrid identities resulting in a fractured self. The struggle of Changez makes it clear that cultural duality does not always expand belonging but can lead to isolation and psychological fragmentation of the person. Underlining the personal identity and social relations within the framework of the everyday life of the postcolonial condition, Iqbal emphasizes the fact that the legacies of colonialism are still vivid in the construction of personal identity and social relations.

Combined, these writings reveal that the conflict that Changez is going through is personal, and yet representative of broader postcolonial realities. The intersection of colonial legacies, globalization and geopolitical tensions are what Ahmed, Ghosh and Iqbal posit in the novel to create fractured identities. The failure of Changez to balance between the cultural allegiance is indicative of the larger structural limits of exclusion and inclusion of the postcolonial world. His life story can be heard by millions of people, trying to balance between cultural traditions and modern requirements, so *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is not only his biography but one of the richest interpretations of postcolonial identity politics.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Overview

The research design used in this study is a qualitative approach of research that is in the tradition of literary analysis. It is discussed in the novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid (2007), and his character of Changez and his inner struggle as a postcolonial individual. The interpretation approach is interpretive and aims at examining how the experiences and thoughts of Changez represent the problems of identity, hybridity, unhomeliness and an opposition to the Western dominance. In lieu of quantitative measurement, the analysis grants close reading, textual interpretation, and the postcolonial theory in terms of revealing the cultural and political values of the novel.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

This research will use *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid as the main source of data. The secondary data refers to scholarly articles, critical essays, and journal publications on the topic of postcolonial identity, hybridity, and the works of Hamid. The systematic review of these academic sources is used to collect data but with particular focus on papers by Dr. Toqeer Ahmed, Avirup Ghosh, and Muhammad Iqbal, among others. The study is textual and thematic as the selected passages of the novel are analyzed and interpreted closely to find out the depiction of the inner struggle of Changez and his criticism of the Western dominance. The passages are, in turn, read in the frames of postcolonial theoretical ideas, which include mimicry, hybridity, unhomeliness (Homi K. Bhabha), and orientalism (Edward Said). The researcher builds a sensuous view of identity formation in the context following colonial and neo-colonial formations by associating personal problems of Changez with the general postcolonial realities.

3.3. Theoretical Framework

The paper falls under the area of postcolonial literary theory relying on the works by Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Frantz Fanon. The orientalism concept by Said (1978) is used to understand how the west tries to dominate the cultural and political sphere by projecting the east as an inferior other; this concept is specifically applicable when analyzing how changez is viewed and marginalized in the American society. In addition to this, the concepts of hybridity, mimicry, and unhomeliness (1994) by Bhabha deal with the cultural and psychological instability of the postcolonial subjects who have to make bargains between two worlds. The concepts help to see the split identity of Changez and his concurrent attraction and repulsion to the Western values. Also, the paper applies the work of Fanon in his theory of colonial alienation (1967) that explains the psychological trauma of racism, displacement of culture, and colonial hierarchies. The combination of these theoretical views gives the theory to understand the inner struggle of Changez not only as a personal one but as a symbolic one that reflects the postcolonial identity politics of the post-9/11 world, globalized and united.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Data Analysis

The inner conflict experience through which Changez passes in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is cumulative and an outcome of his adoration and non-admission of the West. His struggle in his mind intensifies when he experiences the fascination, mimicry and final at resistance stage. The epicentre of this change is a fierce postcolonial confrontation: Changez lives between two cultures which cannot accept him. His desire to assimilate in America, as was his sense of disillusionment largely post-9/11, is an indicator of how dislocated identity so many displaced postcolonial people experience. Since the start of the novel, mimicry constructs Changez as his identity. This further led to the creation of mimicry, as explained by Bhabha, the sign of a process of doubleness, to the extent that the colonized subject can mimic the colonizer, but not become him. Changez is an outstanding student in Princeton and internalizes the aesthetics of American professionalism. He puts on western suits, assumes an elegant accent, and has an employment in one of the most excellent firms namely Underwood Samson. There is, however a certain ambivalence to this imitation. He is extolled because of his smartness and finish but it is vividly evident that he is being patronized as an outsider who has been well trained instead of an insider. When he replies to Jim, you have in the saying appears to the listener as encouraging, but at the same time oddly possessive and alienated. Changez realizes the fact that he is accepted, but it is under condition, and what is always defined as a difference.

This understanding continues when they are travelling to Greece together with Erica and other Princeton alumni. With obscene wealth and subtle pride, Changez starts doubting the authority of the system the young American children are inheriting without earning it. He reflects on their colonial legacy, noting how “they seemed to inherit an empire without having to conquer it” (p. 12). His observation has a parallel with Edward Said theory of orientalism whereby the west constructs the east as the exotic inferior other. Although Changez attempts to assimilate, the look that he is subjected to never permits this to happen. As long as he plays the role assigned to him, he can be tolerated (deferential, exceptional and non-threatening). The inner dissonance gets to the limit when Changez moves back to Lahore and he finds himself out of touch with his very own place of residence. “I had changed; I was looking about me with the eyes of a foreigner,” he admits (p. 22). This scene sums up what hybridity is all about. Changez is not a first- or a second-space subject anymore but a third-space subject who is determined by multiple cultural codes that make him a foreigner to his source and destination. Hybridity is beyond fusion of identities since it is a conflict ground upon which the subject of meaning is grappling through being deprived of coherence. His unease in Lahore can be related to the mental expense of incomplete assimilation in the west. Changez is not a Pakistani anymore and not an American, and he is still an in-between state, which Bhabha refers to as an unhomely place.

Another influence of shaping Changez is the sublimating power of the American capitalism. At first, he is dazzled by the giant skyscrapers, the riches and the prospects of modernization. Underwood Samson is the epitomic form of this sublime power: accurate, international, cost efficient. The company trains him to be as emotionless as possible and concentrate on fundamentals only. However, with the course of time, Changez comes to the realization that such sublimity is not neutral. It conceals exploitation and observes imperial domination. The human cost of economic policies by companies such as his comes to Changez as he was in the Philippines examining the activities of a publishing company and comes across the personal cost of economic policies advanced by corporate companies. He starts perceiving himself as being part of a selfish system that favors the west to the disadvantage of weaker countries. This evokes his increasing resentment. “I was a modern-day janissary, a servant of the American empire,” he says (p. 34). These servitors are called janissary, which shows the profound perfidy: a warrior taken against his will out of his native land, conscripted against his will to guard this very empire that victimizes his people.

It is a turning point quote and should not be repeated once in this section, that too. It is a representation that mimicry turns to resistance. Changez starts to denounce the value he has embraced. He wears a beard - it is not only his personal style, but also a political statement. The post-9/11 situation is reflected by the interpretation of the beard as something menacing, causing suspicions and fear. This response reveals the hypocrisy of American liberalism that accords importance to difference but is repulsed when cultural difference refuses to remain difference, and force it into visibility. Changez even comments that his beard might have looked good on him as opposed to his new style. It made me look older... more serious” (p. 56). But he is aware that it has the opposite effect of making him a target as well. The state of attraction and repulsion of or reciprocal relation between the colonizer and the colonized is called ambivalence in the terms of Bhabha. Changez is welcomed in America as a provider of skills but as he ceases to play his expected part, he gets feared by the Americans. This uncertainty is further brought out when Changez spots that people are acting differently there is a change in the way people conduct themselves around him some of the co-workers become cold, strangers staring at him longer than before. The very American society which used to recompense his assimilation does not even excel in punishing his difference.

The inner conflict of Changez is emotionally and politically complicated and this conflict also develops in his dealing with Erica. First, Erica represents the yearning of Changez to fit. It is her attention that makes him feel as a part of elite American society. Yet, she is overcome in the madness of the memory of her deceased boyfriend, Chris. In this respect, Changez is never going to replace Chris as far as nobody sees him at all. His action of becoming Chris, more so when they reach the point of coitus and want Erica to think he is his dead boyfriend is mimicry at its peak. It is a very painful demonstration of a concept by Bhabha that mimicry can never be whole, it will only demonstrate the difference between what the colonizer is supposed to be and what comes to represent it by the colonized. This difference proves to be intolerable to Changez. Amongst themselves, Erica lacks emotion and so does America, and is gradually becoming hostile. They both offer relatedness and give distance. Changez embarks on to believe that the American dream he was running after was actually some sort of fiction- something that only inclusively worked in the whole on the surface. His increased consciousness is associated with the notion of orientalism. Changez is exoticized by Erica, who does not seem to know him. She tells him, "You give off this strong sense of home" (p. 93), but it is a projected idea of nostalgia, not rooted in real cultural engagement. She argues that men of East are romantic, mysterious but incompatible with what she finds.

The situation when Chris died, and Erica cannot get over it serves as the symbolism of the relations between America and its own past. Erica is petrified in mourning, as in the post 9/11 America is paralysed in trauma and fear. The fact that Changez cannot bring Erica to the healing process signifies that there is no chance to come to terms with a culture, which is not ready to address its own mythologies. His growing alienation can be compared to his consciousness about western superiority and the price it insists on from the attempts of those who want to be included into its circle. By the time Changez returns to New York after 9/11, he sees the city's face has changed. "I flew to New York uncomfortable in my own face; I was conscious of my Pakistani identity, of being a foreigner" (p. 85). He no longer has any kind of belonging and his body serves an object of suspicion. This transition implies the violence of sublimity that is deeper. The America which was big and inspiring to Changez is now look- terrifying. The sublime has changed into horror. The brilliance of the city, the dynamism of the population and the organisation of the economy is said to be a mechanism that monitors, blocks and policing. It is the same skyscrapers that were a symbol of ambition earlier that allude fear. Underwood Samson has got into the habit of preaching efficiency, but Changez as well now can begin to realize it is some form of moral blindness. "We were taught to focus on the fundamentals," he says, "but ignoring the human aspect began to seem cold, even cruel" (p. 98). His criticism is borne out with more vehemence; his allegiance is less resolute.

Changez meets with Juan-Bautista during his business trip to Chile and he derives deeper knowledge about himself through him. Here a metaphor of janissary appears one of the strongest symbols of postcolonial dishonour. Changez becomes aware that he is a servitude to the empire. His economic scrutiny, his smooth words and his attendance in boardrooms the world over is all a part of a system that ensures colonial exploitation by the corporate dictatorship. "I was never an American; I was immediately a New Yorker," he reflects earlier, but now he recognizes that even this limited acceptance was temporary and transactional (p. 86). Hybridity is also supported by Chile episode. Several forces have influenced Changez, such as the Pakistani tradition, American education, and the global capitalism, and the identities conflict inside him. He is neither a full-blown reject of America, and neither a full-blown embracer of Pakistan. Rather, he drifts in what Bhabha terms as the third space - a dialectic of contradiction, instability, and potential. Resistance is possible in the third space, but confusion as well. The growth of the beard and the open criticism against the American policy made by Changez is a symbolic action, but not one accompanied by an assured confidence nor peace. His ambivalence does not come to a conclusion.

Aping, which used to be a success formula, has failed. Beatings, which are morally fulfilling to him, isolate him. Changez is not merely renouncing America, but he is lamenting his faith in his country. His criticism of the western hegemony is not loud and violent but it is supported by some feeling of personal treason. "I had returned to Pakistan, but my soul was still caught in the America I had known, in the man I had been" (p. 133). The transition between sides is not what solves his inner conflict, but rather the realization that the conflict cannot be solved in the first place. We have the theory of ambivalence as propounded by Bhabha. Changez revolts against the West and yet he does not sever ties with it. His experience and education in America means that his knowledge, language, and strategies are still based out of there. His beard can only speak of defiance, whereas his rhetorical abilities as well as presentation in the professional sphere is still constructed in terms of the Western norms. Such intrigue complicates his resistance and makes it more human. He is not an extremist, but a product of the two worlds and is attempting to make sense of it in the middle of their collision. He says to his American guest, I was back in Lahore but I had not come back the same. "I was angry, yes, but not unthinking" (p. 138).

The political situation is aggravated because Changez is more outspoken. He starts participating in demonstrations and giving his voice out against the American policies especially when they supported India in regional tensions. He reads these happenings in the postcolonial way- the way the American imperialist design takes a toll, not only in the economy but in the military, and cultural superiority. His consciousness is brought to an acute state when he sees how the West still builds the East as either

dependent or dangerous. This is the gist of the idea of orientalism as postulated by Said. Changez realizes that his beard, his voice and his origin have become the inseparable characteristic of the way he is viewed. "I had become a symbol," he notes, "and symbols attract attention" (p. 144). Changez does not change easily and fully. This inner conflict remains since he has not achieved a final decision. He criticizes the domination of the West, but rejection and the memory of belonging war wounds are still there. This constant dilemma describes the mental expense of hybridity. According to Bhabha hybridity is not merely a cultural crossbreeding but is also a destabilising force destabilising predetermined identities. Changez can no longer live in easy categories: he is not a complete Western or a traditional Eastern. He is a split or mixed identity that destabilises and disorients.

This indeterminacy is an uncertainty of Homi Bhabha as to the colonized subject. Changez shakes the reader because he cannot fit into definite categories. He does not represent a victim or villain. He is a contemplative, traumatized, and a very clever man who has been influenced and carved by the empire. The listener who symbolizes the West seeks certainty, but what Changez is trying to give him is complexity. "Perhaps you are wondering," he says, "whether I am being entirely honest with you now, or whether I am using you to vent some hidden agenda" (p. 160). Such ambiguity in words reflects the conflict of identity which is central throughout the novel. As the Changez monologue goes on, his criticism on western power is getting clear, without though being too radical. He does not invite revenge or violence. Rather he presents reflection. His opposition is both intellectual and emotional as well as cultural. He is a new postcolonial subject; not one who works out a revolution against the system with his body weapon, but one who fights against it with words, alertness, and metaphorical tactics. The act of his storytelling becomes subversive in itself: a Pakistani male eagerly telling the story to an American who does not speak: switching the balance of power based on lines of early colonialism that lends authority to the Western word.

Here the identity conflict of Changez has assumed his final form- not as a conflict that has been resolved, but as a negotiation that will persist. He is thrown in the middle between his past in the West and current life in the East. He is still English speaking, well-educated on the American culture and his elite nature. But now they are turned against structures in which they are created. This is what makes the subversion of mimicry, it is carried out as imitation, but emerges as criticism. The disciple acquires the language of the master, after which he uses it to unmask the contradictions of the master. The psychological dimension of living in a state of suspicion is also revealed through the experience Changez works out. Having experienced 9/11, the attitude towards the Muslims in the West has changed drastically. Changez becomes hyper cognizant of his perception. The meaning is loaded in his beard, accent and shape of body language. He tells the listener, "It is remarkable, sir, how often, in America, one's identity is questioned simply on the basis of appearance" (p. 171). At this point, the novel is critical of racialization of Muslim identities, which was the effect of 9/11 attacks when Muslims became the object or the target of the given racialization- it is identical to the concept of orientalism which Said described as it was the West which "orientalised" the East based not on which it is, but which the western way perceived it to be.

Another detail contributing to the censure that Changez makes is the fact that the story is set in Lahore, where, to be more precise, it happens in the Old Anarkali region. The place serves as the symbol of culture and layered history and a contrast to the efforts to erase it, as it had by colonial powers. When he takes the listener through busy streets, which are cluttered with colour and noise, he repossesses space lost in sanitized cities of the world which thrilled him previously. These scenes are a praise to cultural peculiarity against the generality of international capital. His pride in his environs is quite honest: this is a place of significance, sir, not of luxury. But there is beauty here, of a different sort" (p. 174). So, by doing so, Changez is relocating the sublime in Western skyscrapers and locating it instead in the experienced fabric of his own ethnicity. But this recovery by no means ever happens. There is hesitation in the voice of Changez particularly in his concluding remarks. He knows that his guest might not be convinced of him. This uncertainty of the identity of the listener, who might be a tourist, an agent, a more dangerous person, reflects the uncertainty that Changez feels with himself. This plot demands the reader to be in an uncomfortable position. No simple conclusions are available. Is Changez a radical? Strong opinions held by a professor? A nationalist? The novel is unwilling to explain. It is the denial of that that is core to its strength. It reverberates on Bhabha as he saw a postcolonial identity as something that was constantly in the process of formulation.

This indecisiveness is what counts. Mohsin Hamid builds the novel like a reflection of the madness of a postcolonial era, with identities challenged continuously and truth backed by cultural distrust. The reader sees his or her expectations reflected in the inner struggle of Changez. We are ready to see a positive hero or an anti-hero. We instead receive a man, who is self-searching, expressive, indignant, and in the state of uncertainty at the same time. He is a very complex person that disputes the ordendness of Western histories of the East. As he puts it, he does not want to be misinterpreted... I am not anti-American; I am simply pro-Pakistan" (p. 180). This is the point as to what Changez transformed. His review of the Western hegemony is individual yet collective as well. He no longer focuses on personal aims, and is politically conscious. Mimicry to voice. Calmed down and into resistance. Nevertheless, he does not lose all he has learnt in America. Education, professionalism, and the ability to use rhetoric are factors at his disposal. He just decides to utilize them in a different way. The co-existence of this hybridity that is the presence of tools of conflicting worlds is not a weakness. He is powerful in it. The identity of Changez, in that way, is a life

contradiction. He is not only postcolonial in his speech content, but in structure. It hosts the shattered past, the pressure of the present and the unknown future. He leaves no closure. He provides inquisition. His last words are very ambiguous and the reader does not know what will follow. Why fear, indeed? there is nothing about you to fear. My hand is open and extended" (p. 184). The move is non-violent some but the tension remains. Has the visitor got him wrong? or has the reader?

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a more than a story of identity crisis of one man; it charts the position of the postcolonial subject in the whirlpool of postcolonial capitalism, cultural exile and negative paranoia. He starts off as an actor of imitation a high flier among immigrants who wants to be successful by picking up western ways. However, as Bhabha claims, when it comes to mimicry, there can be no escaping the trouble to the dominant culture as the latter discloses its contradictions. Changez is used as the mirror that can embody America and all of its shortcomings and hypocrisies where the other is concerned. It is not only the confrontation between Pakistan and America that creates his internal dilemma but his first experience with Western sublimity as well. In the beginning the American life excites him with its power and promise. The same power, when threatened, however, is shown as an enormous and dehumanizing force. Sublimity changes to alienation. He starts viewing American institutions as theaters, the systems that require action, applaud superficial obedience, and do not care about emotional and moral prices of its superiority.

Changez as a postcolonial figure of resistance shifts his focus when he moves on to assimilation before switching to criticism. The move of returning to Lahore and the acceptance of his cultural background is not indulging to modernity but it is a relocation of politics. He does not want to become an American anymore. Rather, he wants to see how his experience can be mapped onto the world-wide trends of domination, oversight, and exclusion. His opposition is made up of ambivalence: not hatred and extremism but disappointment and understanding. It is a kind of love-hate relationship with him loving the West but denying the moral blindness therein. This text is also the demonstration of the theory of orientalism introduced by Edward Said the way the East is projected as an object of passive discourse of the West. This is put to test as Changez re-claims his right to speak. His monologue turns into an anti-narrative of the powerful Western discourse, which views Muslims and Easterners either in the light of fear, suspicion, or pity. The narration of his own story is a way by which Changez breaks that framing. He reminds the readers that postcolonial people can speak, see, and act, no matter how their thoughts and behaviour are formed by disjointed histories.

Hybridity is the last and most long-lasting element of the identity of the character Changez. He does not completely fit into one or the other. His self is created out of contradiction: that is, there is a superimposition of works of culture, emotional crisis and ideological changes. Bhabha himself describes the hybridity as an inhabitation of the third space, the third space that is the hybridity itself may well be represented by the very mechanics of Change z story itself: a local Pakistani man, who tells us the story in a flawless English, talking to a local American, in a cafe with a loaded atmosphere of cultural clash. That is the place where identity is redefined. However, the meaning of hybridity is not a solution to the conflict. It exaggerates it. Changez does not manage to live in harmony, and does not fake it. He returned to where he has started, in uncertainty. Such ambiguity is premeditated, though. He is a reluctant fundamentalist as his title makes us suppose. Fundamentalist is a buzz phrase that most people associate with violence or intolerance. However, Changez does not want to--he is indecisive, introspective, averse to polarities. And this paradox is the essence of the novel, identity, at least in its postcolonial context, is slippery, fluctuating, and constantly in negotiation.

This ambivalence idea is the focus of his open-ended monologue and inconclusively left the end. The silence of the listener is arguably a parallel of selective hearing that the West has which is never eager to know those who have been oppressed by them. The extensiveness of the invitation that Changez makes of listening to him to think to understand is a challenge to the entire American nature of the establishment and also the reader. There is a literal and symbolic meaning to his hand that is extending out at the end of the novel. It invokes to reconciliation, forgetfulness not. Not without a observe. In conclusion, the problem of Changez and his inner dilemma can be seen as the product of good postcolonial politics. His personality makes a good example of how hybridity in action can feel like a man that has been existing in other worlds, and none of them is willing to accept him wholesomely. Using such tools as mimicry, orientalism, sublimity, and ambivalence, Hamid transforms Changez, who is the passive immigrant, into the eloquent critic of the empire. He is not a complete person but he knows. His life story causes the reader to review his or her concepts of belonging, nationalism, self-identity, and power in the post- 9/11 globalized world. His tone is not confident, it is critical and honest, and it can be evaluated even nowadays as one of the most vivid literary descriptions of the postcolonial identity in the history of the literature.

4.2. Discussion

The results of this paper indicate that Changez struggles with inner dissonance cannot be narrowed down to a strictly individual issue but is symbolic of the broader postcolonial realities. The novel illustrates how the world order and cultural superiorities

define the self of those who are negotiating East and West. To begin with, an optimistic attitude of Changez to America at the very beginning of his life can be seen as a manifestation of the Western dream of meritocracy and prosperity. Mimicry is embodied in his Princeton training and his work in the company where the postcolonial subject is anxious to assimilate into the mainstream culture. However, such imitation is never completely paid off, but he reveals his alterity, which makes him remember his marginalized position. This concurs with the argument by Bhabha that mimicry creates ambivalence, which allows one to be a part and at the same time strengthens the exclusion.

Second, Changez becomes even alienated due to the effects of 9/11. America turns into a place of control and insecurities once it is the symbol of possible belonging. This transformation as described by Said in *Orientalism* is that Changez has ceased to be an individual but a component of the essentialized Other which is classified based on racialized fear. His identity is not proposed according to his own terms but rather as seen by the West which makes him a suspect of distrust. Third, the fact that Changez returns to Pakistan does not solve his conflict but makes it even deeper. The experience he has in the West alienates him to his native country and he finds himself torn between the two worlds. This in-betweenness is what defines the unhomeliness of Bhabha in that the subject is neither entirely a part of the colonizers world nor their own culture. The colonial alienation insights provide by Fanon are informative of the psychological effect of this displacement, and show how the legacy of colonialism creates fractured identity across generations. Therefore, the inner conflict of Changez is the symbol of general postcolonial unsteadiness. His disjunctive selfhood is the paradox of hybridity - making it possible but disjunctive. Finally, the illusion of Western universality, revealed through the story of Hamid, is a criticism of how the 21 st century identities politics continue to be influenced by global hierarchies.

5. Conclusion

This paper has found that the internal conflict experienced by Changez in the *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is both a personal and a political level and a reflection of the postcolonial identity conflict and critique of the Western dominance. His experience of being ambition-filled and then disillusioned is the fate of the unstable hybrid subjectivities based on the colonial legacies, cultural marginality, and racialized marginality in the post-9/11 era. The fractured selfhood of Changez shows that through hybridity, instead of establishing harmony, alienation, estrangement, and resistance take place. Through the discussion of the psychological and cultural impacts of Orientalism and neo-colonialism, Hamid seeks to emphasize how the postcolonial theory is relevant in the current state of global identity politics. Changez turns out to be not just a single character, but the representative of the fight of the millions of postcolonial subjects who have to deal with the notion of belonging, difference, and power in the unequal world.

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