



Allegorical Aspect of Mohsin Hamid's Selected Novels

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The Abstract

The bitterness of Colonial past is something which is hard to erase from the history of Indian Subcontinent. British Pakistani novelist, Mohsin Hamid's plea to approach his writings from a post-postcolonial perspective is self-contradicted when he names his protagonists-- Changez in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Darashikho in *Moth Smoke*, the names of the actual historical personae of the region. This paper makes an attempt to compare and contrast Hamid's literary characters as portrayed in these two novels and the historical accounts of the actual personalities of these two men. The characters of Changez and Darashikho acted either as power centres in colonial history or somehow participated in struggles to achieve power, which these novels encapsulate very skilfully while depicting intricacies of power games amongst the characters. This paper examines political upheavals and struggles of characters for meaningful human relationships against the backdrop of historical games.

I. Introduction

The naming of Hamid's characters stands in stark contrast to his request that his novels be read using a post-postcolonial approach. The characters Changez, Darashikho, and Aurengzeb, who play pivotal roles in both "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" and "Moth Smoke," are all derived from historical figures with connections to the Colonial era. In addition to that, the opening lines of his first novel, which was titled *Moth Smoke*, were taken from the history of the Mughal empire. In a certain sense, the Mughal princes and the Mongolian conquerors were also clones because they imposed their own way of life and social structure on the native people of the land they conquered. This presented a problem for the post-postcolonial strategy. Because the very phenomenon of globalisation is an extension of colonisation, this debunks the post-postcolonial approach. If we consider the contemporary times interwoven with globalisation, which is a major theme in both novels, this also debunks the post-postcolonial

approach. It is possible for me to draw comparisons between the personalities of historical figures and those of the characters in Hamid's novels because of the way in which he asserts his identity by employing historical allegorical names in his works.

War of Succession

Both the Mughal princes and the characters in the story were interested in using the power that they possessed. The actions of Aurengzeb are being held against Dara, and the accusation that "Ozi Pajero ran over a child at a red light" is what is putting Dara on trial for her alleged involvement in the incident. This inquiry looks into how Aurengzeb used his political influence to influence the outcome of a criminal case he was involved in. Even though Shah Jhan had already chosen Darashikho to be his heir, Aurengzeb used his military experience and political influence to annex the throne of the Mughal empire in the same way that the Mughal Prince had done. The fact that the Dara were falsely accused of being *kufr* (non-believers) by the Mughal prince Aurengzeb contributed to his success in gaining the support of various religious authorities. The method of falsification utilised by Hamid's *Ozi* is the one that resulted in Dara's apprehension and subsequent imprisonment. Aurengzeb was banished from the imperial capital as part of Shah Jahan's plan to ensure that his son Darashikho, who had blue eyes, would be able to ascend to the throne of the Mughal empire after his father's death. This was another significant decision that Shah Jahan made. Despite this, *Ozi* makes the decision to leave Pakistan in the book because there is a compelling reason for him to do so. The removal of oneself from the political epicentre of Aurengzeb always ends up producing the same outcome, irrespective of whether the story being told is historical or narrative in nature. In the end, the historical figure who served as the character's analogue did come out on top and assumed leadership of the group. Both the real-life Mughal emperor, Mughal Prince, and the fictional character, Aurengzeb, wielded brutal power. However, their motivations were quite different. The main character and the prince are both driven



by love, but in very different ways. The prince is driven by his love for the throne, while the character is driven by his love for his family life.

Personality

Prince Darashikho of the Mughal dynasty was a devout follower of the Sufi faith, and he is best remembered for his efforts to translate various religious scriptures into the Persian language. He is known as the "Translator of the Sufi Scriptures." It is believed that Darashikho was the one who introduced Sufism to the Mughal Empire. The works of Hamid and Darashikho couldn't be more different from one another. After being fired from his job as a result of the impolite manner in which he conducted himself, he decides to completely immerse himself in the seedy underworld of drug dealing and theft. There is not the slightest resemblance between this interpretation of Darashikho Shezad and the real-life Mughal prince Darashikho. Darashikho Shezad is a commoner who struggles to make ends meet, in contrast to the prince, who was born into a family that holds a position of authority. The fact that Darashikho and the Mughal Prince share the same religious beliefs is the only thing that ties their lives together in any way. Both do not approve of or lend support to extremist interpretations of Islam. In the book, the protagonist, Dara, has a school friend who is a fundamentalist, and while Dara does have some sympathy for his friend, he does not accept the invitation to join the movement that the fundamentalist extends to him.

Military Campaign

When it comes to the conduct of battle, both the protagonist and the greatest conqueror in history share similar qualities, and both were unscrupulous in their approach to conflict. The ruler of Mongolia is infamous throughout the world for the brutal methods he used to conquer neighbouring states and territories. His army became infamous for the atrocities they committed during the war as well as their peculiar practise of stealing human heads and impaling them on spears. The protagonist is shown to have the same kind of brutal behaviour as the antagonist, as evidenced by the smile on his face during the attack that caused the World Trade Center towers to come crashing down. The protagonist, despite having compassion for the plight of those who were trapped in the towers, takes pleasure in the idea that someone was responsible for the humiliation of the United States of America, the most powerful nation in the world at

the time. These two distinct personalities are brought into alignment by the pleasure of violence.

The student of our protagonist is a suspect in the murder of an ambassador, and authorities are looking for him. The American government, most likely the CIA, was looking into the matter, and they were being intimidated by Changez. When the alleged operative is escorted back to his hotel, the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), despite its reputation as the most diplomatic intelligence agency in the world, compels him to leave without providing any conclusive evidence or a new lead. This is a similar quality on par with that of the greatest conqueror; at that point in time, the Mongols inspired a similar kind of fear in the hearts of the kings. Despite the fact that they killed the ambassador, they waged war against a nation that was contested by the Mongolian ruler and provided diplomatic immunity. This runs counter to the actions of the protagonist, who is trying to save his student from being accused of political anarchy.

Marriage was yet another strategy that the Mongolian conqueror utilised to increase both his political and military influence. As a result of this strategy, he was able to amass a large army and support base. The protagonist, on the other hand, is participating in activities of a similar nature. His inclination to fundamentalism has increased since Erica has not shown the same level of interest in him romantically.

Meritocracy

A social system known as meritocracy is one that recognises the abilities of its citizens and allocates the resources of the nation in a manner that takes those abilities into account. It is generally agreed that Changez Khan, the great Mongolian conqueror, is the founding father of this socio-political system that the modern western world adheres to. This idea is supported by the character as he moves up the socioeconomic ladder by assimilating himself into the cultural melting pot that is New York and by making effective use of his talent to land a job at one of the largest corporations, Underwood Samson, which improved his economic standing in the society.

Religion

Khan was a title bestowed upon tribal leaders who were not associated with any particular religious affiliation. As a result of the military campaign that the Mongolian conqueror led across the Islamic-ruled Middle East, the name Changez came to be used to voice the people of that religion. According to my understanding of Hamid, the



primary reason he used this name (Changez) for his political movement was the religious freedom he allowed to people living under his rule. This religious freedom is the protagonist's struggle after 9/11. The image of Changez Khan, who was permitted to practise any religion, has come to be equated with the momentum shift toward every human resembling a South Asian and especially carrying a Muslim identity in the United States.

II. Conclusion

Hamid used a nuanced combination of characteristics from various historical figures when developing his characters. Both my comprehension of historical accounts and my reading of novels led me to the conclusion that the names of both protagonists, Darashikho and Changez, were intellectually borrowed from history in order to challenge the way in which the West treats people of South Asian origin, particularly Muslims. This was the conclusion I came to after reading both historical accounts and novels. Both the Mughal emperor and the Mongolian conqueror are known for their promotion of universalism and for providing a fertile environment for the growth of a variety of religions within their respective kingdoms. This helped to balance out the disparity that existed between how open western nations were to people on the ground and how multiculturalism was promoted in the west.

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