The Psychological Impact of Globalization on the Quest for Self-Discovery in the Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid

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Abstract

The impacts of globalization that are producing the identity crisis are investigated in this study, as are the psychological concerns that occur as a result of an identity crisis. It also examines western attitudes toward the Orient, as well as challenges that Pakistanis face in Western countries, through Henry Tajfel's vision. Individuals that share a great deal in terms of values, interests, and beliefs form communities. Many people believe that a community is a collection of like-minded people. On the other hand, the values of homogeneity and identity are crucial in the formation of communities. As a result of modern technology and ingenuity, the world has become a global village, and this globalization has put people's identities at risk. In "The Reluctant Fundamentalist," by Mohsin Hamid, looks at the issue of identity and the issues that immigrants, particularly Muslim Pakistani immigrants, experienced in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks. Another theme tackled in this book is how diversity has made life difficult for the protagonists, who confront a range of challenges as a result of their diverse backgrounds. They are unable to go forward since letting go of one's past, culture, and roots are so tough.

Key Words: Postcolonialism, imperialism, identity, 9\11 incident, discrimination.

1.Introduction

Without a doubt, the twenty-first century is a period of rapid scientific and technological advancement. While modernization benefits people all over the world, it also brings with it a slew of new difficulties, such as migration, race relations, hybridity, cultural incompatibility, and a sense of alienation and self-discovery for many people groups. To bring these difficult issues to light, literature is used as a potent weapon. Also, to blame for the identity dilemma is postcolonialism. The post-colonial era encompasses the time period following a country's formal proclamation of independence from colonial rule. The phrase "post-colonial" refers to all cultures that have been influenced by imperialism. Simply put, post-colonialism signifies the end of colonialism by allowing indigenous peoples to free themselves from imperial culture and politics. Imperialism was defined by Western nations' economic endeavors in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

Their goal was to increase their product's global market while simultaneously gaining control of as many natural and human resources as feasible at the lowest possible cost. They founded colonies to gain the raw commodities required for colonial authority. Because the colonizers considered the indigenous peoples of these countries to be subhuman, many westerners propagated the idea that anyone who is not white is somehow less attractive. Identity crisis has taken centre stage in post-colonial literature since it is ubiquitous in all post-colonial countries. Invaders' cultural, emotional, and political legacies are causing post-colonial nations to vent their unhappiness. These countries' peoples have made a concentrated effort to recover a sense of self that they believe was lost during the colonial era. The identity crisis has had an impact on literature as well as everyday life. According to Ashcroft (1989), this literature gives information about postcolonialism to help colonized people better understand their problems. Hamid's novel, "The Reluctant Fundamentalist," is an example of a post-colonial novelist's good portrayal of the issues faced by immigrants in a new country.

1.1 Statement of the Problems

In today's globalized world, identity crisis is a common occurrence. To emphasize the relevance of this issue in contemporary man's existence, this study explores the circumstances and reasons that contribute to its formation. The Reluctant Fundamentalist, written by Mohsin Hamid in 2007, is a well-known Pakistani novelist's take on the subject. He talks about the challenges people have when they move to a new country and how they frequently lose their sense of self. He claims that a person's physical appearance is what allows others to recognize them, which leads to an identity crisis.

1.2 Significance of the Research

A person's or an item's distinct identity is defined by the defining characteristics that determine who or what they are. People who are going through an identity crisis are trying to figure out who they are and who they want to be. As a result, people feel insecure about their identities. This is a term used by Erickson (1950). The fear of losing one's identity in a strange country with a different culture is one of the themes, challenges, and issues covered in Hamid's (2007) novel "The Reluctant Fundamentalist." After the 9/11 attacks, he presents Changez, the novel's key character, as having an identity crisis. He was born in Pakistan and moved to America to further his education. Nonetheless, by living in the country, he is attempting to erase his American ancestry. Before the September 11 attacks, he believed he had a bright career ahead of him. Through his words and gestures, he expresses his love and admiration for the United States of America and its people. He is thrilled to be engaged by Underwood Samson, a prominent American firm. However, since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the scene has changed considerably. He had to deal with prejudices held by Americans toward him and all non-natives, particularly Pakistani Muslims. They are disinterested in his work or achievements; all they care about is that he is non-white and thus a threat to the United States. His identity is jeopardized when he witnesses such crimes. Immigrants confront unique challenges due to cultural, linguistic, physical, and religious incompatibilities, which Hamid (2007] seeks to solve. A combination of these elements has resulted in an identity crisis. Hamid (2007) embodies the same mentality toward Easterners that westerners do toward Pakistanis.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the impact of globalization on individual and community identities?
2. How do people experience psychological problems as a result of an identity crisis?
3. How does Hamid aim to highlight the western stance of the Orient, particularly Muslims, in "The Reluctant Fundamentalist"?

1.4 Objectives of the Study
The following were the study's objectives: -

1. To Explore the effects of globalization that are causing the Identity Crisis.
2. To identify and examine the psychological issues that arise as a result of an identity crisis.
3. To scrutinize the western attitudes regarding the Orient, as well as the issues that Pakistanis experience in Western countries.

2. Literature Review

Authors who have studied and elaborated on the subject of identity crisis have achieved international literary acclaim. Ngugi, Woodward, Morrison, Desai, Narayan, Coetz, Fanon, Selvon, Walcott, Phillips, Ferguson, Rhys, Rushdie, and Gosh have all written on identity in their works. The contemporary self-definition issue is explored by Naipaul (1967). He claims that if people reject their forefathers' history and culture, they would lose their identity. As his works indicate, mindlessly imitating foreign cultures is an issue. Woodward (1997), for example, shows how identification influences how people organize the things that bond them to other members of the same social group, as well as how they are unable to connect with other members of the same social group. According to Hall (1996), a person's identity is never fully formed and established, but rather evolves. Identity crisis, according to Hall (1996), arises when people travel to new places and are presented with questions such as "why are you here?" and "when are you going home?" However, almost all novices are unable to respond to these questions.

3. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a form of framework for reading and analyzing texts. A theoretical framework can be used to deduce various facts and opinions. When examined through the lens of Tajfel's (1979) Social Identity Theory, the text "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" becomes more understandable. The concept of social identity describes how people define and categorise themselves. In-group and out-group are the two groupings that are given. Minority and majority groups are referred to as in- and out-groups, respectively. This idea holds that belonging to one group causes animosity against members of other groups. It's broken down into three key steps. One of them is social classification. Persons are now classed based on their colour, ethnicity, occupation, and other characteristics, such as whether they are black or white, students or professors. The second is the ability to identify with a group of individuals. Individuals begin to identify as members of a specific group at this point. Social comparison is the third stage. It is a practice in which members of one group compare themselves favourably to members of another group. As a result, there are racial and ethnic divisions.

4. Discussion and Analysis

People are currently confronted with several issues, the most fundamental of which is the issue of identity. Individuals who migrate to other countries with pre-existing identities moulded by their new surroundings usually face challenges when they arrive. Because of cultural, religious, and lifestyle differences, their preexisting identities collide with those of foreign nations. The story of a man's quest for self-discovery is told in Hamid (2007). It's not uncommon for him to run against roadblocks on his route to self-expression. Hamid (2007) examines the issues that migrants encounter and shows how these concerns jeopardize an individual's uniqueness.

Hamid the protagonist of the novel, Changez, is introduced in this year's novel. Hamid informs us about his life in the United States by describing how he went about getting an education and a job during his stay. Following his graduation from Princeton, Changez lands a well-paid analyst position with a well-known US corporation. He enjoys his profession and is fascinated by American culture and way of life. He is ecstatic to be a citizen of such a wonderful country. He sees himself as having a bright future ahead of him. In his opinion, his American dream has been realized, and as a result, he cherishes the country. Things have changed since the terrorist events of September 11, 2001, when America was the target. In "The Reluctant Fundamentalist," there are numerous instances of racism and discrimination hurled at the protagonist because of his looks and race.

He begins to doubt his own identity after the terrorist atrocities of September 11, 2001. This research helps to dispel the myth that all Muslims in the Muslim world, particularly in Pakistan, are terrorists and murderers. Individuals who are believed to be different from themselves are referred to as "others," and we tend to treat them differently. Changez, founded by Hamid (2007), aims to change that. Individuals who identify as non-white due to cultural, ethnic, or national affiliations are referred to as "others." Despite his best efforts to hide his oddity and integrate himself into American culture, the protagonist remains an outsider. He is attempting to accomplish so, according to the text: "I attempted to act and speak, as much as my dignity would permit, more like an American." (2007, 7)

As can be observed, to adjust to his new identity, he adopts American behaviour and words. According to those who believe this claim, he is willing to let go of his previous identity and embrace a new one. Isn't that what an American does, after all? Changez's long-time girlfriend, Erica, then invites him to supper. To Eric's father, Changez looks to be a non-drinker at first, but he gradually admits to drinking. Changez is so deeply rooted in American culture that he refers to himself as a New Yorker, as demonstrated by the following line:

"I was immediately a New Yorker." (2007, 37)

When Changez starts working for a reputable firm, his emotions are put to the test. As a result of the city's diverse population, he feels a strong connection to it and considers himself an American by default. He is never out of place. He considers the United States to be his own country. He hides his true identity to achieve this goal. He hides his identity once he starts working, as the text reveals:

" on that day, I did not think of myself as a Pakistani, but as an Underwood Samson
Trainee   " (2007,38)

It is feasible to establish that he is a part of the new society through the text by rejecting his history. His vocation has invigorated and stimulated him to the point where he feels compelled to declare:

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" I was the only non - American in our group, but I suspected My pakistaniness was invisible, cloaked by my suit, by my expense account." (2007, 82)

As a result of leaving his roots and culture, the passage reveals that he is striving to conceal his identity

"I was the only non - American in our group, but I suspected My Pakistanis was invisible, cloaked by my suit, by my expense account." (2007, 82)

To put it another way: when he was in Manila working on Underwood Samson with the Americans, he wrote the sentence above to express his views about the incident. Changez is only popular among Filipinos because he has hidden his true identity by imitating American culture. Following the September 11th attacks, he was unable to conceal his fake identity or accept a new one. Despite his efforts and dedication to the United States, he remains an outsider.

Before September 11, 2001, he was ecstatic, ecstatic that his goal had been realized. Following the 9/11 disaster, however, he notices the prejudiced attitude, prejudice, and contempt widespread in the country for which he claims to be a fan, and the situation completely changes

He begins to consider his own identity after confronting the awful scenario. He is in Manila at the time of the September 11th terrorist attacks and hears about them. Attacks on his identification have begun as a result of the terrorist act. He is confronted with the issue of white vs. non-white regularly. After being suspected based on his looks, Changez is detained at the airport upon his return from Manila for examination. An airport officer questions him about his genuine motivations for staying in the US. He assures her that he is there for a good reason, but she has her doubts. All white people, according to Hamid (2007), have an inherent belief that everyone else is savage and untrustworthy. As a result of the September 11 attacks, Westerners' perceptions of Easterners have shifted. Other people's existence, in their minds, equals "harm to America." When Changez realizes this, he begins to reflect on how unique he is in comparison to other Americans. Change has been spurred by the US invasion of Afghanistan. It demonstrates a shift in Changez's perspective in this situation. In the eyes of the American people, he is no longer the same person he was before.

For the first time, America's handling of the Orient is alarming. The widening distance between East and West threatens Changez's sense of self. In the aftermath of 9/11, incidents are justified in their belief that all-easterners are demonic necromancers and terrorists. In this novel, he (2007) addresses the truth that, as the text demonstrates, a partial method is employed to criticize all Eastern societies in particular.

"Pakistani cab drivers were being beaten to within an inch of their lives;" (2007,107)

The book reveals how the occident's prejudiced perspective adds to the representation of Changez's identity issues for non-natives, notably Muslims. Following the 9/11 attacks, Changez returns to Pakistan to see his family. At this point, he begins to ponder his own identity. Before leaving Pakistan, he grows his bread to separate himself apart from the Americans and demonstrate his uniqueness.

"It was perhaps, a form of protest on my part, a symbol of my identity," (2007, 147)

As his beard grows, he is subjected to excessive white behaviour when he returns home. Because he is a Muslim and posed a threat to their safety and the safety of their country, his employees began whispering about him. After witnessing these events, he decided to return to his homeland. He works as an adjunct professor at a nearby university, but his students refer to him by

his first name. Hamid's work, published in 2007, is on how Westerners treat primitive cultures, particularly Muslims.

5. Conclusion

Identity crisis is just one of the many complex difficulties that arise as a result of globalization. Individuals who leave their home nation and enter another with pre-existing identities and a new culture face significant risks. According to Hamid (2007), Cultural and political circumstances can influence an individual's uniqueness. Elements like mimicry and hybridity, he claims, play a role in the construction of people's identities. Individuals are divided into many categories based on their ethnicity, religion, and country of origin. Changez is embarrassed as a result of his ethnicity, culture, religion, and nationality, which makes him an outsider. No culture, as Hamid (2007) argues, is perfect. There is no such thing as a superior or inferior culture; there are no superior or inferior cultures. The distinction between a developing and a developing country is dependent on one's perspective and attitude. Westerners' distorted conceptions of the eastern hemisphere and its civilizations are the subjects of Hamid (2007). This is a skewed viewpoint. An immigrant's identity can be jeopardized by one's attitude. The loss of one's own identity, like changes, can lead to a feeling of estrangement from one's community. He works for the US, but after being forced to hide his true identity due to westerners' animosity, he returns to his homeland.

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