

NEGOTIATING THE COLONIAL SHADOW: JUNGIAN INDIVIDUATION AND POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITY IN THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST

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Abstract

*This article combines Abdul Jan Mohamed's description of colonial psyche with Carl Jung's theory of individuation to offer a fresh and unique insight into Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007). It contends that Changez's journey transcends the common geopolitical, diasporic and economic tropes and is more an expression of a historically inflected psychic process. This article introduces the concept of colonial shadow integration, a form of individuation that is attuned to the cultural specificities in which the postcolonial subject encounters and integrate aspects of the self repressed under the internalized Manichean binaries of empire. This article studies Changez's journey from a brightly enacted Wall Street persona, through the devastating eruption of a colonial shadow after September 11, to his complex engagement with Erica as both anima and maya towards the conditional synthesis emerges from Lahore. This article contends that Hamid postulates fundamentalism not as an ideological standpoint but as an internalized psychic struggle, foregrounding the ethical assimilation of a historically troubled shadow as the main challenge of postcolonial selfhood in the contemporary geopolitical capitalist world order.*

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Keywords: *Postcolonial psychoanalysis, Jungian psychology, individuation, shadow, Mohsin Hamid, The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Abdul JanMohamed, identity, Changez.*

INTRODUCTION

THE POSTCOLONIAL PSYCHE IN CRISIS

Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) unveils as a prolonged dramatic monologue delivered by Changez, a Pakistani intellectual, to a silent American stranger in a Lahore cafe'. The cafe offers an ambiguous setting where individuals of different cultures and nationalities are engaged in interaction with each other that reeks of latent menace and severe distrust. The narrative's architectonics characterised by what Wayne Booth terms as "unreliable narration" along with Genette's concept of "focalization" is both intentional and controversial. The novel's nuanced engagement with post September 11 geopolitics have garnered global critical attention and debate. Consistent scholarship reads the text in relation to what Derek Gregory (2004) identifies as the "colonial present" (Gregory, 2004, p. 7) as a subtle charge sheet of American imperial power, neoliberal capitalism. These readings position Changez as a figure of renewed political awakening whose reverse journey is reflection of the moral bankruptcy of the neocolonial world order dominated and controlled by America. This dissonance with the empire is seen by David Harvey as what he terms "accumulation by dispossession" inherent in global finance capitalism (Harvey, 2003, p. 137).

Such fixed reading of the novel ties it irrecoverably with the historical urgency and illuminates its inevitable engagement with what Achille Mbembe theorizes as "necropolitics" in which the sovereign dictates who may live and who must die (Mbembe, 2003, p. 11). These attuned readings prioritize the external structures of power, control and visibility at the expense of the novel's subtle attention to interiority or what Jung terms as the "individuation process" (Jung, 1959, para. 490).

Changez's journey is not merely a register of his ideological dissatisfaction or geopolitical, religio-cultural reorientation. Rather, it exemplifies a consistent meditation on psychic faultlines, ethical

disillusionment and the slow reawakening of a self conditioned by the factors of colonial inheritance and corporate modernity. To decipher his transformation as only a political reaction amounts to reductive understanding of the nuanced and complex narrative that is invested in an outcome of unconscious conflict as conceptualised by Freud as the "return of the repressed" (Freud, 1915/1957, p. 154).

The journey of Changez does not simply provide a list of his ideological disillusionment or geopolitical, religio-cultural realignment. Instead, it is an example of an uninterrupted reflection on psychic faults, moral disillusionment and gradual return to self, a self socialised by the dynamics of colonial legacy and the modernities of corporations. Any reduction of his transformation into a mere political response to it is reductionist interpretation of the rich and multifaceted story that is enacted in an end product of unconscious struggle as conceptualised by Freud as in the process of the "return of the repressed" (Freud, 1915/1957, p. 154).

This novel endorses that The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) finds its enduring critical appeal in how it echoes a crisis of postcolonial psyche, what Fanon calls as a "zone of nonbeing", created by colonial domination (Fanon, 1952/2008, p. 2). The problematisation of change of the journey of Changez can be fruitfully achieved through the concept of individuation developed by Carl Jung, which is a teleological process whereby the subject engages and absorbs the repressed parts of psyche, the shadow archetype, in order to achieve a more balanced and proportioned Self (Jung, 1959, para. 490; von Franz, 1964, p. 168). However, Changez's psychic eruption does not occur in vacuum or follow the common Western developmental trajectory Jung often assumed. It is influenced by racialized surveillance, neo-imperial structures, and the institutionalized binaries of colonial discourse. A purely Jungian reading of the text risks universalizing his battles and neutralizes the historical specificity of the forces that constitute his unconscious, which is recognized by the postcolonial theorists as the psychic dimension of the colonial power.

To fill in this epistemological and methodological lacuna, this article attempts to productively problematise Jung's analytical psychology by engaging it in dialogue with Abdul JanMohamed's psychoanalytic theory of

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the colonial subject and Frantz Fanon's phenomenology of colonial experience. JanMohamed's postulation of the Manichean allegory explicates the rigid binary oppositions through which colonial power controls and shapes value, subjectivity, and identity. These oppositions are then internalized by the colonial subjects and get reproduced at the level of desire, ethical manifestation and self-orientations (JanMohamed, 1985, p. 63). These internalizations give birth to what Bhabha terms as "psychic economy" wherein mimicry, repression and self-surveillance become the mechanisms of belonging and survival within the colonial order (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). Fanon contends that the colonized subject goes through a fundamental "epidermalization of inferiority" whereby the racial and cultural differences are perceived by psyche as shame, inadequacy, and self-alienation (Fanon, 1952/2008, p. 4).

At the nexus of these standpoints, this article develops the concept of Colonial Shadow Integration, which encapsulates the dialogic and dialectic processes through which a postcolonial subject encounters and integrates those facets of the self that have been disavowed, repressed, or rendered abject to approximate the idealized figure of the colonizer described as "coercive mimeticism" demanded by imperial center (Chow, 2002, p. 107). Changez's shadow is not solely the repository of his repressed and rejected parts of the self, neither is it storehouse of the Jungian archetypal content but rather stores a historically approximated psychic formation composed of cultural dissociation, political resentment, ethical dilemmas. To put in Vijay Prashad's terms it constitutes "Third World consciousness", which his rising corporate persona must suppress to function within capitalist order (Prashad, 2007, p. 8). The incidents of September 11 trigger a traumatic rupture that decentralizes this persona and forces the colonial shadow into consciousness, initiating what Cathy Caruth theorizes as the "unclaimed experience" of trauma, an event that cannot be fully integrated in the moment of its occurrence and thus returns to haunt the subject (Caruth, 1996, p. 4).

This psychological conflict is further mediated by Changez's relationship

with Erica, which serves as both an embodiment of the anima figure in Jungian terms and what JanMohamed refers to as the specular economy of colonial desire. This refers to the structure in which the colonized subject looks up to the imperial center for its recognition and acceptance only to receive fundamental unavailability and symbolic violence (JanMohamed, 1985, p. 64).

Erica for Changez mediates emotional anchorage and cultural belonging within America, however, her ontological unavailability shown by her persistent obsession with the spectre of Chris, exposes the illusion at the heart of mimicry described as the “almost but not quite” quality of colonial imitation (Bhabha, 1994, p. 89). Her collapse and subsequent disappearance is the final outcome of the fallout of Changez with the imperial centre and the realisation of the shadow that has long been repressed, a step towards the false recognition of the core to the accepting and validating of the core.

The interconnections of Jungian individuation theory with JanMohamed's analysis of colonial subject formation, Fanon's phenomenology of colonial alienation, and contemporary trauma theory, this article contends that Changez's struggle is located not in geopolitical and economic structures alone but is also rooted in the psychic labor required to dismantle and reconstitute a self shaped by empire and its aftermaths. Changez's final emergence of self signals not closure, extremism, reactiveness, or political certainty but as potential and tentative ethically charged synthesis that recognizes historical injury without reproducing the Manichean binaries that produced it.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Existing scholarship revolving around the novel is overwhelmingly inclined to situate the narrative within its political, economic and geopolitical urgencies, often placing the text within broader discourses of postcolonialism, or Said's “Orientalism” and its contemporary manifestations (Said, 1978). An overwhelming body of readings situate the novel within post 9/11 critique of American imperialism and neoliberal capitalist globalizations. Basu (2010) reads the text as an exposé of imperial structure that fuels American exceptionalism, arguing that Changez's narrative destabilizes the moral authority of the United States by exposing

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the violence associated with its global reach and what Naomi Klein describes as "disaster capitalism" (Basu, 2010, pp. 349–358; Klein, 2007). McLeod (2013) reads the novel as reflection of the moral repercussions of transatlantic mobility celebrated as "Cosmopolitanism" by Appiah is undermined by asymmetries of power and systematic racialized exclusions (McLeod, 2013; Appiah, 2006).

These political, economic readings, informed by Marxist literary criticism, postcolonial studies and Orientalism provide foundations for understanding the contemporary situatedness of the novel and its associated historic stakes. They frame Underwood Samson as an offshoot of imperial rationality that is understood by Max Weber as "instrumental rationality," which identifies corporate fundamentalism as a form of ideological violence that replicates the religious fundamentalism that it so vehemently opposes (Weber, 1904/1958; Basu, 2010).

However, their emphasis on external structures often treats Changez's psychic transformation as an epiphenomenal effect of political incidents rather than as the main narrative engine. This results in reducing the nuanced subjective experience to mere ideological reflex. The novel's meticulous engagement with affect, ambivalence and unconscious response, termed as "cultural politics of emotion" remains undertheorized in such readings (Ahmad, 2004).

One of the biggest masses of the critical readings is focused on such concepts as diaspora, hybridity, and performance identity which is based on the theorization of diaspora as the becoming, not the being of Stuart Hall and the idea of Black Atlantic as the model of the formation of the transnational identity (Hall, 1990; Gilroy, 1993). Ahmad (2011) places Changez in the wider discussions of Muslim identity and democratic belonging by emphasizing securitizing demands made on Muslim subjects to act and be loyal and moderate in the global North. According to Mahmood Mamdani, this tendency is the demand of good Muslim to condemn bad Muslim (Ahmad, 2011; Mamdani, 2004). Although these readings are more concerned about the sociocultural aspects of the life of Changez, they are

not usually rigorously psychoanalytic account on the unconscious structures, affective processes, and the intrapsychic cost of this fluidity. The unconscious though invoked metaphorically is not theorized with the conceptual robustness that psychoanalytic framework provides.

Recent studies have begun to read the text within affective and psychological dimensions of Hamid's work, yet the integration of Jungian analytic psychology with postcolonial theory to analyse the process of individuation as it unfolds under conditions of neoimperial structures is novel and fresh. This article attempts to fill that gap by contending that Changez's transformation can be productively problematised by synthesizing Jungian Analytical Psychology with the insights of postcolonial psychoanalysis, particularly the work of Fanon, JanMohamed, and Bhabha. This synthesis equips us to conceptualise what I term as Colonial Shadow Integration. This results in informed rereading of the text as a historically specific form of psychic work that addresses both universal dimensions of the human psyche and the specific forms and structures of postcolonial subjectivity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SYNTHESIZING JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND POSTCOLONIAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

This article is informed by the strategic synthesis of Carl Jung's analytical psychology, specifically his concept of individuation, the shadow archetype, the persona, and the anima, along with postcolonial psychoanalytic theory as developed by Abdul JanMohamed, Homi Bhabha and others. This synthesis is not merely additive but dialectical, that accepts simultaneously both the universality of Jungian archetypes and its historical limitation when applied to non-Western, colonized subjects. Jung's theory of individuation is manifestation of a teleological process of psychic assimilation whereby the ego encounters, confronts, integrates, assimilates unconscious contents, particularly those accumulated in the "shadow", in pursuit of wholeness and what Jung terms the "Self" (Jung, 1959, para. 490). The shadow is the repository of those aspects of psyche and personality that the ego has repressed, denied, or projected onto others because they threaten the coherent, socially acceptable conscious self-image or persona. As Marie-Louise von Franz elucidates, "The shadow is that hidden, repressed, for the most part inferior and guilt-laden

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personality whose ultimate ramifications reach back into the realm of our animal ancestors" (von Franz, 1964, p. 168).

*However, Jung's postulation of the shadow as fundamentally formed by "inferior" personality traits or "uncivilized" impulses shows his concentration in early twentieth-century European culture and its attendant racial and civilizational hierarchies. This universalist framework, however, when applied to postcolonial subjects needs dialogic and dialectic problematisation. As Fanon formulates in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952/2008), the colonized subject's psyche is not entirely constituted by individual developmental history but is essentially shaped by the colonial encounter and the racialized "sociogeny" that positions the colonized as ontologically inferior (Fanon, 1952/2008, p. 90). The "shadow" for the postcolonial subject is not solely personal but historical, collective and politically charged. It constitutes those cultural inclinations, political affiliations, ethical orientations and forms of knowledge that the West has deemed primitive and irrational.*

Abdul JanMohamed's concept of Manichean allegory provides an interesting and critical site of intersection between Jungian psychology and postcolonial discourse. JanMohamed argues that colonial discourse and ideology operates through rigid schisms that compartmentalize the world into categories of civilized/savage, rational/emotional, white/Black, Western/Oriental (JanMohamed, 1985, p. 63). These binaries are not merely representational but formative of subjectivity; they control the psychic structure of both colonizer and colonized. The colonized subject internalizes the colonizer's gaze, to form an acceptable persona, and performs Bhabha's "mimicry" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 89).

The concept of Colonial Shadow Integration, thus emerges from the nexus of these theoretical intersections. It constitutes a psychic decolonization whereby the postcolonial subject removes the persona, confronts the shadow, and eventually begins the process of individuation. This, however, is not just the replication of the usual Jungian individuation process, which presupposes a stable social order and prioritizes

introspection over political struggle. Colonial Shadow Integration acknowledges that psychic struggles cannot be separated from historical consciousness and political resistance to global order. The shadow of Changez is not merely the storage-room of personal complexes but also has cultural identity, political criticism, moral outrage, and historical alienation. It is these very aspects, which his character as an up-and-coming globalized elite should stifle. Integration is hence a psychic political act.

METHODOLOGY

*This paper takes a qualitative, interpretive approach, which is based on close textual analysis, inspired by analytical psychology and postcolonial psychoanalytic theory. Instead of perceiving *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) as a sociological text or an unambiguous allegory of post 9/11 geopolitics, the article views the novel as a psychic text, where the forces of history leave their trace at the reverse end of the conflict, the level of affective dissonance, and the symbolic form. The methodology thus aims to follow the process of metabolism of colonial power, global capital as well as geopolitical violence in the subjectivity of the protagonist.*

ANALYSIS : MAPPING THE JOURNEY OF CHANGEZ THROUGH COLONIAL SHADOW INTEGRATION

*The initial success of Changez in the United States is not just another American Dream immigrant story; it is beyond just the implementation of the classic articulation of the American Dream. It heightens the process of internalization of imperial valuation. The Princeton elite culture that he adopts and adapts and the subsequent corporate machinery of Underwood Samson that he takes on, is the specular economy theorized by JanMohamed (1985). Each of his moves such as perfecting his smile, to softening his accent is a psychic adjustment geared towards validation and acceptance in those formations which have been historically hostile to his racial and cultural profile. The persona Changez makes out to be is coherent, self-confident and socially acceptable but inherently fragile, based on the contents of his repressed self, the historical ostracism and ethical turmoil (Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 43).*

In Jung, the ego is an extension of identification with socially approved ideals, which are not sturdy though, their stability is implemented by

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excluding that which the conscious self cannot bear (Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology 28). In the case of Changez, such isolation is accentuated by colonial past: these qualities which could enable his cultural and moral agency are viewed as being incompatible with the requirements of empire. The psychic entrapment of power can be seen in his early attraction towards Jim, the charismatic leader of Underwood Samson; the colonial gaze is a two-sided process, involving attraction, aspiration, and self-esteem (Hamid 40; JanMohamed 65).

The colonial shadow breaks out under the influence of the attacks of September 11. The accidental smile of Changez is a moment of psychic contention: an experience of facing his own internalized guilt and also the structural savageness and degradation of empire (Hamid 72). This emotive break causes his persona to be destabilized and the dormant existence of the shadow is brought into view. In this rupture, Changez confronts the psychic internalizations of global inequalities and ethical unease that have been repressed in his shadow.

This eruption of his shadow is further dramatized during his Valparaíso assignment. Confronted with Juan-Bautista, a beleaguered publishing house owner, Changez experiences a profound ethical dislocation: "I could not help but think of myself as a modern-day janissary" (Hamid 152). Here the archetype of the janissary, a soldier coerced into serving a foreign empire, mirrors his economic and psychic complicity. The shadow materializes as ethical awareness, forcing confrontation with moral contradictions that the persona alone cannot resolve.

Erica functions as a psychoanalytic and postcolonial mirror, simultaneously working as anima and the archetype of Maya. For Jung, anima connects the ego with deeper emotion (Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology 57). Erica evokes longing, nostalgia and the eventual desire of anchoring within an authentic relational experience. Nevertheless, she perfectly embodies the Maya archetype, who is unattainable, illusive and bound to the spectral presence of a deceased partner. The inaccessibility of her is a reciprocation of systematic exclusion that Changez experienced in

the colonial specular economy. His wish is designed as deficiency and his adjustment to the imperial center is indefinitely postponed (JanMohamed 64).

The moral and psychologic price of imitation is the desperate effort of Changez to live in her lost world by putting on the temporary mask of Chris. His affair with Erica is not purely based on his love feelings, but rather a psychological urge to long, to be acknowledged, to be vindicated on the cultural, moral, civilizational, ethical, racial front. Her ultimate disappearance of Erica makes her a Maya classic seductress who leaves his subject drowning in the incomprehensible psychic warfare that is disturbing.

After the unimaginable 9/11 events and the Erica incident, Changez deliberately assumes the contents of the shadow and Colonial Shadow Integration begins. The intentional act of developing a beard, the “knowing it will make me look like a mujahid” (Hamid, p.130), is a representation of a re-consideration of repressed identity and performance of a political protest. Reading this as a performative religiosity or reactionary extremism is reductive deciphering of an otherwise semiotic reclamation of otherness. It is conscious dissociation from imperial expectation and an ethical realignment with the suppressed selfhood previously marred by multiple complexes.

*For Jung, the initiation of individuation necessitates the collapse of the dominant conscious attitude, strengthening the ego to engage the contents of the shadow and pursue synthesis (Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 44). Changez’s withdrawal from Underwood Samson and his eventual return from America to home dramatize this collapse. He initiates the journey towards the Self informed by ethical awareness, historical recognition and psychic authenticity. He intentionally removes his persona and liberates himself by deliberate confrontation with internalized structures that are shaped by empire.*

Changez’s sitting in Lahore, engaging in a monologue, demonstrates partial, nevertheless culturally and personally charged integration. He occupies a space of reflective tension, recognizing both the “positive” and “negative” poles of colonial allegory (JanMohamed 66). His monologue is reflective of the dialogic space that he created as a result of integration. The

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fragmented persona and the diffusing shadow coalesce into an integrated conscious self. Yet, Jung teaches us that individuation is a continuing process that is tentative in nature; the real synthesis is only aspirational (Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology 60).

The metamorphosis of Changez is culturally and historically placed and fundamentally fundamentalism is presented as an inner, psychic struggle. The Lahore Café, which is full of narrative suspense, is a psychic liminal space that is compromised by past, historical discrimination, personal desires, racial occlusions, and civilizational otherness. His ultimate position resembles the ongoing work of postcolonial selfhood, where the achievement of Self, which is based on the psychic emancipation, is dependent on the ethical responsibility and historical consciousness.

CONCLUSION

The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) by Mohsin Hamid is more than just a post-9/11 novel that is based on the geopolitical imperatives of its era. It provides a glimpse of the multifaceted psychic make-up of a person engaged in different social and cultural predicament. The story of Changez in the context of the intersection of Jungian psychology and postcolonial discourse of JanMohamed proves that the postcolonial subject is engaged in combating battles at multiple levels. Their plights are psychologically on one hand and historically charged on the other. The transformation of the so-called golden boy of Wall Street into the bearded man sitting in the Lahore cafe can be regarded as an example of Colonial Shadow Integration.

His individuation process is critical with the breakdown of his persona occasioned by 9/11, racialized profiling and loss of relations. The unconscious smile towards the fall of the towers, the acknowledgement of hierarchical formations all over the world, and the retrieval of the beard are all indicators of conscious interaction with the colonial shadow. These are not symbolic gestures or even political gestures, but a calculated descent into the process of individuation in the search of authenticity.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) by Mohsin Hamid goes beyond the geopolitical story on 9/11 to map a psychologically and ethically rich

interior world. The analysis of *Changez* in terms of the synthesis of Jungian psychology and postcolonial frameworks by JanMohamed proves that the struggle of postcolonial subject is internal and can be traced in history. His Wall Street golden boy to the narrator character in Lahore is an example of Colonial Shadow Integration, a process where the ego deals with and absorbs the suppressed contents as a result of empire, historical resentment, moral requirements (Hamid 132; Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 44; JanMohamed 6566).

The ethical turning point of *Changez* as a person is the breakdown of his persona, which was triggered by 9/11, racist profiling, and personal loss. The forced smile when the towers were defeated, the acknowledgment of the part in the world wrongs, and the shaving of the beard all of them are the indicators of the conscious work with the colonial shadow. These are not symbolic gestures or political posture, but they are ethical and psychic work in the quest to be authentic (Hamid 72, 130; Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* 28). The fact that Erica is an anima and Maya is also an anima is an indication of the constraints of relational and cultural mimicry. This unreachability pushes *Changez* inside and he must admit that the real integration depends on the ability to face the historically organized shadow. This synthesis is performed in Lahore, in his monologue, which displays a dialogic, provisional and ethically vigilant self. Hamid does not simply redefine fundamentalism as a political ideology in itself, but as a psychic conflict of trying persona, shadow, and historical inheritance to come to terms.

The bottom line is that the novel claims that postcolonial individuation is undiscoverable without any ethical involvement and historical awareness. Lahore cafe serves as a physical and psychic place in which the subject is addressed with binaries of the empire that have been internalized. The tension resolution that was not achieved at the end of the novel highlights how Colonial Shadow Integration is still in progress, and selfhood is never full, and liberation must be constantly negotiated with ethical issues. The main contradiction in the modern globalized, subject in the work of Hamid, therefore, seems to be the conflict between forced masks and true self, in which the most challenging and radical form of fundamentalism can be an

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inward, reflective, and ethical one.



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