

THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST: CHANGEZ'S DISCERNING VOICE

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The 9/11 terrorist attack on Twin Towers at World Trade Centre can safely be called a seminal event in the history of the world. The change in the 'world order' that it brought about in the recent contemporary history is very vast, rather mammoth if we look at the socio-cultural denominations of the world today. It has shaken the very foundations of the modern world, has sent tremors and created many new fault lines in the cosmopolitan fabric of the world:

Many events have a catalytic effect on the course of history; some of them even have the potential to alter that course. The contemporary world has witnessed a series of events which have had dual effects on the conventional flow of history and its capability to change its course as well as cause the escalation of its momentum. The epochal event of 9/11 is one of them. Consequently the relations between nations have changed, new foes have emerged, friendly nations have become either enemies or friendlier than before. Few events like the assassination of Duke Ferdinand in 1914 or the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 have transformed the fabric of the world polity the way 9/11 has. (*Islamophobia* 81)

The event has also engaged the attention of the writers around the globe, more so in the country of Pakistan and its close neighbour Afghanistan which was a direct recipient of the repercussions of the 'War on Terror' that ensued thereafter. Mohsin Hamid, an once-expatriate Pakistani writer in his well acclaimed *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* deals with the issue in a refined monologue of his protagonist Changez.

An anti-American university professor at Lahore, Changez has an apparently chance encounter with an American stranger who he meets on a road in Lahore. The stranger remains wholly silent throughout the novel, with his expressions, actions and voice reflected only through the words of Changez. They move to a restaurant nearby where Changez recounts his story to the addressee, asking him not to be led by his intimidating beard,