

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE AS POSTMODERN FORM IN MOHSIN HAMID'S THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST

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Abstract

*This paper explores *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid through the lens of dramatic monologue as a postmodern narrative form. Drawing on both classical literary traditions and post-9/11 global anxieties, the novel reconfigures the dramatic monologue into a politically charged, psychologically layered, and narratively ambiguous device. Hamid's use of a single, uninterrupted voice Changez's monologue directed at an unnamed American listener in a Lahore café—mirrors and subverts the conventions of traditional dramatic monologue by destabilizing narrative authority, erasing the interlocutor's voice, and immersing the reader into a space of uncertainty and ideological tension. The study argues that this monologic form, characteristic of postmodern experimentation, serves multiple functions: it challenges the reliability of the narrator, problematizes truth and representation, and implicates the reader in the interpretive act. Furthermore, it becomes a strategic tool for addressing postcolonial identity, cultural alienation, and global power dynamics. Through close stylistic and structural analysis, the paper highlights how Hamid's postmodern adaptation of the dramatic monologue not only amplifies the psychological depth of the protagonist but also critiques Western-centric narratives of terrorism, nationalism, and the immigrant experience. The research ultimately positions *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a seminal work that merges formal innovation with political urgency in contemporary global literature.*

Keywords

Dramatic Monologue, Postmodernism, Narrative Voice, Reader Response, Political Discourse, Stylistic Analysis, Narrative Ambiguity, Postcolonialism, Global Literature

Introduction

Literary form and political context have long intersected in moments of cultural upheaval, yet in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, this relationship assumed a particularly urgent character. Writers across the globe grappled with how to narrate trauma, displacement, and identity within a world suddenly reconfigured by the rhetoric of terrorism, suspicion, and the “clash of civilizations.” Among such attempts, Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) has emerged as one of the most provocative and formally innovative contributions to contemporary literature. The novel not only foregrounds the anxieties of post-9/11 existence but also reshapes the contours of narrative technique by employing the dramatic monologue—a form historically tied to Victorian poetry—within the frame of postmodern fiction (Khan et al., 2017).

Traditionally, the dramatic monologue invites readers into the psyche of a speaker who addresses a silent listener, thereby offering an intimate yet partial window into subjectivity. Hamid, however, reconfigures this convention in strikingly postmodern ways. His protagonist, Changez, speaks in a continuous, uninterrupted monologue directed at an unnamed American in a Lahore café. The absence of the interlocutor's voice destabilizes the narrative, compelling readers to question the reliability of Changez, the authority of his storytelling, and the nature of the encounter itself. What begins as a conversation gradually transforms into an unsettling performance in which the boundaries between speaker and audience, fiction and reality, self and other, are constantly blurred (Chen & Ramzan, 2024).

This formal strategy does more than simply experiment with narrative structure; it mirrors the precariousness of postcolonial identities caught in the crossfire of global power relations. Changez embodies the contradictions of the immigrant subject: simultaneously integrated into Western corporate culture yet alienated by its implicit hierarchies; both seduced by America's promise and repelled by its geopolitical aggression. The monologue thus functions as a site of ideological contestation where questions of nationalism, belonging, and cultural estrangement are negotiated in real time (Nawaz et al., 2021a).

By situating the dramatic monologue within a postmodern framework, Hamid also foregrounds the act of interpretation itself. The silent American listener becomes a proxy for the reader, whose role shifts from passive observer to active participant. Each pause, insinuation, and ambiguity demands that the reader fill in the gaps, speculate on motives, and confront their own assumptions about identity and truth. In this way, Hamid weaponizes narrative form to implicate the audience in the very dynamics of suspicion, surveillance, and stereotyping that mark the global political climate (Nawaz et al., 2021b).

This paper seeks to explore *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a reimagining of the dramatic monologue for a postmodern, post-9/11 world. It argues that Hamid's choice of form is not a mere stylistic experiment but a deeply political act—one that interrogates the authority of Western-centric narratives, unsettles the boundaries of truth and fiction, and dramatizes the psychological depth of a character negotiating multiple cultural frontiers. Through close attention to the novel's stylistic strategies, narrative ambiguities, and political resonances, the study positions Hamid's work as a critical intervention in both literary form and global discourse (Khan et al., 2021).

Literature Review

Several scholars highlight how Hamid employs the dramatic monologue—a form typically rooted in Victorian poetry—to deepen psychological nuance and narrative ambiguity in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. One study notes that TRF is presented as “a kind of prose dramatic monologue addressed to Changez's unnamed guest at a restaurant in the Old Anarkali district of Lahore”. This echoes traditional dramatic monologue traits—especially the speaker's unreliability and the reader's responsibility to interpret meaning amid absent dialogue. Other criticism underscores how Changez's continuous narration to a silent listener resonates with the device's power to foreground subjectivity and implicit tension. The listener's absence destabilizes narrative authority and invites readers to interrogate assumptions—another hallmark of postmodern design. The novel's classification as postmodern fiction is well-supported in the literature. One scholar describes how Hamid transforms the dramatic monologue into a postmodern narrative, emphasizing identity fluidity and self-referential storytelling, stating the novel “uses the form of dramatic monologue... blurring the line between narrator and audience”.

Furthermore, the narration is described as “autodiegetic and metafictional literature,” which points to Hamid’s layers of self-reflexivity in the storytelling process (Khan & Ramzan, 2021). TRF’s engagement with postcolonial tension and the identity crisis post-9/11 has been the subject of focused research. A cultural discourse analysis by Ayaz (2024) explores Changez’s shifting perception of America—from aspirational “American Dream” to disillusioned resistance—through the lens of Orientalism and critical discourse analysis. This study foregrounds the ideological implications of the narrative form in reflecting political and cultural alienation. Another study delves into how the dramatic monologue amplifies political resistance, arguing that Hamid’s narrative structure is not merely aesthetic but explicitly oppositional, giving voice to marginalized discourses in a global context (Ramzan & Javaid, 2025). Pedagogical commentaries and educational analyses note that Hamid constructs the dramatic monologue to dramatize shared unease, suspicion, and the consequences of racial profiling. One such analysis observes that the novel, shaped as monologue between Changez and the American stranger, “shows the dangers of racial profiling,” and underlines how the silent listener becomes a site of anxiety and projection (Ullah et al., 2023). Across these studies, there’s a consistent alignment: Hamid’s adaptation of dramatic monologue in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is both a formal and political maneuver. The monologic structure destabilizes narrative certainty, inviting readers into a destabilized interpretive position. It enables exploration of postcolonial identity, trust, ideological dissonance, and cultural alienation in the post-9/11 world. The writing resists simple categorization—it’s at once introspective, reflective, and ideologically provocative (Javaid et al., 2024a).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical lens for this study draws on the intersection of narratology, postmodernism, and postcolonial theory, situating Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* within a broader discourse on form, identity, and power (Ramzan et al., 2023).

1. Dramatic Monologue as Literary Device

The dramatic monologue, traditionally associated with Victorian poetry (e.g., Browning and Tennyson), has been theorized as a form that simultaneously reveals and conceals the speaker’s subjectivity (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). As Robert Langbaum (1957) argues, the genre invites readers to engage in a “double process” of sympathy and judgment, oscillating between identification with the speaker and critical evaluation of their perspective. In Hamid’s text, Changez’s uninterrupted voice to an unnamed interlocutor foregrounds this duality. The silent listener not only reflects the classical monologue convention but also becomes a postmodern absence, destabilizing interpretive certainty (Javaid et al., 2024a).

2. Postmodern Narratology and Unreliable Narration

From a postmodern narratological perspective, Hamid’s novel embodies what Linda Hutcheon (1988) terms “historiographic metafiction”—fiction that problematizes truth, authority, and representation. The use of a single voice that dominates the narrative creates an unreliable perspective, aligning with Wayne Booth’s (1983) concept of the “unreliable narrator,” where readers must negotiate meaning through gaps, silences, and contradictions. The deliberate erasure of the listener’s voice and the open-ended conclusion exemplify postmodern strategies of ambiguity, indeterminacy, and readerly implication (McHale, 1987).

3. Reader-Response Theory and Interpretive Participation

The novel’s dialogic structure resonates with reader-response theory, particularly Wolfgang Iser’s (1978) notion of the “implied reader,” who fills in textual gaps through interpretive acts.

Since the American interlocutor remains voiceless, the reader assumes their position, becoming complicit in the tension, suspicion, and unease embedded in the narrative. This positioning transforms the reading process into an active encounter, where meaning is co-constructed rather than passively received (Ramzan, & Alahmadi, 2024).

4. Postcolonial Theory and Global Power Relations

At the same time, Hamid's manipulation of form cannot be divorced from its postcolonial context. Edward Said's (1978) theory of Orientalism is particularly relevant in understanding Changez's disillusionment with Western power structures. The dramatic monologue, as adapted by Hamid, becomes a counter-hegemonic form that destabilizes the Western gaze, reclaiming narrative authority for the marginalized subject. Similarly, Homi Bhabha's (1994) ideas of hybridity and ambivalence underscore the protagonist's in-between status as both insider and outsider in the globalized world. Through Changez's monologue, the novel foregrounds cultural alienation and contested belonging, situating the dramatic monologue within a politics of resistance (Ramzan & Khan, 2024a).

5. Synthesis

Taken together, these frameworks illuminate how *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* transforms the dramatic monologue into a postmodern form that interrogates identity, power, and truth. The text blurs boundaries between narrator and reader (Iser), challenges fixed narratives of history and politics (Hutcheon, McHale), and situates the immigrant voice within global hierarchies (Said, Bhabha). Thus, the theoretical foundation of this study rests on the convergence of literary form, postmodern indeterminacy, readerly participation, and postcolonial critique, enabling a multidimensional exploration of Hamid's novel (Ramzan & Khan, 2024b).

Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design, employing textual analysis as the primary method to investigate Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* through the lens of dramatic monologue and postmodern narrative experimentation. A qualitative approach was deemed most suitable because the research questions centered on meaning-making, interpretation, and the interplay between form, politics, and reader engagement—elements that cannot be captured through quantitative techniques. Rather than testing hypotheses, the study sought to explore how Hamid's narrative strategies produce ambiguity, negotiate identity, and position the reader within the discourse of post-9/11 global anxieties.

The text itself served as the principal unit of analysis. A close reading method was applied to examine stylistic, structural, and rhetorical elements, with particular attention to the novel's monologic voice, narrative silences, and the erasure of the interlocutor. This process drew on established practices in literary criticism, where passages were analyzed for thematic patterns, recurrent motifs, and formal strategies that contribute to narrative ambiguity and ideological complexity. Specific sections of the novel—such as Changez's recollection of his American experiences, his corporate assimilation and disillusionment, and the climactic ambiguity of the ending—were examined to illustrate how Hamid adapts the dramatic monologue tradition to postmodern purposes.

The methodology was also informed by theoretical triangulation, combining insights from narratology, postmodernism, reader-response theory, and postcolonial studies. Narratological analysis was used to evaluate the reliability of the narrator and the implications of a one-sided dialogue. Postmodern theory provided a lens to interpret Hamid's deliberate play with indeterminacy and metafictional elements. Reader-response perspectives framed the interpretive

role of the audience, particularly how the silent American listener implicates the reader. Postcolonial theory allowed exploration of identity, hybridity, and global power asymmetries embedded in the text. This layered analytical approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the novel as both a formal experiment and a political intervention.

In order to maintain scholarly rigor, the analysis was situated within existing academic discourse. Secondary sources—including peer-reviewed journal articles, literary criticism, and theoretical works—were consulted to contextualize findings and compare interpretive perspectives. These sources were retrieved primarily through Google Scholar and academic databases, ensuring reliability and academic credibility.

Finally, reflexivity formed an important component of this methodology. Since literary interpretation is inherently subjective, the researcher acknowledged their own positionality in engaging with the text, particularly in relation to post-9/11 discourses on terrorism, nationalism, and immigrant identity. This reflexive stance highlighted how interpretation is co-constructed between text, theory, and reader, aligning with the postmodern rejection of singular or authoritative truths.

Ethical Considerations

Although this study was primarily textual and did not involve human participants, ethical reflection remained central. Since *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* engages with sensitive issues—such as terrorism, racial profiling, nationalism, and post-9/11 cultural politics—care was taken to approach the analysis with academic sensitivity and respect for cultural contexts. The researcher acknowledged the risk of reproducing stereotypes or reinforcing polarized discourses in interpretation. To mitigate this, the study consistently drew upon peer-reviewed scholarship and established theoretical frameworks to maintain balance and avoid reductive generalizations. Furthermore, reflexivity was maintained throughout, with the researcher recognizing their own positionality in interpreting a text deeply entangled with global power asymmetries. This reflexive stance ensured that the study upheld principles of intellectual honesty, respect for diverse perspectives, and ethical responsibility in literary scholarship.

Justification for a Qualitative Approach

A qualitative approach was justified on several grounds. First, the study deals with subjective experience, narrative ambiguity, and ideological representation, phenomena that cannot be quantified or reduced to numerical patterns. Second, the nature of dramatic monologue itself—where meaning emerges through gaps, silences, and interpretive play—requires methods that privilege depth over breadth. Quantitative approaches, such as surveys or statistical analysis, would not capture the richness of Hamid's stylistic and political strategies. Similarly, a mixed-methods design was deemed unnecessary, as the focus is not on empirical generalization but on textual interpretation and theoretical engagement. Qualitative research, therefore, provides the flexibility and depth required to analyze how form and politics intertwine in Hamid's narrative.

Data Analysis and Results

Analytical Approach

The analysis employed close reading and interpretive textual analysis, supported by the theoretical lenses outlined earlier. The narrative was deconstructed across three intersecting dimensions: form (dramatic monologue), postmodern strategies (ambiguity, unreliability, metafiction), and political implications (postcolonial identity and global power relations). Each dimension was examined not in isolation but as overlapping fields that together generate the novel's complexity. Analytical coding involved identifying recurring motifs (voice, silence,

suspicion), narrative strategies (gaps, metafictional cues), and thematic clusters (alienation, cultural hybridity, nationalism, and resistance).

1. Form: Dramatic Monologue and Its Transformation

The results demonstrate that Hamid's deployment of the dramatic monologue reconfigures classical conventions into a novelistic experiment. Changez addresses an unnamed American in a continuous speech, but the absence of the interlocutor's voice transforms the dialogue into a one-sided performance. This silencing serves two purposes: it foregrounds the dominance of the narrator's perspective while simultaneously leaving interpretive gaps for the reader. Whereas traditional dramatic monologues, such as those in Browning's poetry, present a speaker who unwittingly reveals more than intended, Hamid's Changez is self-aware, manipulative, and reflective, consciously engaging the listener in persuasion. The narrative results suggest that this structural adaptation allows Hamid to merge the intimacy of monologue with the political urgency of testimony, destabilizing the boundary between confession and accusation.

2. Postmodern Strategies: Ambiguity, Reliability, and Reader Implication

The analysis further reveals how postmodern techniques shape the reader's experience. Changez's monologue is marked by strategic ambiguity—he narrates with confidence but leaves events open to suspicion. For example, the climactic ending, where the American's intentions remain uncertain, resists resolution. The unreliable narrator effect is central: Changez's retrospective account of his life in America is colored by nostalgia, bitterness, and ideological conviction, raising doubts about accuracy. Postmodern play is most evident in the erasure of the listener's voice. Every supposed response of the American is mediated through Changez's narration, collapsing the line between dialogue and soliloquy. The results suggest that this device forces the reader into the American's role, making them complicit in the interpretive process. Each pause, insinuation, or evasive gesture requires the reader to speculate on meaning, embodying Wolfgang Iser's concept of the "implied reader." This shifting interpretive responsibility exemplifies postmodern destabilization of authority and truth.

3. Themes of Identity and Postcolonial Alienation

Analysis of thematic clusters highlights how Hamid employs the monologic form to dramatize identity conflict and postcolonial alienation. Changez's trajectory—from Princeton student and Wall Street analyst to disillusioned returnee—mirrors the broader immigrant struggle of belonging and exclusion. His admiration for America's meritocratic ideals is gradually overshadowed by his awareness of its imperial posture, particularly after 9/11. The results reveal that the dramatic monologue amplifies this psychological duality: Changez speaks as both insider and outsider, confessing affection for America while indicting its cultural arrogance. His voice embodies what Homi Bhabha terms hybridity—a space of ambivalence where the subject is never fully assimilated nor fully rejected. The findings suggest that Hamid's formal innovation not only deepens Changez's character but also positions his alienation as emblematic of postcolonial dislocation in a globalized world.

4. Political Discourse and Narrative Suspicion

The data also underscore how narrative form operates as a political strategy. The Lahore café setting, with its implied atmosphere of surveillance and suspicion, becomes a microcosm of global East-West tensions. The absence of explicit confrontation—whether Changez is threatening or merely conversing—produces a climate of unease that mirrors post-9/11 distrust. The results show that Hamid deliberately uses the open-endedness of dramatic monologue to problematize truth. Neither the American's intentions nor Changez's reliability is

confirmed, compelling the reader to grapple with competing possibilities. This outcome aligns with Linda Hutcheon's theory of postmodern indeterminacy, where narrative ambiguity resists closure and compels active interpretation. Thus, the monologue itself becomes a political act of resistance: it rejects Western demands for fixed identity categories (terrorist vs. victim, loyalist vs. dissenter) and instead inhabits the fluidity of lived experience.

5. Reader Response and Interpretive Engagement

Perhaps the most significant result of this analysis lies in the reader's forced participation. By silencing the American, Hamid transfers responsibility for interpretation to the audience. The results demonstrate that this narrative strategy destabilizes conventional literary consumption—readers are no longer passive observers but implicated participants. They must decide whether to trust Changez, whether to fear the American, and how to resolve the story's ambiguity. This implicatory function situates the novel within global discourse, where Western readers, in particular, confront their assumptions about immigrants, terrorism, and cultural otherness. The dramatic monologue thus emerges not only as a literary form but as an interactive site of ethical reflection, compelling readers to examine their own prejudices and ideological positions.

Summary of Findings

The analysis reveals that:

1. Hamid reconfigures the dramatic monologue into a postmodern narrative experiment, privileging one voice while erasing the interlocutor's.
2. Ambiguity and unreliability emerge as key strategies, implicating readers in the interpretive process.
3. The monologue amplifies postcolonial alienation and hybridity, dramatizing Changez's conflicted identity.
4. Narrative form becomes a political tool, reflecting global suspicion and destabilizing Western-centric truths.
5. Readers are transformed from passive consumers into active participants, enacting the ideological tension of the text within their own interpretive act.

These results affirm the central argument that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is not merely a political narrative but also a formally innovative text, where Hamid's adaptation of the dramatic monologue exemplifies postmodern strategies and postcolonial resistance simultaneously.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* operates as both a formal experiment in narrative technique and a political intervention in global discourse. Through its adaptation of the dramatic monologue, the novel destabilizes narrative authority, implicates the reader in the interpretive act, and dramatizes the tensions of postcolonial identity in the aftermath of 9/11. This discussion situates these results within broader theoretical debates, highlighting how Hamid's novel embodies postmodern innovation while articulating urgent postcolonial concerns. The study's results reveal that Hamid's monologic form mirrors yet subverts the conventions of the dramatic monologue. Classical theorists such as Robert Langbaum (1957) emphasized the genre's reliance on a speaker who simultaneously invites sympathy and judgment from the reader. Hamid reconfigures this dynamic by presenting a speaker, Changez, who is both persuasive and ambiguous. Unlike Browning's monologists, who inadvertently reveal flaws, Changez appears consciously self-aware, even manipulative, blurring the line between sincerity and performance. This transformation aligns with postmodern narratology, where genre conventions are not abandoned but reimaged as sites of resistance

and play. By silencing the American interlocutor, Hamid alters the monologue from a dramatic exchange into a postmodern experiment in one-sidedness, forcing readers to confront not just what is spoken but also what remains unheard. The dramatic monologue, then, becomes a flexible vehicle that allows Hamid to merge introspection, confession, and political commentary into a single narrative form.

A key result of this analysis is the novel's reliance on ambiguity and unreliability. Changez's account is mediated by personal emotion, ideological commitment, and retrospective reflection. As Wayne Booth's (1983) concept of the "unreliable narrator" suggests, such narrative strategies compel the audience to question truth claims and reconstruct meaning through interpretive effort. This resonates with Brian McHale's (1987) conception of postmodern fiction as privileging epistemological uncertainty, where the question is not simply "what happened?" but "how do we know what happened?" Hamid's narrative indeterminacy—most notably the unresolved ending—resists closure and denies readers a definitive resolution. The postmodern distrust of master narratives (Lyotard, 1984) is evident here: Hamid deliberately rejects the binary categories often imposed on post-9/11 identities (terrorist vs. victim, loyalist vs. dissenter). By refusing to clarify whether Changez is a threat or merely a storyteller, the novel foregrounds the instability of truth and the fragility of interpretive certainty in a world shaped by suspicion.

The findings also show that Hamid transforms the reader into an active participant in the narrative. By silencing the American, Hamid positions the audience in the role of interlocutor, compelling them to respond imaginatively to Changez's insinuations, pauses, and silences. This structure exemplifies Wolfgang Iser's (1978) theory of the "implied reader," where meaning emerges through the filling of textual gaps. This participatory dynamic is not merely stylistic but deeply political. Western readers, in particular, are forced to confront their own assumptions about the immigrant, the Muslim, and the "other." By implicating the audience, Hamid destabilizes the comfort of detached reading, demanding instead a confrontation with one's prejudices and interpretive choices. Thus, the novel demonstrates how postmodern form can become a site of ethical engagement, where literature functions not only as art but also as a mirror of global anxieties. Beyond formal experimentation, the results emphasize the novel's engagement with postcolonial identity and cultural alienation. Changez embodies hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), navigating between insider and outsider positions. His Princeton education and Wall Street career initially mark him as assimilated into American modernity, yet his increasing disillusionment reveals the limits of belonging in a system structured by cultural hierarchies and suspicion. Edward Said's (1978) critique of Orientalism is especially relevant here: Changez's growing awareness of being perceived as an "other" in post-9/11 America exemplifies the persistence of Orientalist discourses in contemporary contexts. The dramatic monologue amplifies this alienation, giving voice to a subject who is both intimately connected to and critically estranged from the West. By reclaiming narrative authority through a one-sided account, Changez resists the silencing effects of imperial representation and asserts his own interpretive power.

Perhaps the most significant implication of these results is that Hamid's manipulation of form functions as a political strategy. The dramatic monologue, as adapted here, dramatizes the dynamics of power, surveillance, and suspicion that define the global post-9/11 landscape. The Lahore café setting becomes symbolic of a world where East and West confront each other across a table, locked in dialogue yet separated by mistrust. By leaving the interlocutor's voice unheard, Hamid denies Western authority within the text, inverting the usual power dynamic of

representation. Instead, the immigrant voice dominates, narrating and interpreting events without interruption. This silencing is not accidental; it is a deliberate reversal that exposes how marginalized subjects are often denied narrative agency in global discourse. Thus, the novel exemplifies how formal innovation merges with political urgency, creating a text that is as much about how stories are told as it is about what stories are told.

In sum, the discussion highlights that Hamid's novel cannot be understood solely as a political commentary or as a postmodern experiment. It is precisely in the fusion of form and politics that its significance lies. The dramatic monologue, traditionally a vehicle for psychological depth, is repurposed as a postmodern, postcolonial weapon—destabilizing authority, amplifying alienation, and compelling readerly participation. The results confirm that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* stands as a seminal work in global literature, demonstrating how narrative form can be strategically adapted to respond to geopolitical crises. Hamid's text illustrates that the dramatic monologue, far from being a relic of the Victorian past, remains a living form—capable of articulating the anxieties, ambiguities, and complexities of the 21st century.

Conclusion

This study has examined Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* through the lens of dramatic monologue as a postmodern narrative form. The findings reveal that Hamid reimagines the classical tradition of the dramatic monologue—historically rooted in the works of Browning and Tennyson—into a politically charged, formally innovative, and ideologically destabilizing structure. By silencing the American interlocutor and privileging Changez's uninterrupted narration, Hamid destabilizes conventional narrative authority and compels readers to occupy the position of the silent listener. The discussion highlighted several key insights. First, the novel exemplifies postmodern experimentation through its use of ambiguity, unreliability, and narrative gaps, refusing closure and resisting the imposition of fixed meaning. Second, the reader's role is central: through active interpretive engagement, audiences are implicated in the tensions of suspicion, trust, and identity that define the text. Third, the novel is firmly situated in postcolonial discourse, dramatizing the alienation and hybridity of the immigrant subject while simultaneously resisting Western-centric narratives of terrorism and belonging. Finally, the study established that Hamid's narrative form itself functions as a political strategy, inverting power dynamics by silencing the Western voice and foregrounding a marginalized perspective. Taken together, these conclusions affirm that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is more than a novel about post-9/11 identity; it is a formally innovative intervention in global literature, one that merges aesthetic experimentation with political urgency. Hamid demonstrates that the dramatic monologue, rather than being a relic of the past, can serve as a flexible and radical tool for negotiating contemporary anxieties of nationalism, globalization, and cultural alienation. In conclusion, Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* demonstrates how literature can simultaneously innovate form and interrogate politics. By reimagining the dramatic monologue for a postmodern, postcolonial age, Hamid challenges readers to confront their assumptions, implicates them in global tensions, and redefines the possibilities of contemporary narrative art. This study affirms the novel's enduring significance as a work that merges formal creativity with political urgency, ensuring its place as a landmark in both literary studies and global cultural discourse.

Recommendations

Future research may extend this analysis by comparing Hamid's adaptation of the dramatic monologue with similar narrative strategies in other contemporary texts, such as J.M. Coetzee's

Disgrace or Mohsin Hamid's later works like *Exit West*. Comparative studies would broaden understanding of how postmodern narrative forms are mobilized across global literatures to articulate postcolonial concerns. Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches that integrate literary theory with political science or sociology could further illuminate how narrative form interacts with global discourses of terrorism, migration, and surveillance. This research underscores the need to view Hamid's novel as part of a broader postcolonial project that resists the silencing of subaltern voices. Scholars should explore how narrative structures themselves act as counter-hegemonic tools, shaping not only the content but also the politics of storytelling. Hamid's inversion of voice and silence could be situated alongside other postcolonial authors who manipulate narrative perspective to subvert Western authority. From a pedagogical perspective, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* offers fertile ground for teaching both literary form and political discourse. In classrooms, the novel can be used to introduce students to dramatic monologue as a literary device, while simultaneously inviting discussion about issues of race, identity, and power in the post-9/11 context. Educators are encouraged to emphasize the role of the reader as participant, drawing attention to how Hamid's form implicates students in the act of meaning-making. This reflexive engagement can foster critical awareness of how literature shapes and challenges cultural assumptions. Finally, the study recommends positioning *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a seminal text in global literature—one that bridges East and West, tradition and innovation, aesthetics and politics. It should be read not merely as a post-9/11 narrative but as a text that exemplifies the global circulation of literary forms and their capacity to respond to shared anxieties. Such a perspective highlights Hamid's role in reshaping the contours of 21st-century narrative experimentation.

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