

Reluctant fundamentalist essay sample



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In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Mohsin Hamid uses a variety of literary devices to create the tone of confusion and agitation. By doing so, Mohsin Hamid also develops a theme of change. All these literary features combine to make an enthralling page-turner. One literary device used by the author to create restlessness in the reader is diction. The author intentionally uses words to create discomfort in the reader. “The twin towers of New York’s World Trade center collapsed. And then I smiled. Yes, despicable as it may sound (4-6).” The fact that the protagonist smiles at America’s misfortune only puts the reader at unease. Furthermore, the author himself suggests that the smile was a despicable reaction. However by making the reader anxious, Mohsin Hamid does only but one thing; lure in the reader to continue reading. This quote also denotes Changez’s change towards America. This is because, although Changez was “the product of an American university; (he) was earning a lucrative American salary; (he) was infatuated with an American woman (28-30)” his initial reaction to this incident was a smile.

The repetition of the word “American” only creates the motif that Changez has supposedly become American. However after the attack, Changez’s smile only suggests otherwise; thereby creating the theme of change. Another literary device used by Mohsin Hamid to create a sense of confusion is the use of ambiguity through dramatic monologue. “It is hateful to hear another person gloat over one’s country’s misfortune. But surely you cannot be completely innocent of such feelings yourself (22-24).” Because the American does not speak, the reader is forced to create the personality of the American in his or her own mind. Thus, when the protagonist accuses the

American of being guilty of such feelings, the protagonist is essentially accusing the reader of those feelings. The ambiguity of this quote further agitates the reader, yet at the same time forces the reader to continue reading in hope of finding more truths about the reader's self. One more technique the author uses to develop the theme of change as well as compel the reader to continue reading is foreshadowing.

After reflecting on his reaction to the attack, Changez still doesn't know why he smiled; " So why did part of me desire to see America harmed? I did not know, then (30-31)." Although Changez is not sure why he smiled at the present time, this quote indicates that later on, the reader will find out why he smiled; another reason requiring the reader to finish reading the book. Simultaneously however, the author also foreshadows a lot of change is about to take place since we already know Changez is back in Pakistan and telling this story to an American at a Pakistani café. Literary devices and techniques are abundant in this passage, though they all merge to create a sense of perplexity and irony. At the same time however, they all merge to create the theme of change. Though all this contrariness simply obliges the reader to continue reading the book. Not only will the reader finally understand Changez's reaction to the attack but the reader will also discover new truths about him or herself as he/she continues to read the book.