THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST: ANALYSIS ON CHANGEZ’S CHARACTER

Mohsin Hamid’s protagonist in “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” represents what in literary language is called a round character. Indeed, one could easily understand after reading the novel that he’s no ordinary immigrant who searches for work in the US, but rather a foreigner whose assumptions about the New World get eventually turned upside down.

Also, Changez’s name itself has not been chosen at random, for it describes a process that he underwent from the beginning of his life in the States to his return to homeland (Pakistan).

It is possible to chronologically list three phases of his experience, namely “Naïve phase”, “Maturation” and “Awareness phase”.

The first one depicts Changez’s hopefulness and trust about the “American dream”, for which every desire can become true after hard work and endeavour. His amusement about the USA is also enhanced by his own results he gets at Princeton University. But very little does he know about the real face of America, a country that attracts world’s best minds seeking for luck and perfects their skills just in order to harness and exploit their ability for the good sake of America only.

As it turned out further on in the narration, good manners towards Changez are actually a cover of the fact that most American people, when it is needed, are just as narrow-minded and nationalist as many other Western citizens.

When it comes to Maturation, Changez commences to become suspicious of the reality he lives in, and this feeling is fired up by American people’s reaction in the aftermath of the Twin Towers attack. The protagonist is now compelled to face the dark side of a foreign (and Western) country, which makes him suspect that maybe the USA has been concealing a deluding truth: Changez was being used just like a puppet by America for its own development. Indeed, outside his job, he’s seen pretty much as a threat by natives and arouses suspicion inside their minds.

Changez eventually understands that he does not belong in the reality he previously considered to be promising and useful in the pursuit of his goals, so he decides to go back to Pakistan, for he is now conscious about America’s dangerousness and insincerity.

I think that both Changez and American ordinary people are not to blame for their demeanour. Indeed I would probably behave the same way if I were to face their situations. Changez has bid goodbye to America for the bad manners he received (which made him aware of many things), and American citizens got defensive when they had been attacked in their nation’s heart.

Nevertheless, an external point of view could bring someone to admit that whatever the violence committed, the United States are the core of the greatest part of world’s most powerful organisations, from banks to multinational corporations, and they are also the cause of most of East’s greatest problems. It is therefore necessary to analyse such situation on a political and historical point of view, out of which America would definitely have to be blamed for tons of irreparable misdeeds.