# Secularism and Islam: Friction in the Post 9/11 Fictions by Muslim Writers

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*Abstract*

The present study has its genesis in a film entitled *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2012), a political thriller by Mira Nair adapted from the 2007 novel of the same name by Mohsin Hamid, a popular British-Pakistani novelist and columnist. As I started pondering the novel after watching the movie, my attention got invited to the intricacies of the Muslim young protagonist Changez's efforts to address the post 9/11 confusions between the East and the West, tolerance and xenophobia, dreams and beliefs. Changez's girlfriend Erica at the very progress of the pages seemed to be a shadow of America (*I'm Erica*) to my own ears. I ran my eyes upon internet and began my search for critical papers and research articles about tolerance, then secularism and finally the impact of the 9/11 on literary artifacts in general and 'Muslim' writers in particular. I found that while much has been said about the 9/11, its global impact on English literature (Western; American to be more precise) or its aftereffect as the increase of Islamophobia, the interface between 'Muslim' writers and the 9/11 is scanty. In the meantime, when comparative studies on Hindu myths and mythology with secular values were becoming more popular with days, Islam was in a jeopardized state of academic hibernation. This initiated my zeal into the research.

To trace the history and the nature of the interface between the values of secularism and Islam over the years is an ongoing process, where I feel that the evident problematics and jeopardies have been side-lined by the academia. To pronounce the caricatures of post 9/11 phenomena in the fictional writings, the literatures are opening up newer possibilities through its emergence in the recent times. The politics in South Asian continents having a major role in the geopolitical discourses consistently keep in depth traces upon the psychodynamics of the literati. While I never claim to have made an exhaustive study in the

field, I have surely tried to identify some of the major facets of this interface as documented by the major Muslim authors of South Asian English Fiction as well as the writers from the Middle East. For example, in this doctoral dissertation I have extensively touched upon Fadia Faqir, an eminent writer from Jordan now living in the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, there are also major shelves on regional literature by Muslim writers which need to be translated for the so called global reception and deliberation. In fact, a lot of such works are being carried out. Further research in this area will surely be taken up by future scholars that would positively enrich the academia and add values.