

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
“The Reluctant Fundamentalist”

Text guide by: Scott Langan

Copyright © TSSM 2010

TSSM

ACN 099 422 670

ABN 54 099 422 670

A: Level 14, 474 Flinders Street Melbourne VIC 3000

T: 1300 134 518

F: 03 97084354

W: tssm.com.au

E: info@tssm.com.au

Contents

AUTHOR NOTES.....	4
HISTORICAL CONTEXT	5
Pakistan	5
Modern Pakistan.....	6
America	8
GENRE	10
Audience.....	11
STRUCTURE.....	12
STYLE.....	13
Rhetoric Questions	14
Questions and Answers	14
Symbols	15
SETTINGS	17
CHAPTER SUMMARIES	19
CHARACTERPROFILES.....	22
Protagonists and Antagonists	22
Construction of Character	22
Major Characters:.....	23
Minor Characters:.....	27
Relationships between Characters.....	29
THEMES AND ISSUES	30
Fundamentalism	30
Cultural Assumption and Bias.....	31
Corporate versus Personal Ethics.....	32
IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS	33
EXPLANATION OF EXAMINATION CRITERIA.....	37
SAMPLE ESSAY TOPICS.....	38
FINAL EXAMINATION TIPS.....	39
REFERENCES	40
References Used.....	40
References for Students.....	40

Note: All page numbers provided throughout this piece are taken from Hamid, Mohsin. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Penguin 2007.

AUTHOR NOTES

Mohsin Hamid was born in Lahore, Pakistan, in 1971. When he was three, he and his family moved to America. For the next six years his father was employed as a university professor whilst being enrolled in a PhD program at Stanford University. At the age of nine his family returned to Lahore, where he attended the Lahore American School.¹ At the age of eighteen, Hamid returned to the United States to study at Princeton University. He graduated from Princeton in 1993 and returned to Pakistan to work on his first novel, which he had begun at Princeton in a fiction workshop taught by the writer Toni Morrison. He then returned to America to attend the Harvard Law School, graduating in 1997.

After graduating from Harvard, he worked as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company in New York. He managed to take three months off each year to write. His first novel, *Moth Smoke* was published in 2000.

Moth Smoke (2000), dealt with sex, drugs, and class conflict in 1990's urban Pakistan. It asks the reader to judge the trial of an ex-banker and heroin addict who has fallen for his best friend's wife. *Moth Smoke* became a cult hit in Pakistan, where it was made into a telefilm. It was also the winner of a Betty Trask Award and a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award.

Hamid moved to London in 2001 and lived there for the next eight years, becoming a dual citizen of the United Kingdom in 2006. In 2007, he published his second novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. This novel became an international best seller. It was short-listed for the Man Booker Prize, as well as winning numerous other awards.

In 2009, Hamid moved permanently to Lahore, taking with him his wife Zahra and their daughter Dina.

Mohsin Hamid also writes for the *Guardian*, *Time Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *La Republica*, and various other publications.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Pakistan

The single most defining element in the history of Pakistan has been its geographic location. Situated in south west Asia, it is wedged between India to the east, Afghanistan to the west, Iran to the south west and China to the north east. Pakistan's history is full of stories of invasion, colonisation, struggles for independence, war, civil war and military coups. The region now known as Pakistan, has been part of no less than six empires, beginning with the invasion of the Ancient Greeks and ending with the granting of independence from the British Empire in 1946.

The Post-Independence era in Pakistan's history has been turbulent. To indicate just how volatile the political landscape of Pakistan was, a brief recount of the country's changes in leadership since the first Governor General passed away after British rule, paints a confusing but fascinating picture.

In 1951 Prime Minister Khan Liaquat Ali Khan is assassinated. In 1958 there is a military coup and the dictator Ayub Khan takes control of the country.

In 1965 there is the Second War between Pakistan and India over the province of Kashmir.

In 1969 Ayub Khan resigns and Yahya Khan declares martial law and assumes the presidency. In 1971 East Pakistan attempts to secede to India. With India's support, another war between these two countries, East Pakistan breaks away and becomes the country of Bangladesh. This leads to the resignation of the Pakistani President Yahya Khan.

In 1972 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto becomes President and subsequently Prime Minister in 1973. In 1977 General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq ousts Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and martial law is again declared. He declares himself Pakistan's sixth President. General elections are finally held in 1985 and Muhammad Khan Junejo becomes Prime Minister but then in 1988 General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq dismisses this government.

With General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq's death in a plane crash later this same year, new elections are held and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto is elected Prime Minister. This government lasts only two years before the President, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, dismisses Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif becomes the next Prime Minister. Benazir Bhutto becomes Prime Minister again in 1993, but is dismissed by President Farooq Leghari in 1996. In 1997 general elections are held and Nawaz Sharif is elected Prime Minister for the second time.