



Original article

Faith, Gender, and Spiritual Resistance: Reimagining Islamic Ethics in the Neoliberal Age in Mohsin Hamid's How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia

Hussein Nasir Shwein Al-Khazili

Al- Qadisiyah University/ College of Arts/ English dept

***Correspondence author:**
husein.naser@qu.edu.iq

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ABSTRACT

This study indicates Mohsin Hamid's How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia (2013) examines the notion of faith within the framework of neoliberal Pakistan. While the previous literary studies viewed this novel as a satire of globalization. However, these works fail to address the reconstruction of Islamic ethical subjectivity. This study fills that significant gap. The study integrates postcolonial theory with Islamic ethical ideas such as niyyah (intention) and ihsan (benevolence). It claims that the novel expresses a form of spiritual opposition to hyper-materialism. The author uses second-person narration and a self-help format to question the dichotomy between secularism and fundamentalism. The analysis shows how the protagonist and female lead use resilience to negotiate challenging moral terrains. Finally, the story reimagines Islamic teachings as a subversive form of empathy. This view offers the essential ethical framework for the postnormal period.

Keywords: Gendered agency, Islamic ethics, Mohsin Hamid, Neoliberalism, Postcolonial subjectivity, Spiritual resistance

الإيمان، والجندر، والمقاومة الروحية: إعادة تصور الأخلاقيات الإسلامية في العصر النيوليبرالي في رواية محسن حميد "كيف تصبح فاحش الثراء في آسيا الصاعدة"

م. حسين ناصر شوين الخزعلي
جامعة القادسية / كلية الآداب

المُستخلص

تشير دراسي هذه إلى أن رواية محسن حميد "كيف تصبح فاحش الثراء في آسيا الصاعدة" (2013) تستقصي مفهوم الإيمان ضمن إطار باكستان النيوليبرالية. وفي حين نظرت الدراسات الأدبية السابقة إلى هذه الرواية التي تناولتها في بحثي بوصفها هجاءً للعولمة، إلا أن تلك الأعمال أغفلت تناول إعادة بناء الذاتية الأخلاقية الإسلامية؛ لذا تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى سد هذه الفجوة البحثية الكبيرة. تدمج دراستي بين نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار والمفاهيم الأخلاقية الإسلامية، مثل "النية" و"الإحسان"، وتجادل بأن الرواية تعبر عن شكل من أشكال المقاومة الروحية للمادية المفرطة. يوظف المؤلف السرد بضمير المخاطب وقالب كتب المساعدة الذاتية لمساءلة الثنائية القائمة بين العلمانية والأصولية. كما يُظهر التحليل كيف يستخدم البطل والشخصية النسائية الرئيسية المرونة للتعامل مع سياقات أخلاقية شائكة. وأخيراً، تعيد القصة تصور التعاليم الإسلامية كشكل تقويضي من أشكال التعاطف؛ وتقدم هذه الرؤية الإطار الأخلاقي الجوهرية لمرحلة "ما بعد العادية".

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفاعلية الجندرية، الأخلاقيات الإسلامية، محسن حميد، النيوليبرالية، الذاتية ما بعد الاستعمارية، المقاومة الروحية.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistani English fiction of the modern era provides a complex and colorful area of concern to examine the comingling of postcolonial identity, globalization, and religious consciousness. Mohsin Hamid writes as a postmodern author to examine the immoral consequences of the effect of neoliberal capital on the individual. *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) is characterized by an anonymous protagonist weaving through an Asian city. The narrative represents satire and the voice of self-help literature (Saleem, 2023; Aslam, Ali, & Taqi, 2025). The book represents the broader global literary trend of authors examining the identity of Muslims in a secular space (Chambers, 2019). The initial literature focused on the criticality of the voice concerning both consumerism and the presence of social mobility (Iftikhar & Imran 2016; Rabbani and Chaudhary, 2020), but did not pay attention to the manner by which the text represents the reconstruction of the Islamic ethic of subjectivity. The narrative seeks to examine the manner to which the protagonist must produce devoutness while participating within the capitalist system (Maydan, 2022). This research shall rectify the oversight to propose that it represents a postcolonial counter-narrative. Hamid represents a morality concerning the actuality of the human experience that arrives at the possession of spiritual purity through the development of the worldly.

The theoretical construct applied to the analysis is founded on the postcolonial theory and Islamic ethics. The research starts with the application of the concept of hybridity and the "Third Space" as developed by Homi K. Bhabha (1994). This concept explains that cultural identities and definitions are not fixed, but in a state of dispute. Second, within the framework, there is Islamic ethical theory that was coined by Ebrahim Moosa (2015). The approach lays emphasis on such essential pillars as *niyyah* (intention) and *ihsan* (spiritual benevolence). These concepts provide the vocabulary needed to grasp the characters' inner moral quandaries. Lastly, the research utilizes the sociological concept of the postnormal times by Ziauddin Sardar (2005). This term is used to describe the present moment of history when the previous certainty is lost and new norms are being pursued in a chaotic manner. In order to support this argument, the study is categorized into three key sections. The initial part examines the moral restructuring of the protagonist. It studies the process of material accumulation to spiritual underpinning. The second section examines the figure of the pretty girl, and views her fluidity and her career as a form of gendered spiritual resistance and agency. The last part dwells on the form of the narrative, showcasing the way in which the use of the second person narration and a self-help format force the readers to assume moral responsibility to themselves. The research concludes that faith as explained by Hamid is an emerging ethical consciousness, which has its focus on purpose, mercy, and seeking perfection. This finding is important as it provides a viable ethical basis to the contemporary life, which means that ancient ethical principles can be reused to experience contemporary complicated and corrupted economies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An evaluation of scholars writing about Mohsin Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) would place this text within the realm of social satire, the extent of global capitalism, and the construct of postcolonial identity. In addition, Shah and Sheeraz (2022) similarly argue that Anglo-Pakistani fiction is a potent force to resist neoliberal ideology through scathing literary critique. Hamid is recognized as a major figure of the postmodern movement, whose works explore the moral and psychological rifts which result from neoliberal capitalism ideology. It seems that a major reading of this novel, which takes the form of a self-help guide describing the rise of a faceless protagonist in a faceless city, is a denunciation of external social structures and not a guide for spiritual inner journeys. One of the most influential readings of this novel is as a social satire reflecting on the contemporary South Asian condition. According to Iftikhar and Imran (2016), this text is directed, first and foremost, at failing institutional structures detailing examples involving, for instance, the prevalence

of dengue fever and contaminated water as a form of highlighting its socio-political significance, and suggests a relative lack of concern with personal ethics. In a similar perspective, another study conducted by Saleem (2023) applies *Reader Response Theory* with the aim of highlighting the influence of globalization on people's ordinary understanding of social prestige. In this set of studies, this novel is understood as a commentary on the external forces of the world that globalization has created.

Hand in hand with the presence of sarcasm in the novel, the academic eye is trained on economic neoliberalism too. Cilano (2017) introduces the following view on the novel: “the novel critiques a society ruled by the market and the pursuit of social prestige.” Rabbani & Chaudhary (2020) focus on neoliberal commodification of the phenomenon of water to trace a narrative link from the novel to a broader theme of commodification in neoliberalism. The sound economic analysis stops at least at the level of omitting the religious morality upon which the characters' choices rest. In turn, Shakoor et al. (2024) focus on consumerism/identity within late capitalism without highlighting the spiritual within religious beliefs that could counter the identity crises presented within the novel.

More general commentary situates the novel in the context of a world of globalization ruled by transnational Western capital. Scott (2017) posits that Hamid is a globalization novelist in which his characters are caught up between the traditional East and the need for market capital from the West, demonstrating how the world of global capitalist markets makes up their world. On this economic perspective of the novel, Naydan (2018) offers that the satirization of the self-help industry is actually a commentary on the genre of self-help itself and that the very form of the novel itself makes a commentary about the empty rhetoric of neoliberalism. Another such critique can be seen in critics such as Shamsie (2017) and Cilano (2014). This particular critique relates to the second-person narration form and how it actually brings the reader into the character's motivation to attain and moral failure (Complete Review, 2013).

Finally, contemporary identity research provides competing secular perspectives. Mahdi (2025) applies Routine Activities Theory to consider human identity as a commodity vulnerable to theft in digital environments. In contrast, Ressen (2025) studies self-development using psychological and sociological frameworks related to life and death. While Chao (2014) and Poon (2017) argue that the narrative framework is intended to inculcate ethical thought, a significant gap remains in the specific reconstruction of Islamic subjectivity. Previous research has not completely investigated how

the novel restores Islamic qualities within the framework of fundamentalism and secularism. This study fills that vacuum by examining the book as a postcolonial counternarrative that redefines faith using the ideas of *niyyah* (intention) and *ihsan* (benevolence).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a three-part conceptual framework to perform a thorough examination of Mohsin Hamid's multidimensional interest in faith and morality. Homi K. Bhabha (1994) developed the notion of hybridity, which serves as the foundation for the first pillar. This notion is essential to postcolonial studies. Bhabha (1994) suggests that colonial experiences create a "Third Space." Cultural meanings and identities are not set in this space. Rather, they are always negotiated. When applied to Hamid's story, this concept illuminates the main character's position. He exists in a dual reality. He is a ruthless capitalist while also engaging in moral inquiry. This dualism produces a diverse identity. It cannot be labeled as strictly traditional or modern.

The second part of the framework is premised on the critical ideas of Islamic ethical thought as articulated by Ebrahim Moosa (2015). It gives emphasis to *niyyah* (intention), *adl* (justice) and the significance of *sabr* (patience) to achieve *ihsan* (spiritual benevolence). All these notions rest on an ancient science of the soul, where Islamic cosmology offers the applicability to interpret the existing world (Chittick, 2013). These concepts give the vocabulary to negotiate the internal moral problems of the protagonist. Moreover, the revival of the ethic of virtue by Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) resembles this Islamic paradigm. Both systems underline the role of communal traditions and inner discipline, not the external norms, in the process of molding the moral behavior. With the integration of these perspectives, Sardar (2005) explores how characters develop an internal moral compass at a postnormal time. Lastly, this subjective ethical feeling is put into a greater sociohistorical context. It takes into account the sociological viewpoint of Muslim modernity as contributed by Ziauddin Sardar (2005). Sardar presumes that the postcolonial Muslim societies are in a postnormal era. The era can be characterized by the loss of former certitude. This kind of breakdown will demand a serious and conscious re-investment in ethical discussion. So, the story of Hamid can be seen as very deep narrative. It explores the way characters create their own system of morality in a rather barren environment.

The Satire of Self-Help: Reconfiguring Neoliberal Ambition into Islamic Ethical Consciousness

The strategy used by Hamid in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) creates in the reader a delicate tension between expectation and reproach. The initial impression of the book is that of a self-help guide -a sort of bible to neoliberal ambition that maps out a road to mastery in the capitalist order. But the point that is made here is that this arrangement is not decorative but a conscious conveyance of a greater spiritual message, through an abrupt second-person voice that is disconcerting and personal in its instruction. It is no coincidence or even a slap in the face of the self-help genre. It is a considered reaction to the Sardar idea of postnormal times when the previously established certainties of community and religion have broken, and society is seeking new standards through unstable markets. In that connection, it is the self-help book that comes out as an isolated guide through a landscape that no one has explored. Since the very first page, Hamid exposes the spiritual emptiness at the center of the genre, indicating an intrinsic contradiction of its structure:

Look, unless you're writing one, a self-help book is an oxymoron. You read a self-help book so someone who isn't yourself can help you, that someone being the author. This is true of the whole self-help genre. It's true of how-to books, for example. And it's true of personal improvement books too. (Hamid, 2013, p. 8)

Hamid uses this cynical voice to lure the reader into a position of complicity. He develops a work that falls within the terminology used by Bhabha (1994) as a hybrid artifact. The text is situated in the space between a cynical business guide and a tragic Sufi parable. The main character does not simply exist. He bargains his being in a gray zone where traditional ethics are continually traded on the upward ladder of success. While each chapter in the novel offers material profit, it ironically records the spiritual degeneration of the lead character. Since the entire novel addresses "You," the reader becomes an accomplice. The audience must witness the tainted decisions of the protagonist. Self-erosion is required for the acquisition of *dunya* or the immediate material world. This trade-off must be questioned based on the model of *niyyah* (intention) as described by Moosa (2015). A corrupted *niyyah* propagates the innovation necessary to sell expired medicine or privatize water. It is not *adl* (justice) or social benefit. It is mere accumulation. As the protagonist rises, the narrative voice becomes increasingly detached and clinical about the horrors required to sustain this wealth. When the deputy of the protagonist urges him to take on dangerous debt to buy out a competitor, the commodification of life becomes absolute:

"We'll compete on quality."

"It's fucking water. We just provide to spec."

Increasingly, your deputy has begun speaking to you in tones that veer almost to the aggressive. (Hamid, 2013, p. 95)

Moreover, this conflict proves the fragmentation of morality when "the source of life" is broken down into a "spec." Moral ethics, through this paradigm, are completely decoupled from action. "The protagonist's wish is neither to sustain nor to sustain others but to uncover value." It is "a kind of moral blindness" that carves out its "own economic realm." This realm keeps the character removed "from any ethical tradition." Within this economic realm, the soul is an externality. However, the text leaves the reader stranded in this realm. Hamid successfully subverts the story of "irreversible decay." He refers to it as "a kind of purification ritual." "The protagonist's life is bankrupt, an ironically twisted fate." This loss leads to "spiritual salvation." It is apparent that the chapter "Dance with Debt" refers to the "moral debt incurred over the course of an entire life dedicated to the service of Ghurur." This notion within the realm of Islamic philosophy refers to "deception rather than mere pride." When everything is already gone, the protagonist "is suddenly deprived of the convenience of this fiction." This downfall compels the character to live through the title of the next to last chapter, telling him to "Focus on the Fundamentals" (Hamid, 2013, pp. 104). It is through this concept that the relevance of the book emerges. "The definition of the fundamentals has been spectacularly rewritten." Fundamentals are no longer the "bottom line or the point of profit." Rather, "It is the primal fundamental, the raw and strange feel of being human."

In this lonely scene of sadness, the novel's latent Islamic moral grounding begins to emerge. The protagonist's spiritual reorientation is triggered by a return to his father's ideals. Throughout his ascension, the protagonist saw his father's life with a combination of sympathy and detachedness. However, after his fall, he comes to represent the peaceful dignity of an elderly man. The father was neither a scholar nor a cleric. He was a representative of an internalized and merciful Islam. The text describes his faith as something personal and grounding:

His faith is strong and idiosyncratic, manifesting itself in prayer, visits to shrines, religious music, and sacred verses written on paper and worn as amulets. All of these comfort him. He fears death, but not terribly so, and he awaits the opportunity to be reunited with his beloved much as certain young girls await... the loss of their virginity. (Hamid, 2013, p. 53)

By the end of the novel, the protagonist adopts this same "idiosyncratic" faith. It represents a movement away from the performative religiosity of the state or the "bearded men." It moves toward *taqwa* or a humbling consciousness of one's place in the vast human web (Rahman, 2009). Furthermore, the voice of the story changes. It shifts from the harsh instructions of a capitalist coach to the reassuring murmurs of a spiritual guide. In the end, the protagonist sees that the "self" mentioned in the self-help book is only a mirage. Humans can be thought of as open containers. The last moments of the protagonist bring this profound reassessment of human purpose to a close. To relinquish one's ego is to achieve spiritual achievement rather than failure. The only way to "get rich" according to Hamid is to give up on material prosperity altogether. One must embrace the interdependence of all living things. The narrative emphasizes this unity in the closing pages by dissolving the narrative boundary:

And the pretty girl holds your hand, and you contain her, and this book, and me writing it, and I too contain you, who may not yet even be born, you inside me inside you, though not in a creepy way, and so may you, may I, may we, so may all of us confront the end. (Hamid, 2013, p. 117)

Finally, this concluding passage represents the ultimate act of defiance by the novel against the capitalist individuality it professed to promote. It promotes a Sufi-style annihilation of the self. In this state, the lines between the reader, the writer, and the characters vanish. The title's promise of "filthy rich" status is revealed to be a spiritual richness. This is found only when worldly existence is stripped away. The journey through the *dunya* was necessary not to acquire the world, but to learn how to let it go.

Gender, Agency, and Spiritual Resistance

The presence of the pretty girl in Hamid's narrative goes beyond being a lover. Rather, she is a crucial opposing force to the market's desire to commoditize everything. While the narrator struggles to gain enough capital to escape his environment, she occupies a space of liminality and mixity, a space known as the "Third Space." In the Third Space, she finds ways to reinvent herself repeatedly. Every reinvented self she takes assumes a fluid form, and such flexibility allows her to slip out of the grasp of patriarchal society. Beginning as a salon girl and culminating in a career as a media businesswoman, she fully embodies a powerful notion of gender agency, one suggestion reminiscent of Saba Mahmood's views (2005, p.15). There, she contends that agency is not necessarily about violating a society's norms and institutions but about constructing one's self within restrictive

boundaries. In any case, the pretty girl does not seek to dismantle society but learns to outsmart and outplay society instead. This particular blending of playing and outsmarting society manifests clearly in her role in the TV cooking show. In this context, she does not become one with the well-heeled but neither does she continue to be impoverished. Rather, she finds a means to turn the contradiction between the well-heeled and the impoverished into something of actual value, thus framing her triumph in terms of a sophisticated display:

A popular cooking show on TV has brought the pretty girl considerable success, which is all the more remarkable since she has never been much of a cook. But she packages a sassy, street-talking persona with a spicy nouveau-street cuisine, combining the dialects of her childhood with the skills of her assistant chefs to charming and profitable effect. (Hamid, 2013, p. 69)

Hamid illustrates the concept of negotiation through this visceral performance. The character uses the "dialects of her childhood" as a badge of authenticity. This is a powerful statement of authority. She is not embarrassed about her origins and demands that the elite circles prioritize her origin story as they would a form of entertainment. In this way, she establishes the parameters of the encounter. It is based on the Islamic concept of "*niyyah*" or "intention." Rather than consuming her, her purpose is to direct the consumption of her identity.

The most radical resistance to the issues of this character begins right at marriage. For the heroine and hero in the story, marriage is the important instrument of the dominance of the stronger sex, a system that, as Asma Barlas (2019) conceives it, is the fulfillment of a woman being led to her traditional role. This can be shown in the way the heroine's wife conducts herself. She turns to religious fundamentalism to insulate herself against the defects of the world. The other woman, patently the sexy one, happens to have a flexible ideology. Meeting the hero at a fashion show and being asked about her married status, she gives her opinion on the subject with the spirit of autonomy. She tells him:

"I change."

"Everybody changes."

"When I change, I let myself change." (Hamid, 2013, p. 50)

This dialogue resonates with the views of Asma Barlas (2019, p. 129). Barlas says that patriarchal interpretations centralize women in predetermined roles, starting with daughter and including wife and so on. Contrary to this, “the pretty girl” claims her right to alter her circumstances. “The pretty girl” claims autonomy in matters of her soul and her life, refusing to be “possessed” for the sake of others. She believes that in her universe, true relationships result in submission, and so her relationships remain transactional and temporary.

The extent to which she is an agent becomes evident in the third part of the novel. The character moves from a living ambition to attain a state of *ihsan* or benevolence. Moosa (2015, p. 42) states that to attain righteousness, one has to turn to the self instead of looking at the world of *dunya*. The character does this before the main character. The move back to her hometown becomes an action towards freedom. The character creates a haven by removing all camouflage that characterized her as a celebrity. The community portrayed shows an unconventional nuclear family:

The two of you venture out less often, and the only other people you see with regularity are the pretty girl’s one remaining tenant, the actress, and the pretty girl’s factotum, who assists you when you are disoriented (Hamid, 2013, p. 114).

In this peaceful domesticity, she represents resistance against Sardar’s “postnormal” times (2005, p. 8). She cultivates a dignified indoor environment while the city outside fractures. Her strength is related to how she confronts her situation. The characters’ relationship weakens to one of passive observation. The narrator recounts this shift:

Inwardly she seethes. But outwardly she grins. “It’s not over yet.” Returned to the sofa, her drink on her armrest, she examines you as you shuffle. Your gaze is focused... She leans forward and waits. You notice. You kiss. (Hamid, 2013, p. 116)

This represents a turning point in the way that the novel explores its ethical themes. The dialogue is no longer imbued with the sting of youth; instead, it represents an icon of fairness and equality. Two people equal in every way walk to the end of the road hand in hand. She decides not to accept the hospital treatment because it is the final act of reclaiming herself; she wants to die in her house, on her own terms, with her own dignity. The medical institution cannot purify her dying in its statistic-cleaning machines. This final gesture transforms her desire for disconnection into a spiritual gesture, which implies that her soul was not for sale.

Narrative Form as an Ethical Aesthetic: Second-Person Narration and the Reimagined Islamic Parable

The construction of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) itself, its structural design, is important in understanding the manner in which Mohsin Hamid transforms Islamic ethical subjectivity. Though much of academia has viewed the text from the perspective of its criticism of “neoliberalism” in particular, its narrative design strives for something rather more spiritual in nature. Hamid makes a point to select a narrative voice that is in the “second-person” form. As Monika Fludernik writes (1994, p. 445), “the narrator speaks in the voice of the listener and in fact, may address the listener in the second person.” This form has the ability to involve the listener totally. Its design puts us in a “totally intimate” position. Since it’s rather “proscriptive” in nature, it encourages the listener to become actively involved in a way that is not common with narrative voice. This is not a life that the reader can observe from the safety of the edges. Rather, it is a life that must be lived. According to Brian Richardson (2006), this form requires the reader to bear the burden of moral decisions and ethical betrayals. The tale leads the reader to join a corrupt environment where objective judgment becomes impossible:

You have, as was perhaps to be expected, fallen in with university idealists yourself. You sit at this moment on a narrow, lumpy bed in a hostel entirely appropriated by members of your organization, like a city block by a gang. Your hostel leader packs as you speak. He is a big man, tall as well as broad, with luxurious facial hair gone prematurely gray and the flattened features of a boxer... You slap one feasting on your forearm as the hostel leader puts a pistol in his duffel bag and zips it shut. (Hamid, 2013, p. 35)

This is quite a powerful passage that hits the reader with the immediacy of being pulled directly into this moment. Naming you directly with the word “You,” Hamid makes it impossible to remain an onlooker. You are thrown into a journey of self-discovery based on muhasabah—the Islamic practice of holding oneself to account. The central question in this novel shifts from what a character should do to what you would do if you were in that same position.

The chapter headings slip into a self-help frame, and that framing isn’t neutral; it is a deliberate cue, almost a wink at how the structure itself shapes our reading. Take a chapter titled “Be Prepared to Use Violence” (Hamid, 2013, p. 65). It’s not a manual of tips; rather, it is an incisive social critique against the background of a kind of structural violence on which modern prosperity in today’s Asia

rests. Such an insight carries on from Islamic narrative poetics, which often relies upon allegory or parable in order to press for tazkiyah-the purification of the self through deep self-scrutiny and critique (Nasr, 1987). Hamid gives us a modern parable that so invariably forces readers to confront an uncomfortable truth: success rests on immoral debt. He speaks the language of capital, yet that very vocabulary presses the reader to a stark awareness of where, really, the wealth comes from:

Distasteful though it may be, it was inevitable, in a self-help book such as this, that we would eventually find ourselves broaching the topic of violence. Becoming filthy rich requires a degree of unsqueamishness, whether in rising Asia or anywhere else. For wealth comes from capital, and capital comes from labor, and labor comes from equilibrium, from calories in chasing calories out, an inherent, in-built leanness, the leanness of biological machines that must be bent to your will with some force if you are to loosen your own financial belt and, sighingly, expand. (Hamid, 2013, p. 66)

The storyteller is cold and detached, emphasizing the brutality of the neoliberal machine. Hamid presents cynical coldness which makes individuals mere biological cogs. In building this violence as some sort of sketchy self-help process, Hamid makes fun of the genre and at the same time exposes the spiritual cost of pursuing ambition. The main purpose-the *niyyah* or intention-of this book appears, however, in the final pages only. With the unfolding of the plot, the authorial voice is donned with the mask of a lost cynical guru-a figure which eventually leaves the shadows in the very end (Naydan, 2018). The narrator loses the mask of a capitalist teacher in the epilogue to reveal a human vulnerability and desire. This has completely redefined the entire reading. Throughout the novel, the hunt does not even require one to ascend to the social ladder. The story undermines a bleak desire of actual human contact, what the cynicism serves as is a veil in the world of reality, by stressing the focus by Ebrahim Moosa on inner intention. Once awkward in both fortune and health, there is still a reflection on the futility of mortality and affection, and that is what is the chief moral line of the novel:

THIS BOOK, I MUST NOW CONCEDE, MAY NOT HAVE been the very best of guides to getting filthy rich in rising Asia. An apology is no doubt due. But at this late juncture, apologies alone can achieve little. Far more useful, I propose, to address ourselves to our inevitable exit strategies, yours and mine, preparation, in this lifelong case, being most of the battle. (Hamid, 2013, p. 113)

This conclusion constitutes an act of radical truth. The book is never intended to be a road map to wealth. It serves as a guidance for the final transition, death. The narrator loses all authorial

power and transforms into a collective human voice. This voice yearns for intimacy with the writer on the other side of the blank space. The narrator admits that empathy is an important human characteristic as:

"As you create this story and I create this story, I would like to ask you how things were... The capacity for empathy is a funny thing" (Hamid, 2013, p. 113)

The novel itself exceeds itself in its final act. It has ceased to be a self-help book but it has become the sacred place of sharing human experiences. It highlights the cohesive role of empathy in helping to overcome interpersonal differences. This offers an escape of the vicious cage of the ego. This transformation makes a difference and is an epitome of beneficial activities. It is equivalent to the realization of virtue ethics reported by Alasdair MacIntyre (1981). Hamid presents a community-centered and moral tradition-based character development framework instead of an individualistic one, centered on gaining. The work does not only explore the issue of ethics, but also takes the reader in a purification journey. This knowledge is achieved by exercising empathy.

CONCLUSION

This paper maintains that in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013), Mohsin Hamid transcends the satirical nature of the premise to develop an Islamic moral sense in the present time. The novel is a critical analysis of neoliberal capitalism, in addition to intellectual journey across the literary nexus of ethics. The novel is not only a critique of self-help books. It, instead, depicts the dunya experience of the protagonist as a perilous spiritual resurrection. In the story, the thematic focus is on inborn belief rather than material riches. Notably, this morality is not religion. It is the result of Ziauddin Sardar (2005) abnormality of the postnormal time intrinsic. Furthermore, the study emphasized the character of the "pretty girl" as an example of gendered agency. Her existence illustrates a specific type of spiritual resistance. This resistance starts with *sabr* (patience) and ends in *ihsan* (benevolence). Her journey challenges patriarchal conventions and current commodity logic. Her experiences show that living ethically is a practice. According to Bhabha's (1994) definition of postcolonial life, she lives in a "Third Space" where a constant negotiation takes place. Finally, the novel's story reinforces this ethical mandate. The continuous second-person narration requires *muhasabah* or self-accounting. Hamid engages readers in anti-neoliberalism. This makes readers unwilling participants in survival sacrifices. Hamid's postcolonial counternarrative is powerful. He

protects Islamic ethics against fundamentalism and secularism. The story reveals that modern life makes spiritual purity difficult.

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