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“The idea of self in the land of self-help”: Globalization and a structure of feeling in Mohsin
Hamid’s *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*

by

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In order to capture the “cultural logic of late capitalism” in relation to postmodernism, it is crucial to think about the cultural formation produced by the progression of global capitalism, where the ideas of success and of upward mobility have since changed from an industrial society to a globalized one. David Harvey in *The Condition of Postmodernity* examines and outlines various meanings of postmodernism. He illustrates the schematic differences between modernism and postmodernism as a simplistic way to understand the indefinable aspects of postmodernism. One question that he addresses stems from Fredric Jameson’s question about postmodernity: “do we attach [postmodernism’s] rise to some radical restructuring of capitalism, the emergence of some ‘postindustrial’ society, view it, even...as the ‘cultural logic of late capitalism’?” (42). It is also important to note, Harvey strictly points out that “we should not read postmodernism as some autonomous artistic current. Its rootedness in daily life is one of its most patently transparent features” (63). This remark initiates a discussion about how the creation of art and the reflection of reality within art represents complex ideas in this postmodern condition and in our present historical, cultural, social, economic and political moments.

Harvey wants us to think about and question our social practices in relation to postmodernism’s “rootedness” within our material lives and within our construction of space and time. It is crucial to understand the effects of postmodernism within daily life, especially through representations of the self, where fragmentation and contradiction come together to formulate complex ideas about individuals as subjects. To begin to understand the intertwined ideas of postmodernism and our historical moment, in which accumulation of material wealth has become an essential goal in achieving happiness, the individual plays an important role in being influenced and influencing larger movements such as late-capitalism, globalization, and postmodernism. The intertwining effects between these structural forces and the self construct a

dialectic interrelationship that further challenges perspectives about our goals for happiness. More importantly, it has also created a self-help culture in which individualism, self-invention, and entrepreneurialism have been used as strategies to take advantage of the world-market economy.

The culture of self-help is not a “modern” tradition and stems from conduct literature; Samuel Smiles’ *Self-Help* (1859) has given the self-help genre its name. The first chapter titled “National and individual” begins with a maxim “Heaven helps those who help themselves” (21). This focus on self-reliance and self-improvement can also be found in Timothy J. Van Compernelle in *Struggling Upward: Worldly Success and the Japanese Novel* (2016), which examines the modern novel as an artistic form which represents the growth and upward mobility of the national subject in East Asia. Compernelle applies to his argument, *risshin shusse*, a Japanese form of discourse on social mobility, education, material happiness, and success, which was tied to the emerging capitalism, industrialization, and urbanization during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (4). Such a discourse portrayed an Asia mirroring the changes that came from industrialization and the sudden accumulation of wealth in the West. This project of modernization and of “catching up” with the West promoted a type of individualism that Smiles incorporated in his guide to move ahead in an age of economic and physical expansion; and Compernelle also used to portray modernity as a tool in his analysis of Japanese novels during the Meiji period (1868 to 1912), that brought together an exploration of what constitutes the self. For Smiles, and for Compernelle, concepts of the self and individualism play an important role in laying out the framework for the fulfillment of happiness and self-constitution, and even though their analysis lies within a context of a precise historical moment, these desires for material wealth and social mobility have not changed within late capitalism and globalization.

In the twenty-first century, the individual has become dismembered and yet more fluid within the structure of globalization, a split-subject. Jameson in “Globalization as a Philosophical Issue” conceptualizes globalization as a system of ideas that is deeply intertwined with postmodernism; however, he purposely sets aside the postmodern debate to focus specifically on globalization as an ideological structure. He defines the phenomenon of globalization as a “communicational concept”. Due to modernization and innovations in technology, globalization as a “communicational concept” represents the transfer and exchange of cultural and economic meanings, which takes place in global, virtual communicational networks (55). He constructs a dialectical framework of globalization in which the “communicational concept” is submerged within two dimensions: cultural and economic. With having such vast amounts of information available at our disposal, at first, on the one hand, Jameson describes how the advancement of technology has created the cultural dimension of globalization as “a new world culture” opening up a space for differentiation and difference within a postmodern context that creates cultural pluralism, diversity, and linkage between a range of groups, cultures, races, and genders (56-7). On the other hand, he fits the economic dimension within the category of “increasing identity,” which considers the immense and rapid growth of the world-market, and the financial transfers that create a sort of “flexible” capitalism integrating the global division of labor, standardization of mass culture, and heterogeneity (57).

By bringing to light these two opposing views, difference and identity, Jameson constructs a dialectic, which can be applied to the self as an idea. The opposition creates a fragmentation, causing a decentering and marginalization of identities as a type of postmodern self. To synthesize the cultural and economic dimensions, he lays out an argument in which these opposing ideas of difference and identity overlap and are fluid as they lead into each other,

where “the becoming cultural of the economic, and the becoming economic of the cultural” characterizes a kind of postmodernity. In addition, such a dialectic constructs an ambiguous, intermingling relationship in which the cultural difference turns into an economic difference where individuals participate in capitalist structures based upon their own self-interest. Similarly, the economic dimension constructs a cultural identity i.e. the unification and standardization of culture, specifically as the export and import of American culture as cultural practices are transmitted around the world (63-4). These two structural possibilities “project their axes upon each other” to reflect upon the fluidity and antimony of their relationship (57).

Furthermore, in “‘Globalization,’ Culture, and the University,” Masao Miyoshi points out the historical weight globalization contains as a new world-system. This historical weight refers to a past that stems and continues from colonialism and imperialism (247). Here we are presented with radically different realities that coexist, collide, and interpenetrate to form the conditionality of globalization and late-capitalism. And so, this complicated concept – globalization – comes as a positive and negative result of the change in degree of trade and transfer of labor, production, consumption, information, and technology. By examining and further understanding this dialectic of cultural and economic practices within the ideology of globalization, we begin to observe the relationships of these larger forces in relation to the individual as a split-subject. One such postmodern novel, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) by Mohsin Hamid, engages in the discourse of self-help by constructing “the self” as a contested identity that represents, within our historical moment, the differentiation and standardization of culture. This novel reflects upon the present historical moment where globalization and late-capitalism influence the individual subject. In addition, historical and cultural forces reveal the individual as a contested self.

To even begin to understand the didactic nature of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* in terms of the rewards and consequences of globalization, it is important for us to dwell on the title, which gives rise to the first expectation and the first assumption the reader makes about this novel. Superficially, this novel is expected to provide the reader with instructions and guidance on how to gain material wealth in the continent of Asia. We are provided with a title that places itself within a category of a “modern age” self-help book; however, the words “filthy rich” and “rising Asia” hint at a parody of the self-help genre and adds an ironic element to the tone of the novel. Furthermore, these words add onto the nature of the historical moment of globalization: the desire of moving socially upward in a drastic/extreme manner (“filthy” also may be read as a negative attribute of material desire), and the forces of the global market moving from Western countries to Asian countries, specifying some sort of public and collective assumption of an upward moving economy within a certain geographic location. Within the title of this novel, Hamid masks his actual intent with the imitation of how the self-help genre, one of the most purchased genres in the United States (Raja 85), refocuses the genre’s use and its capabilities within the ever-changing space of Asia. Furthermore, “filthy” and “rising” hyperbolize the perspectives readers have on the concept of globalization as an exaggerated term, and an abused term that qualifies the competitive race in acquiring material wealth. In addition, parody and irony are quite essential elements of what constitutes a postmodern novel, the title initiates a dialogue about how Hamid reworks and transforms the self-help genre into a postmodern project. By experimenting with the form of genre, narration, and the narrative of upward mobility in the current global economy, Hamid forms questions of what, how, and why, the author as a self, the narrator as a self, and the reader as a self, represent the social consciousness of this historical moment.

How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia, Hamid's third novel, dramatizes how globalization has impacted local and global cultures, spaces, agency, and relationships between individuals and society, especially the tension between individual desire and upward mobility. Similarly, Hamid's first two novels, *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), also deal with emerging capitalist societies in which characters and their circumstances struggle and sometimes rise from economic disparity and inequality. In Hamid's past novels, we notice a pattern in which the author directs readers to a certain perspective by articulating the present to understand the processes of globalization within Asia. As a Pakistani writer who has lived in Lahore, New York City, and London, Hamid brings a unique perspective to the ways in which these global cities, such differentiated sites of physical and cultural spaces, impact the idea of the self in relation to the environment around us, but specifically within the form and narration of the novel.

In addition, Hamid is typically placed in the category of postcolonial or diasporic writers, who takes on the task of representing and describing a much different Pakistan to a global audience. Due to a certain image created by mainstream American and European media, Pakistan is seen as a far-away place that is viewed as one of the birthplaces of extremism and violence. Therefore, it is quite understandable that the first two works by Hamid, and many of his non-fiction works, put emphasis on the relationship of Pakistan with the United States, or depict a more concrete and humanizing view of thriving cities in Pakistan. In this regard, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* is a more complicated project in which Hamid not only turns the gaze of the reader onto an "otherized" geographical location, but also experiments with the essentialism that comes with pre-existing stereotypes concerning the identification of Asia and Pakistan by attaching words such as "booming" and "rapidly-developing". It brings forth

questions of what nations in the so-called “Third World” represent, and how labels of developed, developing, and under-developed countries are shifting to something less binary and more ambiguous.

In “Nationalism Should Retire at Sixty-five”, Hamid reflects upon the role of Asia in the twenty-first century as “the Asian century” where many believe that Asia has become crucial to the world economy and global geopolitics (*Discontent and its Civilizations* 155). However, his focus moves deeper within the social and environmental issues of this century: “But for us Asians, the Asian century is also likely to bring a great dryness” due to vast amounts of drought within the subcontinent region, “to bring a great wetness” due to sea levels rising and displacement of large populations, specifically in the Maldives, and coastal regions such as Yangon, Singapore, and Shanghai, and “to bring a great aging, a great inequality, a great slum expansion” (156). Hamid’s solution for these long-term catastrophes begins to provide an understanding as to the intent of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*. In the essay, he goes on to provide a moral solution in which he wants to move beyond ideas of nationalism to a cosmopolitan ethic that is bigger than Pakistan, India, or China (156); rather than speaking about the dividing interests within the continent, he speaks about a human interest that creates a transcontinental network and further blurs and reconstructs national boundaries. These dividing interests, in other words, also allude to Harvey’s *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, where the author establishes the workings of a transnational ruling class which, from the point of view of the upper classes around the world, has been successful. Specifically, he describes shifts within certain capitalist class formations that restore class power to the ruling elites, especially within China, India, and Japan (156). Again, we are presented with a blend of solutions and problems in terms of regional and local groups, cultures, and material spaces. Even though Hamid sees the

globalized space as a space without borders and as a positive outcome of globalization, we are also met with issues which have been created by the standardization of identities.

Consequently, the reader of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* is presented with a tension between the good and the bad lessons that the Asian century may provide. Hamid satirizes the self-help genre in order to study the individual in this so-called blurred Asian century where post-national collectivism is being experimented on. In “Nationalism Should Retire at Sixty-five” Hamid also states that Asia “may still be a mess, but it is a mess with incredible potential.” He ends this essay by describing himself in an environment similar to the protagonist’s in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, where he sits in “a room in a country that is messier than most, as [his] electricity supply cuts off every other hour, as [his] tap water remains unfit to drink, [and] as foreign drones strike” (157-8).

How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia blends together a conventional rags-to-riches plot with the language of a self-help narrative. Using second-person narration as a direct mode of address, the novel presents the reader with an unnamed protagonist “you”, who as a third child of a poor farming family migrates with his parents and siblings from their unnamed village to an unspecified city in search of a better life. By following the narrator’s guidance, the protagonist rises up on the social ladder by becoming an entrepreneur, specifically as an owner of a water supply company who achieves material success. However, this seeming self-help guide is also a love story about “you” and the pretty girl, another main character who is identified by “your” feelings for her. Just like the protagonist, all characters are unnamed and identified either by their social role in connection to the protagonist (e.g. “your” mother, “your” sister) or by their job title. The novel is divided into twelve chapters, which are separated as twelve different directives or steps, which “you” needs to follow in order to move upward in class and social spheres.

However, when the reader begins to delve into this novel, he or she learns that Hamid uses the self-help genre as a ruse to provide a satirical commentary on how certain processes of globalization – i.e. the unification and differences of globalization – produce contradictions and struggles of defining identity. Hamid uses second-person narration to investigate what a contradictory identity in a globalized space looks like, but more importantly, he studies the physical space and the environment around “you” to inform and influence the social consciousness of this historical moment. Because of this study, we find “you” being pulled and pushed between the dichotomies of the urban and rural, the individual and the collective, and the ideas of social advancement and the ideas of community, family, and love. And so, one of the main questions that this essay tries to answer is: How does *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* contribute to our understanding of the way the literary imagination engages the socioeconomic processes of globalization?

Satirizing the self-help genre: the “slippery” self

In the beginning lines of Hamid’s novel, the reader encounters many participants within and outside of this story. The first participant we encounter is the narrator, who addresses the second participant as “you”. Here we meet an inseparable “you,” a “you” that is both the reader and the protagonist of the story: “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” (3). The unnamed narrator begins the novel in quite a straightforward tone, addressing the reader strictly. This narrator starts with a meditation on the genre of self-help books and acknowledges that the reader is taking part in this act; however, at the same time he questions the legitimacy of what a self-help book is and what

the reader may take from it. By describing the self-help book as an oxymoron, the narrator theorizes the contradictory nature of such literature. Hamid applies the vocabulary of postmodernism to the genre of self-help by calling it paradoxical in nature. Even though he constructs a narrator that seems to have the intellectual authority and expertise in becoming “filthy rich”, at the same time, the narrator is using the same medium to question such reliability upon the author of the self-help.

Likewise, the definition of the self-help genre as an oxymoron in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* is creating a dialectic between the opposition of how the self-help as a form of art produces these paradoxical outcomes of identity and difference within globalization, between the protagonist and the reader, and between the consumer self and the local differentiated self. The contradictory nature of this genre as a form of commodity also creates a fragmented self *and* a fluid self to pursue a competitive and entrepreneurial risk where “only the fittest should and do survive” (Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 157). The standardization and diversity created within globalization can turn into each other in this historical moment, which initiates a conversation about how postmodernity has brought about a chaotic and split subject in the effort of self-making and self-invention. This reflection of the self-help culture begins an examination upon the limitations of the self-help ideology and has created a tension between the different realities and possibilities about the concept of the self. From these first few lines of the narrative, Hamid clearly points out that this self-help guide is masked as a satire of the genre itself to show the severe oppositional results that may come out of globalized notions of culture. In the first chapter, “Move to the City”, the narrator dives deeper into a theoretical mode of discussion to question the efficacy of the self-help genre as a cultural commodity:

None of the foregoing means self-help books are useless. On the contrary, they can be useful indeed. But it does mean that the idea of self in the land of self-help

is a slippery one. And slippery can be good. Slippery can be pleasurable. Slippery can provide access to what would chafe if entered dry. (3-4)

This passage mirrors the dialectic that Jameson uses and examines further questions about the self-help culture: what does the narrator mean by “the idea of the self” and “the land of self-help”? And furthermore, why does the narrator describe the self and the self-help as “slippery” ideas? With this in mind, Micki McGee’s *Self-Help Inc.* investigates the ideals of self-invention and self-mastery in American culture and provides a few answers to the questions addressed by Hamid’s narrator. By highlighting economic and social structural changes such as gender role expectations, employment conditions, McGee puts emphasis on how these macro-changes influence individual and interpersonal changes as well: “Social structures and individual identities are mutually constitutive: interconnected to such an extent that changes in the former necessarily produce changes in the latter, and some would argue, vice versa” (15). The relationship between the self and the self-help book develops a “contested identity, selfhood, or ‘subjectivity’”. The self has been described variously as mutable, protean, autotelic and evolving, multiple, marginal, postmodern, narcissistic, and minimal, hungry and empty, saturated and seeking, invented and enterprising, well-tempered, playing, and ‘decentered’” (15). These many theories and ideas of what the self gives light to a dialogue that narrator of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* wants to have with the reader about the paradoxes of globalization.

Such multiplicity of what the self can be suggests that under this historical moment of globalization and late-capitalism, the self has been pushed and pulled in many dimensions – McGee calls this the “belabored self” – a self that has been invented and reinvented as a new notion of the self. She argues that the “belabored self” has been overworked both as the subject and as the object in their process of self-improvement and self-mastery (16). Under the current labor market, the fast-paced, growing culture of technologies, the self has to keep adapting and

keep redefining itself. And due to the competitive nature of upward mobility and accumulating wealth, the self goes through many changes, especially in terms of labor – where workers have to keep working on themselves so that they remain employed and remain inside the appropriate economic sphere. With this in mind, “the land of self-help” is undefined and borderless, where each individual, in terms of political and economic forces, is competing to be a better self than their past self or than their colleagues. “The land of self-help” is a space where, the narrator implies, the individual is on his or her own, separated, and alone due to the demand of self-making and self-inventing. And yet, the individual cannot re-invent himself or herself without the help of an expert, that being the narrator. As Hamid’s novel points out, the “oxymoron” of the self-help genre is that of the contradiction within the opposition; in the same light, we begin to see how the self in this historical moment inhabits this space of contradiction and synthesis.

Likewise, the adjective “slippery” given to the self and self-help genre adds onto the contradictions and the multiplicity of the postmodern self. The narrator, however, only takes a positive side to the slipperiness of “the idea of self in the land of self-help.” The word “slippery” can connote unpredictability, changing, difficult to hold on to firmly, but it can also mean fluid and mobile. What is even more interesting is the usage of “slippery” within the discourse of globalization. While synthesizing the cultural and economic forces of globalization, Jameson also adds “whoever says the production of culture says the production of everyday life- without that, your economic system can scarcely continue to expand and implant itself” (67). He also identifies this ripple effect as a “slippage” in which postmodernity creates this synthetization of culture and economy in which, specifically, any form of art, is no more an escape, a refuge, or a sanctuary from business, but has become essential to the culture of consumerism (70). Self-help books become, in relation to the individual consumer, a tool to standardize cultural and economic

identity. As explicated before, Jameson also uses “slippery” as a term for the transfer of cultural and economic meanings – both good and bad. If Jameson’s notion of globalization as a slippery concept is applied to the narrator’s assertion that the self-help genre is useful due to its slippery characteristics, we as participants in this historical moment can read into the genre of self-help as art, culture, and a product of our globalized world. Jameson’s strategy to keep in mind the positive and negative characteristics of this “slippery” concept adheres to the changeability of this ideology, the many realities and roles the self slips into. In this case, at first, the reader may believe the narrator’s optimistic tone about the self-help book and all that it can do for the individual. But as we begin to notice Hamid’s critique of such optimism, we notice the mimicking of advertising this genre as a product, and at the same time, a mocking of those marketing strategies used to persuade the individual to give up a part of their agency and trust this unnamed author to provide them with universal answers for material happiness.

Another aspect of “this slippery concept” within the novel, as mentioned before, is the experimentation of the second-person narration pronoun “you.” Such sort of slippage can be found in the play on the “you” as the reader or as the protagonist of novel, and vice versa. Hamid questions what a postmodern novel can do in terms of its boundaries and in terms of the relationship between the narrator and the reader. This dynamic and fluidity found within the form of the narrative is another aspect of how the narrator plays with the mode of address and how one idea of self can be transferred into the other. Even though through the progression of the narrative time the reader finds out an individualistic personality of “you” the protagonist, the reader has the option to identify with or against the protagonist’s ideas and feelings. The absence of “I” and the first-person narrative is important in this regard because the ambiguous nature blurs the lines between what the narrator represents and how much participation and agency the

reader has in inserting himself or herself into the novel. The text constructs an interesting relationship between the reader and the protagonist, where both can be inserted (and can be slipped) into the category of “you”. Similar to Jameson’s conclusion of the unification of culture and economy, the reader and the protagonist can be seen not in opposition but in a union. Even though they exist within different spaces and are in opposition, they form a kind of unity and become parts of a whole.

We begin to see the slippage of the “self in the land of self-help” not only within ideological structures but also within the pseudo-meta-textual narrative. However, the dichotomous relationship between the reader and the protagonist cannot be this simple. Neither can a few meta-textual statements describe the whole intent of the novel. To further dive into the multiplicities of the self by exploring the role of the reader and the protagonist in this novel, and to further blur the lines and the purpose of the self-help genre and the novel, Hamid breaks the straightforward manner in which the narrator addresses the reader and disrupts the temporal and spatial dimensions to remind the reader that the self-help genre is as much fiction as is the novel. The first disruption between the reader and the protagonist comes about when the narrator states:

This book is a self-help book. Its objective, as it says on the cover, is to show you how to get filthy rich in rising Asia. And to do that it has to find you, huddled, shivering, on the packed earth under your mother’s cot one cold, dewy morning. Your anguish is the anguish of a boy whose chocolate has been thrown away, whose remote controls are out of batteries, whose scooter is busted, whose new sneakers have been stolen. This is all the more remarkable since you’ve never in your life seen any of these things. (4)

After stating the objective, the narrator, like a camera man, zooms out of this direct dialogue with the reader, and then zooms into the first characteristics that will place and describe the protagonist of the story. As the image zooms out, the narrator guides the reader into the world of the protagonist. The narrator transitions into the life of the main character quite smoothly, as if

slipping from one kind of self to another. However, this relationship between the reader and the protagonist becomes problematic and quite unsettling as the narrator points out the first emotion “you” feels i.e. anguish. This feeling of anguish is compared to an anguish that can only be felt by a certain group of people. The comparison of such a feeling is being made in regards to a feeling that only a middle-class, modern, and urban boy would understand. This sort of turn in the narrative disorients the tone of the novel and the expectations of the reader. However, the most crucial observation that comes from this cinematic shift in narrative is not only the fictionality of it, reminding the reader that the true intent of this novel is satire, but a certain change in perspective about what being “filthy rich” means, about what economic class the reader belongs to, and how it differentiates them from the protagonist. This passage pushes the reader to define himself or herself in relation to the circumstances of “you” by establishing a difference in economic circumstances. Consequently, before we delve into the many directives “you” needs to follow to begin his ascendance into the middle-class sphere, let us look at the assumptions the narrator and Hamid make about the reader, and especially what kind of audiences would read this satire. Again, we are met with a different version of the self, a self as the narrator points out, defines anguish differently. In this passage, the narrator also provides us with another example of how the protagonist represents the cultural differentiation by placing the protagonist and the reader in two different economic spheres.

The clear difference between “you” who has never used or known about things such as chocolate, remote controls, batteries, scooters, and sneakers, and individuals who have them and use such commodities, reflects a division in class structures and within the cultural and economic dimensions of global capital. Not only does the narrator portray the difference between “you” who has been born into poverty, but also assumes the economic background of their audience i.e.

the reader who can associate with such products. By understanding that globalization means the export and import of culture, commodities such as chocolates, batteries, and sneakers are seen as necessities in a middle-class sphere, where economically identity is categorized as “consumer”, “modern”, and “self-interested”, however, in the protagonist’s sphere, they are luxuries, which points to a cultural difference as difference in local sites of identity. For this reason, it is important to understand a term Jameson uses for this export and import culture as Americanization (“Globalization as Philosophical Issue” 59). American television shows, films, and music are commodified and exported to all nations around the world, which monopolizes American mass culture. In this passage, we see that Hamid brings to light a philosophical problem that Jameson terms as “a kind of blindness at the center” of mass culture. Such blindness stems from the tendency of confusing the universal, the cultural, and the political as equal in value, especially around the world. For example, the English language has come to be a universal language which holds open the door for individuals who want to have access to money and power, but it reduces and ignores the speakers of other languages. In such a case, the anguish that the narrator describes is a blind anguish which only groups and individuals that have assimilated themselves into an Americanized or Westernized culture will understand. By juxtaposing the idea that the reader knows these products, with the “remarkable” possibility of “you” not having a clue of these products shows the economic divide (difference) between where the reader is coming from, an urban capitalist society, and where the protagonist is starting his assimilation in the process of acquiring material wealth, a rural village. Such a passage which disrupts the narration also disturbs the perspectives of a middle-class reader who is placed inside a perspective that shows a sort of “greediness” which is associated with acquiring “filthy” riches when certain individuals do not possess so-called necessities. This observation further adds to the

irony of the self-help genre; only an individual who has the necessary means to afford to give time to self-making and who can afford to purchase this novel has an improved chance of material success.

In addition, let us not forget that “you” is located in the continent of Asia, situating the globalized consumer culture that is present transnationally. In this regard, we begin to see the consequences of globalization, in which the harsh realities of people who have been pushed to periphery are at the center of this narrative. Hamid must begin this novel from the very bottom of the economic sphere in order to highlight the living conditions and difficulties that the protagonist needs to escape from in order to point out the inequalities that arise from the global division of labor. In addition, these inequalities make the middle-class and upper-middle class readers uncomfortable and they begin to form a critique of the globalized elite found in developing and underdeveloped countries. This narrative strategy also becomes a critique of the city centers which attract and thrive on mass populations migrating from rural parts to “global cities” or “megacities”. In this process of movement, the rural self is ignored and forgotten, but most importantly, country life in this novel becomes a space of struggle and of poverty rather than of romanticizing. If the rural subject needs to survive within the processes of globalization, and as Hamid’s first directive points out, the subject needs to move to the city. Here the rural self is forced into becoming a part of the global development of cities by moving out of their village and migrating to a city to earn and support themselves and their families. Drawing attention to these paradoxes brought about by globalization, Hamid seems to urge the reader to think about and to form questions about their current historical moment in regards to the slipperiness of space and the self. By denying the ideas of a nation-state, Hamid creates a spatial relationship between readers and individuals who, like the protagonist, are on the periphery. He explores the

idea of self-help as a slippery phenomenon by creating a dialogue between the narrator, the reader, and the protagonist. This dialogue shows how these individuals and their positions, within and in relation to the story, mirror the reality of our historical moment.

Hamid continues to explore the processes of globalization within the spatial and temporal dimensions in regards to the idea of a slippery self, McGee's study of the protean self, and Jameson's communicational development of technology. In the chapters, "Get an Education" and "Patronize the Artists of War", Hamid uses some specific perspectival positions to describe and invoke mostly negative effects of the power of technology's advancement in our globalized world. In this space, Hamid shows the reader another split and slippery self, a contested self that has been transmitted into the language of numbers, deconstructed and constructed as statistical information. In "Helping the novel: Neoliberalism, self-help, and the narrating of the self in Mohsin Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*" by Angelia Poon, Poon describes this specific kind of self as a "constant object of surveillance" which either by mechanical devices or in other individuals' gazes, the reader finds himself in a similar situation to the protagonist (145). This change in point of view pinpoints a way of seeing in which "the urban modernity the character inhabits" portrays the anxieties and problems produced by the watchful eye, and the dehumanization that, as participants of this historical moment, we have become accustomed to (145). Hamid's exploration of technology within this globalized world gives a new point of view to the concept of a slippery self in this historical moment. The reader and the protagonist alike not only exist as individuals, but also exist in a virtual world and data streams. Hamid's appropriation of the narrative form to explore the power of technology is introduced in a moment where "you" and "your sister" are absorbed in make-believe play in a secluded alley, near an uncovered sewer. It is one of the few moments where we see an emotional connection between

the protagonist and his sister; however, Hamid, quite ironically, uses the point of view of a satellite to describe the scene: “Viewing the scene from the lenses of an orbiting reconnaissance satellite, an observer would see two children behaving peculiarly” (27). By changing the perspective of the narration, Hamid creates a noteworthy dialogue between the effects of technological change on global economic structures and social concerns. The children do not notice the satellite, and this perspective initiates a great distance between the two objects.

In addition, such a narrative point of view also creates a heightened sense of surveillance and an anonymous threat. As readers, we find ourselves in a similar state of constant surveillance, realizing that we as individuals in urban modernity are as clueless as the children in this scene are about the impact of urban modernity and its consequences. Not only do the symbolic and larger structures reflect and impact culture and relationships, but the point of view of a mechanical device also considers the material influence has on individuals living and containing certain realities. In other words, even though as the degree of technology has extended within the timeframe of globalization, and has caused virtual borders to disintegrate, it has inflated a sense of loneliness and self-reliance, which contains and disciplines the human subject in the globalized world. Hamid adds onto the power of the watchful eye as the narrator describes, yet another emotional moment, from the point of view of a drone:

On the outskirts of the city over which this drone is today validating its performance parameters, a crowd is gathering at a graveyard...they must be closely related to the fellow who has died...the elder of them now commences to sob, his torso flexing spasmodically, as though wracked by a series of coughs. He looks up to the heavens. The drone circles a few times, its high-powered eye unblinking, and flies observantly on. (“Patronize the Artists of War” 174)

This passage is taken from the end of this chapter; by now the protagonist is in his sixties wearing a suit, an older man who has entered the upper middle-class sphere and who has successfully gained material happiness. In this scene, again, from the perspective of an

unmanned aerial eye, a drone, the reader is provided with a description of the protagonist arriving at his brother's funeral and looks to be mourning. However, the language Hamid experiments with within this scene emphasizes the dehumanization of globalized networks within local and personal spheres. As readers we would understand the sobbing as a way lamenting, loss, and sorrow, but to the mechanical eye, "you" is observed as an object from which as readers we are hindered any insight into the protagonist's thoughts. By adding this striking narrative perspective normalized by technology, we begin to see how certain outcomes of globalization have created a relationship of distance in which certain groups or individuals are grouped together. This eliminates any difference within cultural and economic dimensions and emphasizes the unification and false equality created between people.

Consequently, the experimentation of such language takes a turn when the narrator adds his own observation of the protagonist who "looks up to the heavens." By using the word "heavens" and then shifting back to the drone that "circles a few times" and moves on, Hamid points out a shift from an old-fashioned definition of the word "heavens", juxtaposing the idea with the inanimate object now occupying that space. Not only does this signal the changes in culture, where once the all-knowing and all-seeing God was revered and looked up to, now, within this globalized world, technology has taken place of spiritual entities. Furthermore, from the point of view of an inanimate object, the ideas of death and loneliness have been reinforced as insignificant, indifferent, and meaningless, which also signals to the desensitization of such loss and tragedy on a global scale as dead bodies become mere numbers. The mechanical and watchful eye does not only represent a certain fast-paced advancement within the structural possibilities of globalization, it also points out the power the nation-state and military-industrial systems have over mass populations. Hamid provokes a certain awareness within these scenes in

which the indifference about death and the death of older ideas turn towards a more moral and human evaluation about the larger symbolic structures of globalization. Here we are given a slippery self that moves into virtual spaces in which the subject is immortalized but at the same time has been deconstructed from all its emotion and feeling.

Besides portraying these paradoxes of our relationship with technology, “Patronize the Artists of War” becomes an important chapter in understanding how our historical moment is adding on more definitions and parts to the postmodern self. This chapter begins, like all the other chapters in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, as a theoretical discussion on the self where the narrator’s first sentence provides the reader to see the self deconstructed and reconstructed within the context of technology. The narrator states “we’re all information, all of us, whether readers or writers” (159). Not only does this provide a new point of view about machines and technology to the reader, this statement also provides a new perspective about how the individual is defined within the cultural and economic spheres of globalization. The reader realizes that she or he is slippery and mutable within virtual spheres. Another imagined point of view the narrator describes to us places the protagonist in direct discussion of how in this historical moment, the self has become information:

From the perspective of the world’s national security apparatuses you exist in several locations. You appear on property and income-tax registries, on passport and ID card databases. You show up on passenger manifests and telephone logs. You hum inside electromagnetically shielded military-intelligence servers and, deep below pristine fields and forbidding mountains, on their dedicated backups. You are fingertip swirls, facial ratios, dental records, voice patterns, spending trails, e-mail threads. (161)

In this passage, the mode of address creates a space in which the reader can slip within the narrative about the protagonist. By using “you” as a way to portray the innumerable ways in which he represents information, the reader is placed, again, in a socially conscious exercise in

which s/he begins to realize that a version of the self is represented as information. A sort of slippage between many dimensions, the self becomes fluid. This passage emphasizes the “belabored” self and depicts the deprivation of human qualities by mechanizing our existence. If the self is then described as information and as external and internal network systems, the individual cannot separate from others; in this period of globalization we become a part of a social web that cannot be detangled. Even though the dehumanization creates distance and ambivalence towards the emotional lives of the individuals around us, ironically that distance is filled by more mechanical processes by connecting us through invisible forces. This virtual sphere adds onto what the self in “the land of self-help” may symbolize, creating a new and more indefinable space in which many versions of the self are present. In this regard, Hamid uses the self-help culture to create awareness and a new way of seeing, first, as a critique of the genre, in its failure to guide the individual, and second, as a didactic tool to help readers and individuals to become more active readers and active participants in understanding the ethical and moral dimensions of the structures of globalization and their present moment.

In the chapter “Get an Education” mentioned before, the gaze of the satellite changes and turns to the gaze of a tall bald man, who stares “at your sister intently” (28). By switching the perspective again, Hamid describes the multiplicity of point of views, but this moment also points out that some gazes like a mechanical eye, or like the bald man who identifies the protagonist’s sister as a girl of marriageable age, and a girl who does not need to continue her formal education, become oppressive spaces that emphasize the dehumanization and insignificance of certain groups of people. Even though some ways of seeing are kept at a distance, others create a more vulnerable space for people in terms of gender roles and of unifying distinct individuals and groups. Not only does the narrator depict the distancing

relationships of “you” in regards to his sister, his mother, his wife, and the pretty girl, they also begin to signify how gender issues and gender roles are perpetuated within globalized spaces to create another kind of split self.

The ideologically driven homogenization of the self within globalization becomes a veneer for historically derived power structures. Hamid characterizes the female characters within *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* as a technique to emphasize the gendered violence and gender differentiation. In this self-help guide, the female characters are not given equal attention, yet they provide viewpoints on how individual autonomy and self-invention are extended to women in contradictory ways. By staring at the sister, the bald man creates an uncomfortable space, which forces her to hide her chest by placing a shawl across her shoulders. Furthermore, this unwanted attention forces the sister to leave that space and take “you” back home. The next paragraph summarizes the sorts of expected roles the protagonist’s sister has to take, especially after moving the city. In order “to keep up with the rampant inflation”, one of the few ways the sister can earn money for the family is to be “a cleaning girl” (28). Even though she is promised she will go back to school, “her time for that has passed. Marriage is her future. She has been marked for entry” (28). Just like her mother, the sister is subjugated to a domesticized job to pay the bills. Women as second-class persons within “the land of self-help” are reminders in these examples of how individualism and the self-making enterprise is modeled for men, especially within Asian nations.

However, the reader is also presented with another a female character, the pretty girl, who also comes from a place of poverty and alongside “you” moves up the social and economic ladder, yet belongs mainly to the emotional center of the novel i.e. the love story. The pretty girl belongs to this global division of labor as a woman who also wants to pursue self-invention;

however, it is a contradictory world, where in inventing oneself, women have to shift and manage themselves within the labor market, and at the same time, adhere to the social and cultural expectations. Although the pretty girl goes onto become first a model, then a celebrity chef and actress, and, finally, a boutique owner, her way to achieve such success is by capitalizing on her physical attractiveness. In addition, she is also seen as a temporary escape from the protagonist's goals of upward mobility. However, the narrator sees the pretty girl as a problem and provides "you" with his or her third directive, "Don't Fall in Love." Especially by providing characters like the sister and the pretty girl, Hamid allegorizes these character types as a way to depict not only the universality of these dilemmas, but also the localized affects and impacts on marginalized bodies that are still struggling to gain agency in this globalized age. In this same regard, Hamid's choice to choose a male protagonist asks further questions about certain limitations that arise within global modernity, especially as the standardization of culture stems from European and American notions of equality, which limit the genre as an opportunity and option geared to only certain groups of people. How do these universalizing ideas effect people translocally, where we are still met with the exploitation and subordination of women? Here we can also begin to question how limited this postmodern self, described as fluid, becomes fragmented within the cultural and economic dimensions of globalization.

Hamid certainly has taken on a project in which the reader is presented with many possibilities and many ways of seeing ourselves and other selves in our historical moment. We are presented with a second-person narration which inserts the reader into the life of the protagonist and plays with the conventions of the self-help genre in order to consciously present and critique the workings and impact of globalization and the cultural and economic forces within Asia. This participatory and direct mode of address as an artistic choice within this novel

creates a sense of hyper-reality where the reader actively reads and participates in relating or becoming aware of circumstances similar to the characters within the world of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*. By intertwining the self-help genre and the novel with second-person narration, Hamid begins a process where the reader is presented with a work of art in which the ideological and social consciousness of our moment is combined with personal experiences to represent the reality of the reader.

“Time is the stuff of which a self is made”: time-space compression and structure of feeling

The intertwining effects of structural dimensions onto individual, local spheres, and vice versa, points to a certain shift in the structure of feeling within late-capitalism where the self has become contested. Another strategy Hamid uses to contemplate and create a certain awareness of this structure of feeling, is of experimentation with the conception of space and time within *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*. The processes of globalization and late-capitalism have created a fluid, forward moving progression of time and space in which “the material practices and processes of social reproduction are always changing” (Harvey 204). As we begin to examine the novel within the modes of time and space, and how those effect social and cultural practices, Hamid presents us with a structure of feeling of our present moment in which certain social meanings are being lived and felt. In our case, Jameson articulates those meanings as a social failure: “the postmodern shift to a crisis in our experience of space and time, a crisis in which spatial categories come to dominate those of time, while themselves undergoing such a mutation that we cannot keep pace” (Harvey 202). Within globalization, the continuous changes and innovations specially within the growing degree of technology pinpoint how such hyper-fast changes give meaning and value to the social consciousness of our precise historical and social

moment. In *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, Hamid is using the novel and the self-help genre as an artistic representation to depict the mood and the feeling of cultural and economic dimensions of globalization. Time, space, and the material within this narrative symbolize a structure of feeling that is currently being lived and is living. In this regard, Jameson's dialectic and syncretization of culture and economy comes together in a dialogue with Williams's application of structure of feeling. They both are building upon the idea that the historical and cultural study of a time period should not be treated and studied as separate elements but are "in the living experience of the time" as every element is, in the words of Marxian critic Raymond Williams, a "an inseparable part of a complex whole. And it seems to be true, from the nature of art, that it is from such a totality that the artist draws; it is in art, primarily that the effect of the totality, the dominant structure of feeling, is expressed and embodied" (Williams 41).

In the land of the self-help, especially within self-help literature, time is fluid and always moving forward and upward in terms of wealth and social spheres. In our protagonist's case, and within the novel, the experience of time and space is constructed in such a manner that the experience of progress is a "process of *becoming*, rather than *being*" (Harvey 205). As readers, we are also actively participating in the making of this split, contested self who, with the narrator's expertise and confidence, we expect, will achieve his goals. These sorts of changes and processes within modes of space and time of the novel, and of the historical moment, are depicted in a complex relationship between the narrator's and the protagonist's observations of the city's infrastructure and the aging of the characters, "you" and the pretty girl. How does space, the global city, and time, the structure of the narrative, come together to contemplate "a mutation that we cannot keep pace"? In this postmodern framework, Hamid combines the linear sense of time with a cyclical completion within the novel. Even though the novel seems to be

moving in a simple linear direction, the narrative structure is not that simply formed. There are no mentions of any historical events or moments; and the novel is narrated in the present tense, producing an on-going “process of becoming”, an immediacy that is further exaggerated by the direct address the reader gets from the narrator at the beginning of every chapter. However, the book does have to end, and to reach that end, Hamid uses the global city to transmit “you” to “witness a passage of time that outstrips its chronological equivalent” (*How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* 13). The descriptions of the city around “you” keeps mutating and growing like a living subject itself. Harvey, in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, builds upon the city and postmodernism illuminating “how the city looks and how its spaces are organized form a material base upon which a range of possible sensations and social practices can be thought about, evaluated, and achieved” (66-7). This is an essential observation to make within the world of “you” who, while maturing into an adult and in his old age, also notices and mirrors the changeability of the city forging new and more competitive spaces within globalization. For example, when “you” migrates to “the global city”, Hamid constructs and interrupts time by mapping out extensive differences and moods of the physical spaces in which “you” travels and describes the protagonist’s journey and the “few hours on a bus from rural remoteness to urban centrality [to] appear to span millennia” (13):

Atop your inky-smoke-spewing, starboard-listing conveyance you survey the changes with awe. Dirt streets give way to paved one, potholes grow less frequent and soon all but disappear, and the kamikaze rush of oncoming traffic vanishes, to be replaced by the enforced peace of the dual carriageway. Electricity makes its parade of high-voltage giants, then later in the form of wires running at bus-top eye level on either side of the road, and finally in streetlights and shop signs and glorious, magnificent billboards. Buildings go from mud to brick to concrete, then shoot up to an unimaginable four stories, even five. (14)

This is the protagonist’s first impression of the city in which he will begin his journey. This lengthy description brings forth the cultural and economic dimensions of globalization in Asia

that have forced masses of people to move into cities and become a part of the cyclical and repetitive division of labor, production, and consumption. This sort of detailed observation about the city as a mode of space, and how the movement towards a city shows the experience of time, intermingles their relationship within the condition of globalization and is an example of the many realities the individual subject becomes a part of within the global city. Furthermore, electricity, transportation, and different modes of advertisement define the “modernization” that has become the norm within this globalized space, yet is still new to the protagonist, which is why it is not absent within the description. Furthermore, this passage initiates a lengthy series of observations of the city, which changes as time passes. Not only is “you” moving in space and time to a “modernized” space, as an individual to self-constitute himself, he needs to adapt and replace his localized traditions to become part of this metropolis. This description also gives the reader a hint at the structure of feeling in the city’s infrastructure as the narrator does not provide simply a material description of the space, but adds adjectives such as “glorious”, “magnificent”, and “unimaginable” to give a certain feeling to the nature of global capitalism and the rewards these spaces will bring to the potentially self-made “you”. In addition, these adjectives and imagery of the space around “you” symbolizes the false optimism that has been advertised to persuade those masses of people by glorifying the capitalist agenda.

This progress from a rural to an urban reality is formed with the image of movement, specifically, as a “road to success,” which represents advancement through the multiple layers the protagonist, like others before him and after him, will have to transverse in order to reach his destination. However, as “you” ages, the narrator provides the reader with an environment that does not necessarily age but becomes a living apparatus in the “process of *becoming*”. Also, the layers that the protagonist moves through in getting an education, learning from an expert, and

starting his own business, makes him realize that the road to success isn't as structured, as glorified, and as functional as the marketing, through the self-help book, has promised: "Your city is not laid out as a single-celled organism, with a wealthy nucleus surrounded by an ooze of slums" (20). This description of the city is provided to the reader in "Get an Education" where the protagonist has started going to school. The narrator informs the protagonist that this city isn't created as a structured, unified model and this failure to function creates many problems in gaining economic prosperity: "Accordingly, the poor live near the rich. Wealthy neighborhoods are often divided by a single boulevard from factories and markets and graveyards, and those in turn may be separated from the homes of the impoverished only by an open sewer, railroad track, or narrow alley" (20). However, in the lack of organization, we also find the differentiated aspects of consumerism where the rich cannot throw the poor out of these urban spaces; rather they mutually are either surviving or thriving right next to each other. Here, we also see a critique of the global division of labor and the tension between identity and difference, which repeatedly interplays with the identities of these individuals and how the symbolic is reflected in the material space, and vice versa.

Later, the reader finds more negative, organic descriptions of the roads of this land of self-help: "A limited-access ring road is under construction around the place, forming a belt past which its urban belly is already beginning to bulge, and from which ramps soar and arc off in every direction. Your bus barrels along in the shadow of these monuments, dusty new arteries feeding the city, which despite its immensity is only one among many such organs quivering in the torso of rising Asia" (82). Here the protagonist has found an apprenticeship where a successful entrepreneur gives "you" experience and skills in the water-supply business. While going home, "you" observes this becoming and living space of his metropolis, and we get more

of a sense of an unhealthy organism. The description of this living thing has a torso, a belly, arteries, and organs to signify the immense and rapid growth of the global city and its extension outward to rural and less modernized parts. Similarly, these passages describe the city as a living entity and form a reflection of how the contested self is also built by experience as time moves forward. Over and over, we are provided with such descriptions of the city from which Hamid informs the reader with an understanding that this space, the global city, cannot be such a city without its inhabitants and its human elements. The impacts of economic and cultural dimensions of globalization on the individual split-subject construct and inform the material spaces of city inhabitants, and how this growth keeps moving towards the periphery of modernized spaces, changing and standardizing them as well. With such repetition and personification of the city, we realize the impossible vastness of the mutations that our living spaces are adapting to.

As readers, we move in time and space with the protagonist in his quest of individual identity and self-constitution, where the reader becomes part of this individualistic project, in which “you” has to: “study, identify, work his way through different masters, become his own master, bribe bureaucrats, negotiate with the government and the military, and use mafia-life violence” in order to fulfill his enterprise (Mahmutovic). In becoming a self-made man, “you” chooses water as the commodity from which he will acquire his wealth. The self-help book is a commodity, which the reader and the protagonist have invested in; similarly the protagonist uses water as a commodity and begins his investment to profit within his capitalist agenda. Within the narrative, to become an entrepreneur, the protagonist uses the dysfunctionality of his material space i.e. the metropolis. In the chapter, “Work for Yourself”, “you” enters the bottled-water trade: “Your city’s neglected pipes are cracking, the contents of underground water mains and sewers mingling, with the result that taps in locales rich and poor alike disgorge liquids that,

while for the most part clear and often odorless, reliably contain trace levels of feces and microorganisms capable of causing diarrhea...and typhoid” (99). This reflects erosion and dysfunctional characteristics of the city as time moves within the novel and as the protagonist becomes older. He realizes and capitalizes on the material space in which he follows the uneven, unorganized road to success.

Not only does the image of water add to “the process of becoming” for “you,” and to the economic goals that pertain to “liquid modernity” within the novel (Poon 142), it constructs a metaphorical image of water as a representation of a postmodern time and space in which all is changing and is symbolic of some kind of fluidity. As discussed above, Hamid’s contemplation of the literal and symbolic significance of water points to the catastrophes and inequalities of the “Asian century”, our contemporary structure of feeling, where water reveals an immense gap between the rich and the poor, and partly shapes the metropolis through the city’s network of pipes and taps, similar to the protagonist’s business becoming “quantified, digitized, and jacked into a global network of finance, your activities subsumed with barely a ripple in a collective mathematical pool of ever-changing current and future cash flows” (Hamid, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* 181). In this regard, Harvey’s claim of architecture as communication becomes applicable to the intention of Hamid’s experimentation with the mode of address, the self-help genre, and the time and space within the narrative (*The Condition of Postmodernity* 67). The idea that the city constructs a discourse where the individual is captured as a subject, and the reader is also tied into paying close attention to what is being said, portrayed, and how much of it mirrors our realities.

Furthermore, this experimentation of space and time within the novel can best be explained and understood through Harvey’s notion of “time-space compression and the

postmodern condition” in which he explores the results of communicational networks and technologies, also mentioned by Jameson, that condense and alter spatial and temporal distances (284). In this regard, the presentation and the realities of self become fragmented, especially as representations of the self start to exist in virtual realities. However, this ever-changing and moving time accentuates and exaggerates the volatility which results from the self having to morph itself within economic and social practices of globalization and late-capitalism. Just like the processes of consumerism teaches the individual to disassociate himself or herself from larger forces at play within their personal lives; the protagonist separates himself from humanistic values, stable relationships, and the human element in his road to success.

As “you” in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* matures to an adult and arrives at his destination of material wealth and luxury, his wife has left him and his son has decided to live and study abroad. After living to the eighth decade of his life, however, the protagonist has a second heart attack and his company is bankrupt. In the last portion of the novel, one of the narrator’s main focuses is the problem of time: “Writers and readers seek a solution to the problem that time passes, that those who have gone are gone and those who will go, which is to say every one of us, will go” (214). By contemplating the clichéd sense of time being never enough, the narrator also breaks the distance between himself or herself, the reader, and the protagonist. Hamid extends this experimentation by further complicating the roles that have been assigned to each individual, and to the space within the narrative: “We must hurry. We are nearing our end, you and I, and this self-help book too, well, the self in it anyway, and likewise the help it offers, though its bookness, being bookness, may by definition yet persevere (177). This is one of the first moments in which the narrator breaks the distance and introduces him or herself in the conversation. By philosophizing on the temporariness of time, the narrator defines

the limits between the temporality and immortality of writing and what it can offer the contested self. Furthermore, this reflection upon time also synthesizes the objective forces and subjective forces of globalization, and begins to deconstruct the narrator's intent to form a human connection with the reader and the protagonist. By concentrating on not having enough time, Hamid intends to give the reader some truths that also exist in our capitalist society: the inevitability of death. As a response to the finalities inherent in human existence, he goes into a discussion of "focus[ing] on the fundamentals" by which he means essential fundamentals of human existence. What comes to be the fundamentals for "you" is finally being reunited with the pretty girl, and moving in together and enjoying their last years as a couple. Hamid constructs an ethic in which the narrator seems to move away from business oriented discourse to one that is removed from goals of living in material wealth. In the last three chapters, this same contested self becomes simplified as both, "you" and the pretty girl, create a life that is shaped around their companionship and spending their time "by turns cheerfully, grumpily, quietly or comfortingly" (215). The text becomes a didactic message about the importance of human connection and human relationship, rather than an importance of economic connectedness in a global world, which mostly serves a self-interested and competitive environment.

One of the most creative strategies of time-space compression is played out in the intensified last scene of the novel as the narrator says: "And she comes to you, and she does not speak, and the others do not notice her, and she takes your hand...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" (222). In this last moment of the narrative, "you" is lying on his deathbed with his ex-wife and son in the hospital room. He is having an illusion in

which the pretty girl enters the room. Not only is there an emphasis between a romantic connection that was an irreplaceable memory for the protagonist, the narrator constructs an infinite connection that is created within this social web that the narrator, the reader, the protagonist, and basically all human lives are a part of. Hamid is constructing a narrative that suggests a human emotion and element without a beginning or end. By reworking a globalized conception of time-space compression of world-markets, communicational networks, and economic standardization, Hamid applies it to the contemplation of imagination and of time on a human, localized level, and by creating empathy between all the relationships that have been either part of the novel's reality or the reader's life. And so, we are met with a redefinition of self-help in this satirization of the self-help genre and of the postmodern self, where a lot of realities and versions of the self overlap and become entangled with one another. Here the help that the narrator is providing is by critiquing the dehumanizing cycle of globalization, and looking upon a differentiated identity that affords human expression to exist within our globalized capitalist world. By showing a certain kind of end for the protagonist, it also provides an opportunity for the reader to revisit her or his own perceptions and ways of seeing in this modernized space. Even though the life of the protagonist has ended, it does not mean the reader's or the narrator's has, and leaves an open space for not revisiting, but revising, contemplating, and taking action accordingly to improve the self, not through a capitalist agenda, but through intimacies and reconnection on a human level.

By combining Jameson's theory of the cultural and economic dimensions of globalization with the concepts of postmodernism as discussed by Harvey, we come to an understanding of the relationships that have been created and intertwined between objective and subjective forces of late-capitalism within Hamid's narrative techniques and experiments with the self-help genre and

the split-subject. Hamid takes a dialectical approach to formulate his ideas about the individual subject in relation to the world, and raises questions about what our historical moment is, represents, and creates. The genre of self-help is reworked within the novel to reach an understanding of the limitations that arise from the one-dimensional goal of achieving material wealth and reminds the reader that he or she like everyone else can be many things. *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* stands out for its engagement with the economic and cultural dimensions of globalization within Asia, the cultural disruptions and uneven effects globalization has caused. Hamid's creative process has begun a realization and a process of developing and forming a newly possible consciousness that, in the words of Raymond Williams, is "a process often described as development but in practice a struggle at the roots of the mind- not casting off an ideology, or learning phases about it, but confronting a hegemony in the fibres of the self and in the hard practical substance of effective and continuing relationships" (Williams 212).

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