



Analyzing Ambivalence and Hybridized Individualistic Western Cultural Values in Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke*

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Abstract: This research explores postcolonial issues like ambivalence, cultural hybridity, mimicry, and identity crisis in Mohsin Hamid's novel *Moth Smoke*. The novel presents the picture of Pakistani society surrounded by the presence of western values, cultural rifts and obsessions of materiality, and a weakening bond between the community and moral codes. Bhabha's theory provides grounds to analyze the selected text. The wealthy characters of the novel, like Ozi and Mumtaz, are pursuing individualistic lifestyles affected by their touch with New York during their studies, while some Pakistani characters, like the drug dealer, Murad, are pursuing English as a basic language of communication only to hide their reality of low origin and stamp their authority and control over other. Ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry of these characters are analyzed in this research. The hybridized individualistic western values lead Mumtaz to become an infidel to his husband and have extramarital affairs with Daru going against the cultural values of the Pakistani society with rigid patriarchal and sexual control over women. The space of cultural hybridity paves the way for mimicry in most of the instances and also leads to the downfall of Daru, the economically poor class friend of Ozi.

Introduction

This research examines Pakistani writer Mohsin Hamid's first novel, *Moth Smoke*, with the postcolonial perspective of hybridity and mimicry in the characters of the ex-colonies of British rule. The central character in the novel, Darashikoh Shezad (Daru), is an aggressive banker who is fired from their job and involved in the business of drugs. He has some jealousy of wealth with his best friend, Ozi. Since Daru is poor but luxurious by taste, he needs to sell drugs for money. Murad Badshah is his drug dealer. Ozi's wife, Mumtaz, is a beautiful and westernized woman who is on a quest for an exciting sexual partner and falls for Daru. She leads a deceptive life with her husband, writing for a newspaper under the pseudonym of Zulfikar

Manto as an investigative journalist. The dual identity and hybridity become the hallmark of the characters like Daru, Mumtaz, and Murad. The novel presents various problems generated by the cultural loss that is the result of the cultural hybridity between Eastern and Western cultural values. As the novel progresses, one sees more problems compounding upon the characters. Mumtaz's husband, Ozi, finds out the truth about his wife's affair with Daru. An extramarital affair is not allowed in Eastern society and is the result of Mumtaz's touch on the Western sense of freedom as she studies in New York. Mumtaz has secretly enjoyed the Western sense of free self, but soon, she knows about her husband's knowledge of their affair. She knows it when Daru

goes to jail on an accusation of killing a child. The child was killed by Ozi's car, but as revenge on Daru for the affair with his wife, Ozi succeeds in proving him guilty, accusing him of the killing.

The novel begins with the court trial of Daru, and the judge declares him guilty. Spending wretched life in a narrow cell prison becomes the fate of this aggressive protagonist. In terms of its form, the novel is a frame story told from multiple narrators' points of view and deals with class problems, growing materiality, the problems of immigrants abroad, drug abuse, crime as well as family tensions. The setting of the novel is the summer of 1998 which marks the time Pakistan tested its first nuclear weapon as a response to the nuclear test of its arch-rival India. The novel is regarded as Hamid's take on the historical moment that planted the seed of the destruction of Pakistan. As the atoms are broken in the fission bomb in the nuclear weapons, Pakistani society is also broken into parts in terms of economic class, in terms of cultural values as well as conservatism and liberalism. The widening rift among social and cultural rift invited various crimes and escalated drug abuse; the moral standard of the people weakened, and deception became frequent. Pakistani society is not only testing a nuclear weapon and heading into a new nuclear era, but it is planting the seed of its own destruction too. Hamid has, thus, painted a grave picture of Pakistan in the novel.

Research Objectives

- To know about the status of the women living abroad having extra-marital affairs.
- To understand the effects of colonialism and Western presence.
- To present the issues of identity crisis in the selected text.

Research Questions

1. What is the reason behind a Pakistani woman like Mumtaz growing up with rigid patriarchal and sexual control, deceiving

her husband, and having an extra-marital romance?

2. How has a colonial, Western presence in the characters affected the characters of the society?
3. How does Mumtaz experience an identity crisis and long for their homeland, even when she has a pretty good and carefree life in New York?

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This research is qualitative in nature. This research analyzes the hybridity and mimicry of the characters in the contact zones of several cultures. Mimicry is a trope devised by postcolonial writer Bhabha with the critical vein of countering colonial discourses and authority. He has discussed this notion of mimicry as promoted by colonial discourses as a psychological construction of the colonized subjects who are similar in habits to the colonizers, so that be compliant to be ruled. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin point out, "The problem for colonial discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits, and values that are 'mimic' the colonizer. But instead, it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery" (Ashcroft et al. 2013, p.13). Despite the attempt of colonial discourses promoting the mimic men as the basis for colonization, Bhabha sees the psychological process of the colonized mimic men and shows that it does not only confirm the colonial rule rather it also subverts the colonial rule because it turns closer to a mockery of their authority. In the analysis of the process of mimicry, Bhabha writes:

"What they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the *ambivalence* of mimicry (almost the same, *but not quite*) does not merely 'rupture' the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence. By 'partial', I mean both 'incomplete'

and 'virtual'. It is as if the very emergence of the 'colonial' is dependent on its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition *within* the authoritative discourse itself. The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace.” (Bhabha 1994, p.123)

Mimicry, or the appropriation of the colonized subjects, is only a partial presence for Bhabha. This partial presence has got its weaknesses and limits, and they cannot remove all the inappropriate subjects with this appropriation. Mimicry thus becomes at once a resemblance and menace for the colonial authority.

Textual Analysis

This research focuses on the postcolonial issues of ambivalence, cultural hybridity, mimicry, and identity crisis of the characters that are in direct touch with the colonial lifestyle in the west or their native land. Since Ozi and Mumtaz have spent a long time in New York and the contact with western society develops individualistic character traits making them culturally hybrid, and Murad is obsessed with speaking English in Hindi and Punjabi accent to be at better control and authority over the people around him, they are analyzed for these postcolonial issues in this research. The main objective of this research is to explore the postcolonial issues like ambivalence, hybridity, mimicry, and identity crisis of the characters of the Third World in Mohsin Hamid's novel *Moth Smoke*. The study of the postcolonial problems and the consequences the characters face is the objective of the study. Even though this research primarily examines the ironic issues related to postcolonial social conditions and their impact on shaping characters, the analysis is textual. Only the textual evidence is drawn into the discussion. Even though this research uses the theoretical basis of postcolonial studies, it does not clarify all the aspects of postcolonialism due to the limitation of time. Only supportive theoretical premises are used. This research

becomes a remarkable contribution to the study of postcolonial problems in the novels written by Third World writers. Further, future researchers will be benefitted and be encouraged to study postcolonial problems of modern people of the Third World in the texts on the framework of this research.

The present research examines the evils of colonial presence in *Moth Smoke* and concludes that the characters display ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry of the colonial world that has still lingering impact on their lives. The big brother arrogance on the part of the colonizers always haunts the psyche of the colonized and formerly colonized individuals and the society. The complex superiority psychology of the Westerners is still ruling the relationship between colonizers and colonized, which is evident from the examination of the novel. Thus, the present research stresses the necessity of the mimicry of the formerly colonized ones. The frame narrative of *Moth Smoke* presents three stories, with the last story bearing the title of the fiction accounts the tale of different individuals suffering from the evils of psychic colonialism owing to the hitherto physical and psychological domination on the part of the colonizers. Thus the research stresses the fact that Mimicry has to establish freedom and decolonization in the ex-colonies.

Critic Muneeza Shamsie sees the novel as Hamid's way of looking back on Pakistan's nuclear test and impending economic disaster:

“Mohsin Hamid (b. 1971) looks at Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests and the ensuing economic disaster in his first novel, *Moth Smoke* (2000), set in modern Lahore, which is framed by a notorious episode of fratricide from Mughal history and echoes the novel's central themes: power, powerlessness, social iniquity, and corruption.” (Shamsie, 2011, p.152)

The novel, according to Shamsie, is an episode of fratricide in Mughal history and encompasses the themes like power, powerlessness, social iniquity, and corruption.

Critic Frederick Luis Aldama discusses the structure of the novel and praises the novelist's handling of suspense mixed with lyrical description:

"In *Moth Smoke*, Hamid richly textures a world filled with invisible and not-so-in-visible boundaries that control and contain those who do not belong to the superelite. He also beautifully anchors his suspenseful and caustic novel in the lyric description, even breathing life into everyday minutiae: Daru rolls a cigarette, 'loosening the tobacco, coaxing it into a sweaty palm, rubbing the flake between thumb and forefinger until it's almost empty.' Long after the last page has been turned, *Moth Smoke*'s poetic turns of phrase and complexly imagined cast of characters resonate vividly." (Aldama 2000, p.812)

In the criticism, Aldama also provides an example of the poetic language Hamid uses to describe the protagonist's act of rolling cigarettes. Critics Linda Null and Suellen Alfred point out the variation in perspectives used by Hamid to narrate the story. His use of multiple narrators touches them as this technique lets the writer give an inconsistent description of a single character from a different point of view:

"An interesting aspect of Hamid's style is his use of multiple narrators. One effect of this technique is to show us inconsistent descriptions of a single character through different points of view. For example, Daru describes his drug dealer, Murad Badshah, who has an MA in English. He speaks what he thinks is well-bred English to deny the lower-class origins that colour the accent of his Urdu and Punjabi. But like an overambitious toupee, his artificial diction draws attention to what it's meant to hide." (Null 2003, p.88)

Null and Alfred provide an example of this. As Daru differently describes his drug dealer Murad, Murad is also given a chance to relate the story from his point of view. The use of multiple

viewpoints becomes a prominent technique in the novel.

The critics of diaspora see the importance of family in such identity crises. More than the place, a caring family with cultural awareness becomes important for her in their diasporic condition. Olwig explores the connection between family, ethnicity, and the place for a diaspora:

"The family also provided a certain sense of community that involved, apart from periodic reunions at major family events, the extension of help and favours important to the livelihood of individuals. The similarities in the two groups of people become apparent when the 'ethnic' identities and practices of these people are interpreted about the lives they have lived rather than about their derivation from a particular place. The place is not in and of itself a given entity that can be used as a natural point of reference in ethnic, diasporic, or transnational identity. Rather it is constructed as people define and gives meaning to a particular physical locale in the course of their lives." (Olwig 2004, p.68)

Olwig does not give much currency to place as the place is constructed point of reference. More than the place of origin, family, ethnicity, and sense of community are focused on the construction of identity in his study of diaspora. Though Ozi was a good husband, he started to go to gold and returned tired, there was no sexual union and passion left, and they talked less in the family. He used to spend some time with the kid and sleep when he returned home tired. The emotional distance created within the family plays an important role in alienating Mumtaz, and miss the home instead of renewing any interest in New York.

Mumtaz, the wife of Ozi, is loyal to her husband only for four years of her marriage, and then, she involves Daru in extramarital affairs, at the same time cheating her husband that she is still loyal to him:

"It is certain that Mumtaz remained loyal and honest to her husband only after four years of

marriage, but at the same time, she got intrigued by having sex with her husband's best friend, Daru. This first lie and deception began when she started writing as an investigative journalist under a pseudonym. Zulfikar Manto. Ozi, on the other hand, had faith and trust in her. Ozi had a bit of suspense about her, as she lied so many times to her loyal husband, wandering all over the town, telling him she had been the place." (Malik 2016, p.594)

Daru's involvement in the extramarital affair with Mumtaz is the result of his jealousy over the wealth of his best friend, Ozi. Mumtaz falls for Daru as he is handsome, attractive, and safe for the relationship, as he does not open his mouth before her husband, Ozi, as he is his best friend. Mumtaz's lie began as she started to write under the pseudonym of Zulfikar Manto as an investigative journalist. The characters in the novel exhibit double standard, and they do not obey the social codes. They live deceptive life.

In Hamid's novel, cross-cultural contact zones of the South Asian societies as well as contact zones between Eastern and Western cultures, are presented. The characters appear to be divided along with the contact zones among the number of cultures in Lahore, Pakistan, cultural hybridity of the characters in cross-cultural contact zones in diasporic conditions. Further, there are sub-cultural groups of drug users and smugglers. The concept of hybridity is a famous post-colonial trope used by Homi K. Bhabha. Ashcroft et al. define hybridity as "One of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in post-colonial theory. Hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (Ashcroft et al. 2001, p.118). The first part of Mumtaz's narration recalls her stay in New York and getting married to Ozi when she meets him and sleeps with him at a party. She begins her recollection of New York which displays her cultural hybridity and ambivalent attitude to the cultural norms of America and Pakistan.

"Let's start in New York City, my senior year in college. The scene is the East Village, a little before midnight, on the steps of a fourth-floor walk-up on Avenue A. The date is important: October 31. Halloween. I'm dressed as Mother Earth (rather ironic, as you'll come to see). My roommate, an English Egyptian major, is improvising around the Cleopatra theme again. This year there's a sun motif. Ra, you know. Last year it was more Leo. (Hamid 2000, p.147)

Mumtaz's narration begins with the recollection of her New York college life. Even though she is a Muslim girl from Pakistan, she not only celebrates the Christian festival of Halloween but also dresses as Mother Earth, the cultural deity of a very different culture. Her cultural hybridity and mimicry for her survival in America are seen in this instance.

In his book *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha discussed the nature of mimicry in these terms:

"The discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal." (Bhabha 1994, p.122)

The ambivalence, a love-hate relationship between two different cultural values, paves the way for mimicry, according to Bhabha. The authority in the colonial discourses is formed on the very basis of mimicry, and it has the nature of indeterminacy. Bhabha further clarifies:

"Mimicry is, thus, the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also a sign of inappropriation. However, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres to the dominant strategic function of colonial power intensifies surveillance and poses an imminent threat to

both 'normalized' knowledge and disciplinary powers. (Bhabha 1994, Pp.122-123)

The Muslim girl from Pakistan mimics the look of mother earth, and her Egyptian mate is doing the role of Cleopatra. The American culture and its mimicry have become the norm for college students who study in America. There is a double articulation of identity, and it is normalized for them. Mumtaz herself accepts that her mimicking of the role of mother earth itself is ironic. Mumtaz narrates the events that unfolded at the Halloween party. In the narration, it becomes clear that Mumtaz has become not only open to alcoholic drinks but also open to drug use and sex. She uses ex, a kind of drug, and feels joyous at the party. She sees a sexy brown-skinned boy at the party and develops a desire for his body, and she spends a night with him. They marry after nine months of that physical union. Mumtaz soon repents her decision to marry because she decided about it at a time when she did not know what marriage meant. We see that she expected the same freedom American culture taught her even after the marriage. The decision to marry was affected by the views of her family and friends, who always professed that a woman needs to marry a wealthy man and secure their future.

We see that there are cultural differences between Mumtaz and other conventional women in her family and friends regarding their views on marriage. Conventional women prioritize marriage with the fear that the future of a woman remains uncertain if they do not marry a good and wealthy man from their own culture. But as a free girl grown up with an air of free lifestyle, Mumtaz does not understand what they mean. But at the same time, having no knowledge of marriage and being influenced by conventional views, she decides to marry. She recalls how the people of her circle praised the couple and depicted Ozi as a prince and her as a slut and gossiped that she was very lucky to get a husband like Ozi. Before Mumtaz knows what marriage means, she shows Ozi as her possible husband at

a party of the South Asian Student Association, where everybody praises her luck. Her friends envied the couple as most of her friends adored Ozi, and her parents became happy. They got married in Karachi as soon as both of them completed their study.

At the beginning phase of their marriage, they loved each other very much; their relationship was passionate, and she shared everything with him. She does not feel any apathy toward the marriage. Sharp contrast and cultural difference are presented in terms of marriage. The marriage of the Westernized couple, Mumtaz and Ozi, is depicted as free, and there is no control over anything. The sexual unions may also be open in such couples as Ozi even makes physical contact with Mumtaz at his office desk and makes his officemate blush with shame. There is passion everywhere in their marriage, but in couples in South Asia, the husbands control their wives. There is an instance of turbulent marriage in Mumtaz's family, too; Mumtaz shares with Ozi the story of the turbulent and violent relationship between her father and mother. Her father controls and beats her mother. Sometimes so hard is the punishment that it might cause lifetime damage.

The gender roles and stereotypes of South Asian society, the image of a submissive mother and dominating father, are avoided by the young couple Ozi and Mumtaz. It is one of the instances of cultural hybridity. At the same time, there is mimicry of the Western form of marriage. The reason behind their non-conformation to the stereotype of their native social codes is to avoid social othering from their open-minded Americans as their attitude to the Muslims is not without prejudices and orientalist views, as Edward Said observes in *Orientalism*:

"The web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, and dehumanizing ideology holding in the Arab or the Muslim is very strong indeed, and it is this web that every Palestinian has come to feel as his uniquely punishing destiny...The nexus of knowledge and

power creating 'the oriental' and, in a sense obliterating him as a human being is, therefore, not for me an exclusively academic matter. Yet it is an *intellectual* matter of some very obvious importance." (Said 1978, p.27)

To avoid the cultural stereotype an American has formed about Muslim people, both Ozi and Mumtaz mimic the Western ways even after the marriage. There is a strong web of racism against the Arab people and Muslims. So, they do not want to be caught in the web of racial orientalist stereotypes in America is clear. This results in their mimicry of the Western lifestyle though they see how marriages go in South Asian societies.

The mimicry of the English language and lifestyle is not less in the characters living in Lahore too. Daru narrates the personality of Murad, his drug dealer.

"Murad Badshah's my dealer: occasionally amusing, desperately insecure, and annoyingly fond of claiming that he's a dangerous outlaw. He speaks what he thinks is well-bred English to deny the lower-class origins that colour the accent of his Urdu and Punjabi. But like an overambitious toupee, his artificial diction draws attention to what it's meant to hide." (Hamid 2000, p.39-40)

Murad is living a precarious life dealing with drugs, but he speaks English that he calls well-bred English. The reason behind his speaking English is to conceal his lower-class origin and build the dominating air around him. His English becomes just a mimicry of colonial authority as it has Urdu and Punjabi overtones. Mumtaz shows boredom and fear in her marriage and recalls that she felt no motherly attachment to the baby she had given birth to. She has no affection for him; she has no wonder, no joy or happiness for motherhood. She feels as if she will go insane with the mental void. Her lack of attachment to the kid she has given birth to is one of the prominent aspects of American culture, as Gary Althen and Janet Bennett point out:

"Many Americans do not display the degree of respect for their parents that people in more traditional or family-oriented societies commonly do. From their point of view, being born to particular parents is a sort of historical or biological accident. The parents fulfil their responsibilities to their children while the children are young, but when the children reach "the age of independence," the close child-parent tie is loosened, occasionally even broken." (Althen 2011, p.8)

Findings

Ambivalence informs the process of mimicry, according to Bhabha. To provide an example, he brings Locke's Second Treatise into the discussion. In the treatise, Locke used the word 'slave' for a dual purpose. First, it legitimizes the legal ownership of the slave and the legitimate exercise of power over them, and second, it is used as the trope for the intolerable, illegitimate exercise of power. In the area left between these opposites, mimicry comes and challenges the colonial, civilizing authority. Murad's mimicry, even then, is not the resistance to colonial authority but a means of survival. Mumtaz continually displays the cultural hybridity and mimicry of a Western, individualistic lifestyle. She does not want to be a mother even after the marriage when she knows she is pregnant. More ironic is the fact that a Muslim girl from South Asian Islamic culture, where Muslim women are not even allowed to use contraceptives, is compelled to give birth to the babies helplessly as far as their body permits, describes herself as a condom person, and decides to abort the baby as soon as she finds she is pregnant. It is clear that Mumtaz is culturally westernized and is very individualistic in contrast to the communal society of South Asia. She finds that she is pregnant like Ozi, and she stops using a condom. She decides to have an abortion and tells her husband, but she finds that her husband is very happy with her pregnancy. So, he suggests she wait and think for a week before she carries out an abortion. She is angry with Ozi and never

forgives him, for he shares the news of her pregnancy with his mother, and his mother flies to New York with gifts and suggestions. Ozi's happiness at her pregnancy, sharing the news of her pregnancy with his mother, and her visits to them with gifts and suggestions are the features of the communal culture of South Asia that Mumtaz is unable to understand. She is more western than her native, South Asian culture.

This shows the cultural loss of an immigrant in Western countries. It is no surprise that the loss of culture and sense of belonging to a culture or family leads a person to an identity crisis. The idea of identity is the result of the crisis of belonging. As Zygmunt Bauman argues, "The idea of 'identity' was born out of the crisis of belonging and out of the effort it triggered to bridge the gap between the 'ought' and the 'is' and to lift reality to the standards set by the idea to remake the reality in the likeness of the idea ..." (Bauman 2000, p.20). The crisis of belonging, the feeling that she is nothing in the family, starts to haunt Mumtaz after unwillingly bearing all the consequences of pregnancy and giving birth to a baby boy bearing a lot of pain. She recalls how she lacked any emotional attachment to her kid even after mothering him.

American parents only fulfil their responsibilities to their children, unlike in traditional or family-oriented societies. They just think that giving birth or being born is just a historical or biological accident. There are not many bonds between the kids and parents, and they become free from the family when they reach the age of independence, which means they are regarded as independent people when they turn twenty-one. This American value is individualistic. Mumtaz is seen displaying the individualistic American value rather than the glorified motherhood that is regarded as a matter of pride in South Asian societies. Mumtaz is fulfilling her responsibility to her kid, Muazzam, like American parents do to their kids. She played with him, read books to him, bought him clothes, breastfed him, and cleaned his shit and dirt. She

feels guilty about the lack of attachment to her child, and she is just fulfilling the duty her husband, mother, and other members of society expect from her. Out of her boredom, she wanted to do a full-time job, but with this guilt that she is unable to love her kid, or else what her husband and relative would consider if she did so, she gives up the idea of doing a full-time job, and she turns to freelance writing for the print media. She is an American with an individualistic approach that contrasts with the social codes of the society she belongs to demand from her. Due to the identity crisis and distraction from her usual free life due to motherhood and family, she looks for interesting stuff to write and make some money as well as identity as a writer. Her loss of interest and passion for the place and local politics becomes evident. She just misses home. She feels that people are wrong to think that the centre of the world lies at the point they stand. She needs to find out another centre to come out of this lack of interest and passion in the city where she lives. She lacks emotion and feelings towards any issue around her, she misses her home, and she lacks the centre that suggests her identity crisis.

New York was the place where Mumtaz had a lot of memories. It gave her the freedom she would never be able to get in South Asian society. It westernized her, and she became sexually independent in New York, going against the Pakistani cultural values with rigid sexual codes for women. Mumtaz does not hesitate to share that she lost her virginity in New York. She learned a liberal lifestyle there, studied liberal arts education and came into touch with a drug-using international crowd. She mimics all the free western lifestyles and cultural values at the expense of her Pakistani cultural values, and now, she is missing home, and she has got a feeling of a void in the western world. Mimicry leads Mumtaz to disillusionment with the West. But her hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry are more for her survival in the western world rather than resistance to western colonial mentality. She is one of the mimicry women who pursue independent life even after she returns to Lahore

with her husband. It is the loss of love and respect for her husband; she develops a passionate, physical attachment to her husband's best friend, Daru.

To sum up, in the age of migration in the postcolonial era, the characters of the former colonies are culturally hybrid when they get in touch with western factors. With that hybridity and their ambivalent attitude between the cultures, they are becoming mimic men, which has not only affected them and led them to an identity crisis but also contributed to the weakening of their cultural values. Hamid's novel has successfully shown this postcolonial impact in the backdrop of Pakistani society.

Conclusion

The novelist highlights that cultural hybridity and mimicry are the consequences of a colonial, capitalist, and materialistic empire, which is well supported by the plot of the novel. The plot is framed inside the historical anecdote about the empire of Aurangzeb and his rise and fall as the imperialist. There was a great feud for power, and Aurangzeb took over his brothers in power politics and bloody tactics to get the rein of the empire of his father, Emperor Shah Jahan. The consequences of empire upon the life of children, i.e. the people around the world, is, thus, a prominent issue of the novel *Moth Smoke*. The sons of Shah Jahan, namely Darashikoh, Shuja, Murad, and Aurangzeb, fight with each other and the youngest of them, Aurangzeb, takes the reign of his father. The writer has diversified those four sons of Shah Jahan among the characters of different traits, socioeconomic conditions, and temperaments in the novel, and they are presented as somehow connected in their daily lives; they affect each other's life where the youngest one, Aurangzeb or Ozi becomes victorious because he has got the wealth. With this, the writer symbolically presents the bitter truth that the youngest among the cultural values, namely materialism or capitalism, is

taking over the empire and ruining the life of the other economically hapless ones.

The plot of the novel is bracketed within the historical anecdote where Emperor Shah Jahan asks a Sufi saint about the future of his sons and his great empire, and the saint predicts that his youngest son, Aurangzeb, will take charge after his death. At the end of the novel, there is an anecdote about the death of Darashikoh that shows the fate of the otherwise legal heir of the empire. This anecdote of Darashikoh's death coincides with the plot in which Aurangzeb, or Ozi, sends his friend Darashikoh (Daru) to prison. The war of succession of empire coincides with Ozi's attempt to win the love of Mumtaz back from her extra-marital love for Daru. The anecdote that ends the novel presents the fate of an empire that is continually fluctuating between fission and fusion, the heir of the empire is responsible for this fate of the empire, while the very empire and power have got several consequences upon their lives. The clash between hope and memory is symbolically presented as the clash between the Western prosperity fueled by the colonial empire in the past and the condition of the Third World subjects that are drawn back to their homeland due to its memory. Hope and memory are fluctuating consequences of the empire in the Third World characters that have long-lasting cultural impacts. Hybridity and mimicry are, thus, the result of hope in the empire and the memory of their own culture.

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