

## Exploring Rupture of Metanarratives, Historiographic Metafiction and Hyperreality in *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*

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**Abstract:** Pakistani Anglophone writers not only connect local and international readerships but also provide valuable perspectives on the intricacies and complexities of Pakistani life and society, playing a significant role in enriching the vibrant and diverse literary landscape. The contemporary grand narratives of religion, science, nationalism, caste, gender, colonialism, knowledge, justice, and culture are all called into question by postmodern fiction. The postmodern condition idea put forward by Lyotard in his report titled *The Postmodern Condition* is contextualized in this study. According to Lyotard, “the term postmodern designates the state of our culture following the transformations which have changed the rules of science, literature, and the arts since the end of the nineteenth century” (Lyotard, 1984, p.7). He expresses his incertitude about the hegemony of metanarratives by pointing out that there are many viable interpretations rather than a single, definitive one. The selected novel is also explored by employing the postmodern historiographic metafictional technique developed by Linda Hutcheon. Additionally, the selected novel is examined using Baudrillard's idea of hyper-reality. According to Baudrillard's (1994) notion of hyper-reality, reality has been supplanted by images. The current research study explores literary postmodernism that is further divided into three categories, i.e., historiographic metafiction, disbelief towards metanarratives, and hyper-reality in the selected novel *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*. The study is grounded in the theoretical framework of postmodernism, and the research approach chosen for the current study is textual analysis.

**Key Words:** Postmodernism, Metanarratives, Historiographic Metafiction, Hyper-reality Anglophone Pakistani Literature

### Introduction

Postmodernism can be interpreted as both a response and a defiance of modernism, as well as an extension of it. It's a wide-ranging word that covers the study of literature, philosophy, art, architecture, culture, and literary criticism as well as a revolt and reaction against the dominant discourses of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries about science, objectivity, and reality. In the last several decades, postmodernism has developed into a worldwide movement that permeates every element of life and is not restricted to any one area. Ihab Hassan (2001) essay, *From Postmodernism to Postmodernity: The Local/Global Context*, makes the distinction between postmodernity and postmodernism, referring to the “geopolitical scheme” and the “cultural sphere”, respectively.

WWII (1939–1945) was the first major historical incident causing a disruption in the then-current contemporary doctrine of metanarratives. The fast growth of science after the 1950s is the second major historical event that spurred the emergence of postmodernism. In literature, art, dance, architecture, music, film, photography, painting, and video, postmodernism has left an enduring mark. It questions current societal norms, traditions, cultural forms, and dominating structures. Through the prism of

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postmodernism, the concepts of paternalism, capitalism, and liberal humanism are also called into question. The development of technology altered people's perspectives, habits, and mindsets, as well as their ways of living. Hutcheon and Lyotard share a similar perspective of postmodernism. Hutcheon (2003) argues in her book *A Poetics of Postmodernism* that Lyotard refutes this perspective by emphasizing the significance of myriad and multifaceted narratives that are independent of universalizing, legitimizing, or stabilizing. According to Hutcheon (2003), "Lyotard characterizes postmodernity as the absence of a grand totalizing narrative and the presence of mini and multiple narratives that seek no universalizing stabilization or legitimation."

According to Linda Hutcheon, the postmodernist perspective raises concerns regarding the sources from which we learn about the past when it comes to the problem of historical representation in fiction. She writes, "... as various forms of modernist art suggest through their implicit view of the 'nightmare' of history. We have to confront the past, and doing so requires acknowledging both our limitations and our strength" (Hutcheon, 2003, p.87). She further argues that the only way we have knowledge of historical events is by way of the evidence left by witnesses and documentation. A historical event can be compared to a tapestry, which illustrates how human consciousness functions in tandem with memory and amnesia, both of which are essential to the design. Historiographic metafiction is a postulate put forth by Linda Hutcheon that reinterprets history by fusing reality and fiction. Every facet of human existence, including politics, media, art, literature, and architecture, has been influenced by Baudrillard's hyper-reality to the point where "consumers are perplexed with artificialities and realities." This study is distinctive and unique as it explores hyper-reality, rupture of grand narratives, and plurality of history in Pakistani Anglophone literature, which has not been extensively examined and explored previously, setting it apart from prior works and providing a fresh perspective.

## Research Objective

To examine and explore hyperreality, historiographic metafiction, and rupture of metanarrative through the lenses of Baudrillard, Lyotard, and Hutcheon framework in the selected novel

## Literature Review

Mohsin, an eminent and distinguished columnist, has been prominently featured in various newspapers, notably *The Friday Times*. Mohsin, along with her sister Jugnu, are the pioneers of political humor and satire in Pakistani literature. Additionally, Moni Mohsin is the awardee of Pakistan's National Literary Award for her top-notch English fiction. Her articles have been contributed to a number of newspapers, including *Vogue*, *The Nation*, *The Boston Review*, *Prospect*, *The Guardian*, and *The Times* (Saeed et al., 2014).

Mohsin launched her literary journey with her debut novel, *The End of Innocence*, in 2006. Concurrently, she contributed biweekly columns entitled '*The Diary of a Social Butterfly*' to the English newspaper of Pakistan, *The Friday Times*. These columns attained enormous popularity among Pakistani and Indian readers, prompting Mohsin to compile and organize them in the form of a book. Consequently, the book was published in October 2008. *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* was embarked upon in January 2001, and it is a series of various diary entries encompassing substantial events from some of Pakistan's most turbulent years in history. It wraps up in January 2008, addressing pivotal moments in Pakistani society that continue to have political and cultural ramifications, such as 9/11, its impacts on Pakistan and its role in national and international politics, cultural exchanges, the media revolution in Pakistan, and the evolving role of women in it.

Jean François Lyotard proposes in his work that prioritizing mini-narratives is vital for deconstructing metanarratives. He argues that while an objective truth may exist for all phenomena in the world, human cognition is confined due to its limitations. Accordingly, humans are incapable of comprehensively apprehending and ascertaining the entirety of universal knowledge to definitively uncover a singular, absolute truth regarding essential inquiries. With the development of new methods and technology following WWII, the narrative began to decline (Farhadi, 2020). Furthermore, according to Lyotard, the use of speculation breeds ambiguity in knowledge by casting doubts on the reader's understanding of what is considered to be legitimate information.

Zahid, Memoona, and Syed Hussain analyse the theory of metanarratives in their research work, expressing, "Lyotard believes that micro-narratives offer a more vivid picture of the segmented society" (Zahid et al., 2023). According to him, "comparatively grand narratives hold very little credibility", which makes micronarratives more pertinent and contextualised. Lyotard is regarded by Gopi Chand Narang as the dismantler of grand récits and metanarratives (Narang, 2011).

Historiographic metafiction regards fiction as a strategy to elucidate and rewrite history thematically and stylistically. "By this, I mean those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages," writes Linda Hutcheon, the originator of the term, in her notable book *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (2003). In contrast to traditional history, historiographic metafiction, a postmodern genre, challenges the conventional notion of historical 'truth' by fusion of fact and fiction. Salman Rushdie has aptly described this postmodern amalgamation as the 'chutnification of history.'

Oppermann (2015) examines how history covers both historiography (as a specific discursive practice) and history (the actual events under investigation). The term 'history' thus denotes both the discourse surrounding facts and the facts themselves, making it a focal point in contemporary critical theories such as new historicism, deconstruction, and Marxism. Kaya Yilmaz, in his research article, pleads that postmodernism undermines the pragmatism of historians by dismantling and rejecting the significance of the center, heralding its complete demise, and shifting focus to the margins (Yilmaz, 2010). Perry Anderson critiques the objectivity of history and instead advocates for a more subjective approach to analyzing events. He challenges the conventional notion of history as an active form of understanding and memory. "The loss of any active sense of history, either as hope or memory, was, in fact, one of the traits of new subjectivity" (Anderson, 2016). Historiographic metafiction treats historical facts and figures as purely textual creations rather than as tangible, visible realities.

Sinoj Antony and Ishfaq Ahmad Tramboos (2020) probe the ubiquitous influence of hyper-reality in literature and media in their research venture titled *Hyper-reality in Media and Literature: An Overview of Jean Baudrillard's*. They analyze that the detrimental effects of hyper-reality are evident in our media and literature, posing a threat to contemporary society by blurring the distinction between reality and its replicas. They argue that these illusions of reality often masquerade as the originals.

Tonsing (2021) asserts in his work *Baudrillard's Simulacra and Death of Solidarity* that the prevalence of simulacra in society has resulted in human isolation (Tonsing, 2021). It is a fact that social reality is constructed through signs and simulations, which profoundly impact people's daily lives. In the selected novel, Mohsin illustrates a novelized depiction of Butterfly and her spouse Janoo's actual life dilemmas and challenges, spotlighting the struggles that regulate their daily lives. The novel is renowned for its exploration of social gossip amid political tumult and upheaval in the country (Kanwal & Aslam, 2019).

The chosen novel illustrates how, amidst the backdrop of bomb blasts and political and economic catastrophes in Pakistan, Butterfly easily brushes aside these concerns by engaging in frivolous gossip sessions with her affected friends. At first glance, one might find it perplexing that a period marked by heightened insecurity in Pakistan could be deemed entertaining by any measure, and this perspective is valid. Kamal (2018) interprets the novel as a satirical critique of Pakistan's privileged social class. Meanwhile, Haq (2014) explores the role of journalism in South Asian literature, specifically examining how it aids and supports readers in understanding Mohsin's artistic venture. While on the other hand, Qazi (2023) categorizes the book as a chick-lit genre, and Laskar (2022) pinpoints it as the voice of the new Pakistan.

In her novel, Moni Mohsin endeavors to portray the precariousness of reality and individuals' unique identities through a comedic exploration of constructing alternate worlds. She underscores how people can feel trapped in a superficial existence exacerbated by the influx of information through consumerism and news. Hence, the study aims to exemplify that the selected novel transcends mere humor centered around a group of social individuals gathering and instead serves as a commentary on the postmodern ethos of society entangled in a maze of consumerism and information. Hyper-reality, a central concept in Jean Baudrillard's theory, denotes a stage in the evolution of images where they 'mask the absence of a profound reality.' According to Baudrillard, each level of simulacra generates specific forms of ideological discourses



that influence perceptions of reality. It is plausible, therefore, that characters within this fictional context are ideologically shaped by hyperreal discourse. Mohsin's *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* explores the formation and deformation of identity in the context of hyper-reality. It raises questions about reality in a hypermarket-driven society where media has instilled hyper-reality in people's minds, diluting the meaning of true reality.

## Research Methodology

The framework of postmodernism is applied as it contains all those approaches which better suit the text to analyze. Textual analysis as a research method is applied in order to explore the postmodernist zeitgeist in the selected novel.

## Discussion and Textual Analysis

### Hyperreality in the Selected Novel

Hyper-reality is a crucial concept in Jean Baudrillard's cultural theory, referring to a stage in the evolution of images when they conceal the lack of a profound reality. Mohsin's novel explores the creation and manipulation of human identity and the concept of reality through the lens of a hypermarket. Mohsin portrays a society inundated with information and technology in her novel, where people strive to find truth via media, consumerism, technology, and knowledge. Meanwhile, the line between truth and falsehood has blurred, and the notion of individuality has deteriorated. The protagonist, Butterfly, inhabits an incomprehensible contemporary world. In the novel, the characters grapple with the blurred line between reality and simulation, which is a characteristic of postmodern society. They struggle to differentiate between genuine and simulated consumerism, and they attempt to find authenticity through information and technology. However, they find themselves trapped in a complex web of simulation.

Butterfly presents herself confidently with reference to the entire world and proclaims that "half of Dubai, half of London, all of Khan Market" is well acquainted with her widespread recognition. The places she mentions in the selected text also manifest her love of shopping. Every summer, she flies to England to avoid the scorching heat of Pakistan and indulge in her yearly shopping spree; although she keeps on shopping throughout the year, this visit is specifically dedicated to shopping. Kasuris's wedding is of significant importance as it is a prominent social gathering for Butterfly. She selects Qazi Hussain Ahmed and Nawabzada Nasrullah, prominent religious figures, as well as fashion designers Deepak Parwani and Tariq Amin, to be her guests. In June 2002, Butterfly's nephew, Asghar (who now chooses to be called Oscar), made an especially captivating appearance, spending several years in America.

The hypocrisy of this superficial society becomes evident when Oscar's father, Ayub, originally known as 'Mayub the butcher' (Mohsin, 2009, p.49), according to Mummy, becomes affluent and wealthy. They now live in a grand house in the U.S.A., and Mummy's frame of mind changed radically. She announces that she will go first, stating she has always deeply valued and revered Ayub bhai (Mohsin, 2009, p.50). Additionally, she has an elderly and unpleasant mother-in-law, whom she refers to as the "Old Bag," as well as two sisters-in-law, whom she calls the "Gruesome Twosome." She actively tries to minimize her interactions with them. However, this does not imply that she lacks compassionate sentiments towards mankind. She describes her frequent visits to jewelers, designers, and beauty therapists as her "selfless little way of supporting Pakistan ki economy."

The Butterfly, too, observes the "point" of her life as both displaying herself and being perceived by others: "Point? I'll tell you what's the point. Parties are the point. Seeing is a point. Being seen is a point. Coming on TV is the point...enjoy is the point. Shopping is the point" (Mohsin, 2009, p.136). The selected novel is replete with incidents that exemplify the dissolution of boundaries of falsehood and reality: "And instead of obsessing about the war on tourism and weapons of mass destruction and Guacamole Bay thousands of miles away, you should be paying more attention to what's going on in your neighbour's house" (Mohsin, 2009, p. 82).

When a Butterfly participates in a demonstration, it prompts a reflection to examine if the objective is to seek attention and live an artificial existence for the sake of the cameras or to actively challenge and resist the beliefs and injustices that we perceive to be occurring:

"On the day I sun-blocked my face, neck, and hands, donned a new cotton jora (can't wear silk on jalooses, I am told it gets sweaty), put on my new Channel ki sunglasses with the huge rhinestone Cs, and laced up the bright white Nike boots I'd bought from al-Fatah a night before. The whole world shook when we marched through Liberty market raising naaras and posing for TV cameras" (Mohsin, 2009, p.74).

Even the experience of pain and loss in the real world is observed from a distance and lacks the full impact it should have. The novel depicts a virtual world where identities are misleading and confusing, intertwined with the electronic manipulation of information. Mohsin's novel explores the deterioration of morals and morality and the search for personal identity and purpose.

Bauman (2013) explicates, in his article *Postmodernity and its discontents*, "None of us is able to build a world of significations and meanings from scratch; each of us enters a prefabricated world, in which certain things are important, and others are not" (p.8). This substantiates Baudrillard's assertions that our existence is denoted by simulacra or deceptive representations of reality. The hypermarket reality is characterized by ambiguity, detachment, and the disintegration of one's sense of self. Individuals strive to establish their identity and find meaning in life by amassing material possessions, which leads them to become increasingly immersed in a culture of consumerism.

In one of the entries of the diary, subtitled November 2001, Mohsin aims to illustrate the ambiguous character of reality by emphasizing how individuals are trapped in an artificial existence that is intensified by the availability of information through news and social media. Both Janoo and Butterfly are ensnared in a complex network of simulations, leading to the erosion of their personal identities and the loss of individual characteristics. According to Baudrillard, humans have become disconnected from reality in a highly media-driven commercial society, instead immersing themselves in the world of media, codes, and images that create a new cosmos of reality known as the world of simulation and simulacra (Baudrillard, 1994).

"Janoo's given me ultimatum. He says he's not going to any parties or any balls or any shaadis this winters. 'Bhai, why?' I asked.  
'Because I don't feel like it,' he said.  
'And why don't you feel like?'  
'I'm just not in the mood. That's all.'  
'And why are you not in the mood?'  
'I'm not in the mood because of the war in Afghanistan. I don't have it in me to party at present.'"

In the above excerpt, two contrasting worlds can be observed between the husband and wife characters. While the wife, Butterfly, remains largely unaffected by the invasion of Afghanistan, the husband, Janoo, is significantly impacted to the extent that he is actively avoiding all social events. The influence of media framing is so strong that even spouses may have differing perspectives on reality.

### Historiographic Metafiction in the Selected Novel

In recent decades, English fiction has prominently demonstrated its strong interest in the postmodern alteration of history by undermining standard historical narratives. Hutcheon, in *Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, introduced the phrase 'historiographic metafiction' to depict books blending fiction and fact in order to rebuild the past. She rejects the idea that fiction and history are distinct fields of study. Instead, she argues that both disciplines create worlds using discursive tactics. She argues that fiction and history are not static entities, but rather, they are always evolving. She refers to the blending of fiction and history as historiographic metafiction, which combines the concepts of constructed-ness and storytelling. Historiographic metafiction is a genre that examines the constraints and boundaries of conventional historical storytelling by creating numerous alternative interpretations to recount history. Historiographic metafiction, a postmodern genre, questions fundamental principles of traditional history such as veracity, exactitude, and precision. It promotes the creation of multiple interpretations of history, similar to the views of theorist Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur, in his book *History and Truth*, considers historiographic metafiction to be a groundbreaking approach to rewriting history (Ricoeur, 1965). Pakistani novelists utilize the genre of postmodern fiction to depict and explore social, political, and historical themes prevalent in the region. The selected text challenges the established narrative around partition, military authority, and politics in



the official history of Pakistan. The traditional approach to historical discourse, which asserts its absolute, accurate, and objective nature, is considered a metanarrative. However, postmodernism, as a movement, rejects all overarching narratives. Jean Lyotard, a French thinker, refers to this era as one of "incredulity towards metanarratives." He challenged the conventional ideas about history, science, modernity, truth, liberty, humanity, and enlightenment.

The target text holds significant importance for the people of Pakistan as it serves as a gateway and portal to their collective memories and experiences from the years 2001 to 2008. These events continue to have a lasting impact on their lives. The events described in the selected novel are of crucial significance in shaping the historical narrative of the nation. Writer and critic Neel Mukherjee penned in an article "Articles & Reviews – *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* by Moni Mohsin," published on January 26, 2009, in *Time Magazine Asia*, as:

"...the period that saw, among other things, 9/11, a very real threat of nuclear war between India and Pakistan, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the steady religious militarisation of Pakistan, a president caught between the demands of the USA and a refractory Islamic fundamentalism at home, the worst earthquake in the country's history in October 2005, and imposition of emergency rule" (n.pag).

During the discussion over Benazir's exile in 2001, Janoo asserted his perspective among acquaintances that a two-party system is irreplaceable. In response, Butterfly made a meaningful comment, saying, "Bilkul theek. As long as one party's in the morning and the other in the evening. Otherwise one gets very tired showing face at two-two places in one night" (Mohsin, 2009, p.9). She romanticizes and holds an idealized view of life, which contradicts distinctly the bleak and sometimes difficult-to-accept realistic portrayal of politics. Amidst headlines "Taliban threaten to destroy all statues," Butterfly is informed that "Floozie" has eloped "with best friend's husband." The selected novel delves into the personal challenges Butterfly confronts amidst global events capturing international attention.

Moni Mohsin's humor effectively portrays the apathetic nature of the Pakistani people, who are insulated from global events and solely concerned with their own well-being and how they are now experiencing the consequences of their indifference. Following the aftershocks of the 11 September sad event, when the US was "planning war in Iraq", Butterfly expressed a desire for Pakistan and India to have peaceful relations, as this may potentially contribute to the resolution of the Kashmir dispute (Mohsin, 2009, p.58). Butterfly would have benefited from this by being able to acquire shawls at a lower cost because "Ab tau prices of any decent shawl have gone so high, so high keh bus" (Mohsin, 2009, p.59). And so in "October 2002 ...So bore. Nothing's happening, I'm going to sleep till November" (Mohsin, 2009, p.61). Butterfly had nowhere to go when Pakistan and India conducted their missile tests, so she hibernated until November.

The diary entry for August 2007 is headlined "Musharraf and Benazir in secret talks in Dubai." During that same month, Butterfly learns that "goras" have acknowledged that the death of Bob Woolmer, the former Pakistani coach, was a natural death instead of murder. She records her anger in the diary about this incident by writing, "...Dekho zara. After all those suspicious looks at our poor, namaaz, God-fearing players, and all that talk of match-fixing and poisoning and doing DMA testing of them and muttering-shuttering about bribery and corruption, they have big beards and can't speak too much English and throw the occasional match doesn't mean our boys are murderers. I tell you, goras are so racist. If New Zealand's or Australia's coach had died, no one would have said a thing. Just because it's big, bearded, brown us... Honestly!" (Mohsin, 2009, pp.207-208).

Although Butterfly, as her name implies, is typically unaffected by the concerns that trouble others, readers observe that she becomes much more vocal when Benazir Bhutto is slain in January 2008. After this sad incident, Butterfly regretted and exclaimed with sorrow that "I don't feel like going to any parties, any weddings, any GTs even. Why? Because Benazir is dead. I don't feel like going anywhere or doing anything. I don't know if I will ever feel like... why am I sad? So, so, so sad? I feel like someone in my family died. I miss her" (Mohsin, 2009, p.220).

The greatest seismic event in the annals of terrorism occurred in September 2001. Al-Qaeda purportedly destroyed the Twin Towers. Despite the occurrence of a catastrophic event, Butterfly stays indifferent. The catastrophic consequences were not confined just to the states; rather, the entire world

was consumed by an ongoing war of terror that continues to date. Despite the great magnitude of the event, Butterfly remains unmoved and unsympathetic. She becomes exasperated with her spouse, Janoo, who devotes most of his time to the television to stay informed on the calamity. She implores him with a sense of helplessness, “What’s so interesting now? Twin Towers have gone, Pentagon has gone, please switch to B4U” (Mohsin, 2009, p.24). She draws a parallel between India and Basheeraan, who was a waxing girl, and she envied the neighbor who was employed by Butterfly instead of her. The contrast demonstrates her dearth of foresight and her capacity to oversimplify complex matters into small concerns. The act of trivializing significant events of history is juxtaposed and problematized, exposing the multiplicity of history.

### **Rupture of Metanarrative in the Selected Novel**

America has assumed a key role in global affairs. It has always attempted to use its supremacy and power to govern the nations for its own gains. The selected novel challenges the idea that American ideology is a metanarrative— a grand narrative that imbues every minor issue with significance, provides solutions to all problems, and exerts a universal, hegemonic influence over everything.

The chosen text disrupts and breaks down larger metanarratives into smaller narratives or mini-narratives. Moni Mohsin has depicted a juxtaposition of the cognitive processes and behaviors exhibited by the older and younger generations. The older generation has nostalgia for historical rituals and ideals and compels the younger generation to adhere to these overarching narratives in order to prevent any cultural or moral decline. The younger generation challenges the legitimacy of these long-standing cultural and ethical principles and constructs its own localized stories to adapt and thrive in today’s media and technology-driven society. The selected novel expresses its distrust towards metanarratives and substitutes them with ‘petit recit’ or little narratives. These mini-narratives embrace diversity by exploring the concepts of ‘paralogy’ and ‘heterogeneity’ in opposition to the widely accepted authority of overarching grand narratives. The novel’s textual analysis emphasizes the fictional undermining of all-encompassing ideologies to illustrate a transition from modern to postmodern fiction.

The selected novel challenges existing conventions and ideas regarding religion, nationalism, gender, and identity by using paralogical moves that defy hegemonic language games. Mohsin employs humor, irony, and irreverence to encourage readers to question prevailing narratives and embrace the subversive potential of language and imagination. The Butterfly’s sarcastic stance towards the extravagant exhibitions of affluence and social standing in upper-class circles is clearly apparent. Butterfly disrupts the metanarrative of upper-class society by making clever observations and using scathing remarks, exposing the reality hidden beneath the glamorous surface.

Gender roles and gender stereotypes are enduring societal norms that persist over time. Men and women conform to societal expectations by adhering to their predetermined gender roles. The protagonist, Butterfly, is portrayed as an independent woman who defies traditional gender roles. The name of the protagonist, ‘Butterfly,’ is not common among Pakistani ladies. The importance of employing a distinct name lies in its symbolic portrayal of the protagonist's character. She deviates from the traditional role of a Pakistani woman, who typically stays at home to cook, conduct household duties, and care for the children. Instead, she is an independent, progressive, and adventurous lady who enjoys socializing, attending parties, and enjoys being the center of attention. The selected novel challenges the dominant narrative of gender by defying conventional expectations of stereotypical gender roles. The novel’s main character, Butterfly, discusses males in a bold manner, which contrasts with the passive, quiet, and subservient role that women typically have in Pakistani culture under the patriarchy, adhering to established conventions.

Women are often stereotyped as having compassionate hearts and a nurturing disposition. However, in contrast to the conventional ideas of femininity and womanhood, Butterfly portrays herself as an indifferent and self-centered lady, disregarding the well-being of others. She speaks disparagingly about her in-laws. The woman ridicules her mother-in-law by stating, “Janoo’s mother is a window” (Mohsin, 2009). While intending to highlight her status as a widow, she instead makes fun of her by referring to her as a ‘window.’ She challenges the traditional expectations of being a meek daughter-in-law, which are prevalent in many Eastern societies. She is depicted as a nonconventional, nurturing female character.



Moni Mohsin skillfully questions conventional gender roles and identity by depicting her protagonist, Butterfly, as a liberated woman who openly rejects cultural norms. Butterflies do not adhere to the conventional gender roles attributed to females. On the contrary, she personifies self-reliance, cleverness, and a strong inclination towards opulence. The diary entries of Butterfly provide her with a voice that is frequently withheld from women in a patriarchal system of Pakistan.

Butterfly frequently reflects on religion. Butterfly links poverty with strong religious devotion. According to her perspective, individuals who are economically underprivileged are frequently depicted as being more devout in their religious beliefs. This stereotype exemplifies her privileged background and distorted comprehension of faith. The religious practices of the Butterfly are somewhat unorthodox.

She amusingly refers to sleeping through the period between 'sehri' (the pre-dawn meal during Ramadan) and 'after' (the evening meal to break the fast). Her lighthearted and disrespectful attitude towards religious practices and ceremonies injects a satirical element into the narrative of the selected novel. Butterfly's fixation on designer brands, social gatherings, luxury items and extravagant possessions surpasses any genuine religious obligation she may have. She is primarily focused on materialistic pleasures and seldom engages in contemplation of profound existential inquiries. Butterfly's engagement with religion is frequently shallow, so the overarching grand narrative of religion is skillfully disrupted through the irreverent perspective of the protagonist, Butterfly.

The Butterfly's intrigue with Western society and her numerous juxtapositions of Pakistani and Western lives highlight the conflict between global and local identities. This contrast disturbs the nationalist overarching story that frequently aims to depict the nation as unique and isolated from external influences. The novel demonstrates the influence of worldwide influences on local identities, which in turn challenges oversimplified ideas of nationalism.

## Conclusion

The present study has affirmed the significant effect and sway of postmodernism in the selected Pakistani Anglophone literature in relation to language games, history, and hyper-reality. Textually analyzing Mohsin's novel reveals a world inundated with simulacra and simulation, creating a hyperreal setting that starkly contrasts with the actual reality experienced by humans. Thus, this artistic endeavor demonstrated the presence of contemporary society inside a hypermarket setting, where digital technology and consumerism play a role in the fragmentation of identity. Moni Mohsin skillfully combines actual occurrences with fictional aspects in her novel, resulting in a layered narrative that defies conventional storytelling techniques. Through the incorporation and integration of historical events, Mohsin prompts readers to scrutinize the credibility of both history and memory. Butterfly's diary entries spans from the years 2001-2008, covering seven pivotal years in Pakistani history, thereby functioning as a social commentary on the early 21<sup>st</sup> century by blending elements of fiction and historiography to reflect upon historical narratives and their construction. *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*, being historiographic metafiction, challenges readers to reassess the process of writing and comprehending history. It stresses the significance of narrative in influencing our perception of present and past.

The selected novel challenges conventional, idealized notions of gender, American hegemony and religion within elite class through revealing the superficial and frequently hypocritical conduct of its members. The chosen novel serves as an excellent example that disrupts grand narratives, blends history with fiction and operates within a hyperreal social milieu. The selected novel critiques and deconstructs conventional notions, offering a rich field for literary analysis. *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* is a captivating and compelling piece of literature that skillfully incorporates the aforementioned concepts of postmodernism. Therefore, future researchers are to delve deeply into the themes of this satirical and introspective novel through others postmodern lenses.

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