

Bad wife and worst Mother: Extramarital affairs in Mohsin Hamids

Novel Moth Smoke

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Abstract

The intent of the present paper is to explore one of the major themes of Mohsin Hamids debut novel *moth smoke*. The novel has a blend of themes such as passion, betrayal, jealousy, and extramarital affairs. It will also throw light on characters like drug-peddling tragic anti hero Daru, an adulterous new mother Mumtaz and a dutiful son of a modern day pirate Ozi. The present paper also attempts to discuss the extramarital affairs between Daru and his friends beautiful wife Mumtaz to assess the consequences of extramarital affairs in a society, if a woman has extramarital affairs becomes a bad wife and a worst mother.

Key words: Drug-peddling, Extramarital, Adulterous, jealousy.

Bad wife and worst Mother: Extramarital affairs in Mohsin Hamids**Novel *Moth Smoke*****Tajamul Islam Malik****Research Scholar****Jiwaji University Gwalior****INTRODUCTION**

Mohsin Hamid is a Pakistani Diaspora writer born in 1971. He is best known for his four novels *Moth smoke* (2000), *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), *How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013), and his fourth novel will be published on March 7, (2017). His debut novel *moth smoke* is set in summer of 1998, when Pakistan detonated its first nuclear weapons in an escalating test for test with India. Like the atoms that split for fission bomb to explode, modern day Pakistan particularly Lahore is itself divided between old and new, rich and poor, conservative and liberal. It tells the story of decline of Daru, who loses his job and falls in love with his best friend's beautiful wife, and plunges into a life of drugs and crime. The loss of his job brings to the fore a widening gap between him and his classmates. Daru owes his job and education to his best friend Ozi's father Khuram. When Ozi has returned from America from where he had earned his college degree, with his wife Mumtaz and new born baby Mauzam. From the moment they met Daru and Mumtaz are drawn to each other. Mumtaz is fascinated by Daru's air of suppressed violence and Daru is intrigued by Mumtaz's secret career as an investigative journalist. Their affair began when Daru witnessed his best friend Ozi, husband of Mumtaz driving recklessly mow down a teenage boy by his Pajero, and flee from the scene. By this Daru felt jealous and this vicious scene created hatred in his heart for Ozi. Daru and Mumtaz shared the recreational drugs, sex and sports. The beginning of their extramarital affairs is clear from point of view when Mumtaz says:

“When I first met Darashikhov shehzad, I didn’t know whether I was going to sleep with him, but I knew I wanted to seem the perfect partner for my first extramarital affairs. He was smart and sexy, and since he was one of the Ozi’s best friends, I knew he’d keep his mouth shut”

Both Daru and Mumtaz shared charas(cannabis),heroin and hash with one another. In spite of betrayal or deception by Mumtaz to his faithful and loyal husband Ozi. He didn’t betray her back but he remained always faithful to her licentious wife Mumtaz. Her activities presented by Mohsin Hamid throughout the novel prove and gives strength to famous quote by William Shakespeare “frailty thy name is women”. Trust and faith lost between Ozi and Daru because of Daru’s extramarital affairs with Mumtaz and it is certain that Daru is jealous towards his friend for being wealthy, well connected and successful. Unlike daru, Ozi is not jealous and hypocrite. This is clear from point of view when Ozi says:

“I am really not that bad. A victim of jealousy from time to time. but definitely no hypocrite”

Mumtaz as a bad wife

Mohsin hamid portrays Ozi’s character as a magnificent, gorgeous and a fantastic lover .Before marriage Ozi is introduced to audiences as a brave who possess the courage to propose Mumtaz in America .Mumtaz was in her senior year in college is introduced as innocent as she had not any idea about marriage system. It is clear from point of view when Mumtaz says:

“And he was, the most romantic man I’ve ever met. He feels love deeply...he proposed during a snowstorm in March, looking cold as only a Pakistani man in America can. And I said yes”.

After completion of graduation Mumtaz from college and Ozi from law school. They were married in Karachi and enjoyed newly married couple days, danced together, and had insane sex. Once they were caught on Ozi’s desk by his office mate, who later swore he hadn’t seen anything .Both were growing together and were happy enough. Abruptly after the birth of their

first child Mauzam, she began to hate her husband as well as her son .Gradually she lost respect for her generous and sympathetic husband when she declares:

“I tried to restart my marriage, to discover everything that had made me love Ozi in the first place honestly I did .but it didn’t work, because I lost my respect for 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 of having sex with her husband’s best friend Daru. This first lie and deception began when she started writing as an investigative journalist under pseudonym .Zulifikar Manto. Ozi on the other hand had faith and trust on her. Ozi had a bit 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. The curtain of lies got raised when he found an article written by Mumtaz under the pseudonym of Zulifikar Manto in computers trash folder as he declares in the novel as:

“I just had no idea that journalism was only half of it, that Mumtaz and Daru were having affairs”

Mumtaz were making fun of her loyal and obedient husband. It was twisted for Ozi that his friend sleeps with his licentious wife Mumtaz. He couldn’t bring himself to confront with his unfaithful wife Mumtaz, because he didn’t want to lose her. But he lost his faith in true friendship as he says:

“There is a reason that prophets perform miracles: language lacks the power to describe fait and you have to land on faith before you can even begin to hike around to its flip side, betrayal ...”

Mumtaz was then called as monster for her rude attitude towards her husband and son Mauzam and Daru her victim, who fired from his bank job and became drug addicted. Both had insane affairs, a couple weeks of wild sex, when she met Daru, his life was falling apart, their relationship became something else. Daru became obsessed with Mumtaz .it made Mumtaz to take care of him, when he was physically attacked by shuja’s father for providing shuja with

drugs. Like moths that can't help but fly close to the candle or moths love the unattainable things and keep circling around the candle which keeps on burning, similarly the two got entangled with one another. Their importance to one another can be easily understood when Daru said, "the longer she stays, the more I hate it when she leaves". Mumtaz later on felt disgusted and regretted for having extramarital affairs with Daru.

The novel moth smoke brings out the realistic portrayal of Pakistani society. We find desire for power, greed, lust and temptations or pleasures in the characters. In the achievement of these desires, there is an essence of unfaithfulness found in the character of Mumtaz, jealousy in the character of Daru and obedience of Ozi towards his friend as well as his wife. Being hypocrite and jealous, drug addicted and charas seller, even once he caught him on his wife's body moving and moving around. Ozi didn't want to hurt his best friend Daru, as he says, "He was my best friend after all"

Mumtaz as a worse mother

Luxurious and licentious Mumtaz had always been a condom woman before pregnancy. Her pregnancy was an ecstatic moment for Ozi and worst news for herself. She revealed to Ozi sadly that she had decided to have an abortion. Ozi was curious to become father and he revealed it in an exciting manner to his mother. Mumtaz tried her best and utmost to end her pregnancy, wandered here and there, but more she thought about it the less power she seemed to have ended it. Her endeavor for ending her pregnancy is cleared from the point of view when she declares:

"Childbirth was an expression of female power that it would make our bond even stronger. So the week turned to week's. Eventually we had a sonogram done and after that the idea was a little person growing and it was too late to turn back"

It was a kind of martyrdom for her, sacrificing for something noble for love, for man and for new species. She looked so upset even people at work asked her why she is upset. She makes them convince that her pregnancy bounded her in shackles and manacles to enjoy parties, drugs

and hash. Unlike other mothers glow when they are pregnant as she says, “I looked so upset, but I could hardly tell my friend most of mothers glow when they are pregnant. I sweated”. To nourish Mauzam was just like a science practical class for Mumtaz. She learned how to use new equipments, how to pump, burp, wrap and powder Mauzam. Her hatred for her child was only because she had extramarital affairs with Daru and was addicted of enjoying insane sex with Daru. Mauzam was like an obstacle in her relationship with Daru. Well nourishment for a child is necessary but Mauzam didn’t get his proper nourishment. Mumtaz treated her as a puppet in her hands .By Mauzam she did feel bored and started to get frightened and she says:

“I didn’t feel anything. My son, my baby, my little janoo, my one and only: I felt nothing for him .no wonder, no joy, no happiness”

Mother plays an important role in the development of a child; she is initial education for child. Mother has to be aware of the physical, cognitive and social development of her child. Mumtaz never played such a role. To feed Mauzam and cleaning his shit with her own hands was guilt for her. It was a new experience for her. Mauzam was always complaining that he didn’t get proper nourishment by his mother. The same concern Mumtaz should have expressed to her loyal husband, she instead expresses it to her lover Daru as she declares: “I am a bad mother, ‘she tells Daru’ and Daru replies, ‘you are not.

While enjoying insane sex with her husband’s friend. So many times she left her child in the care of Ozi’s mother. She never didn’t care about Mauzam was growing up without a mother.

Conclusion

Moth smoke evokes seduction, anxieties, extramarital affairs and drug addiction of urban life in Pakistan post independence.Hamid portrays his characters as selfish, uncaring and throws light on late twentieth century women of Pakistan. The bold and ironic novel is set a long after the seminal event of partition of sub continent in 1947.The novel discovers downward flight from stability to desperation, from salaried banker to low life addict. It also brings out devastating hunger for food and drugs to chase their love.

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