

**Farheen Shakir**

# Disillusionment and Alienation in Hamid's selected works

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**Farheen Shakir**

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**DISILLUSIONMENT AND ALIENATION IN HAMID'S  
SELECTED WORKS**

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## **Abstract**

The present research aims at exploring the themes of disillusionment and alienation with regard to the construction of identity in two postcolonial novels by Pakistani author Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke* (MS, 2000) and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (Hamid, 2013) taking theoretical insights from the works of Karl Marx (1883), Homi K. Bhabha (1994) and others. A common thread running through these novels is the juxtaposing of estrangement and alienation while fighting for the basic right of getting prospects to thrive in life. How the cultural and identity conflicts in developing Asia emerged as the reason for personal estrangement of characters from reality; how the protagonists were found to be fragmented and how they used underhand ways to get rich is explored in Hamid's selected works.

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

David Punter in '*Postcolonial Imaginings*' (2000), cites that literature is defined as an instance of concrete political practice which reflects the dynamic process of the national democratic revolution in developing countries (San Juan, 1998:254).

Literature is not merely an expression of authors' minds but also an image of the period in which it is written. Dealing with postcolonial literature, this literary study is designed to cover the genre of Pakistani English novel which is an invented prose narrative of considerable length and certain complexity. It deals imaginatively with human experiences particularly in Pakistani context, specifically dealing with cultural and identity conflicts and the resultant disillusionment and alienation.

Hamid's literary work is internationally acclaimed and awarded, as it not only presents the Pakistani society on the whole but also gives a bird's eye view of the Asian cultural and economic practices.

The present research endeavours to encompass an effort to examine Hamid's views about the plight and disillusionment of the Post-Colonial Asian societies as they are reflected in his fiction. This is premised on the awareness that there is a close relationship between Pakistani literature and its historical context. Essentially, his novels of pre and post 9/11 time period, *Moth Smoke* (2000), and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) are explored with a view to highlight how he contributes to the discourse of the motifs of Post-Colonial times, the themes of cultural and identity crises and their resultant disillusionment and alienation in Sub-Continent.

Analysis of Hamid (1971)'s selected works brings forth the depiction of themes of identity and cultural conflicts and the resultant alienation and disillusionment. Hamid's wisdom, intellect, knowledge of the world and description of cultural settings are the powers which make disjointed and rambling plots of stories interesting and meaningful. He shows alienation and disillusionment within the surroundings due to social chaos and dishevel as rooted in the society through his characters Dara, Ozi and Mumtaz in *Moth Smoke* and the characters *You, his father, The Pretty Girl* and the *Wife of You* in the novel *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*. These characters face mental turmoil because of their own unstable relationships as well as the disturbed social and