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**CONSUMER CULTURE AND FEMALE SELF-CONSTRUCTION
IN THE DIARY OF A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY**

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Abstract

*The present study examines how consumer culture is signified and how femininity is created in the Moni Mohsin's *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*. This study explores the role of the consumerist values including materialism, brand consciousness, social visibility and class performance in the construction of the female identity in the elite strata of Pakistani society. It states that the femininity of the novel is not fixed or natural at all, but is rather a performance that is socially constructed by the expectations and norms imposed by consumers and the hegemonic patriarchy. The research method used is qualitative and the technique that is applied is textual analysis. The theoretical framework is based on feminist theory, consumer culture theory and postmodern views of the construction of identity. They contribute to the comprehension of how the protagonist, Butterfly, internalizes consumerism and builds her identity through luxury consumption, social events and public performance. The humor in the novel is also examined, as it is a critique of superfluous "femininity" within the upper classes, as well as elite consumer culture. Identities are found to be influenced by consumer culture, and in the capitalist context, the value of women is bound up with their looks, belongings, and their social acceptance. The study also shows how femininity is enacted through repetitive acts of consumption, emotional labor and social involvement, and the role it plays in establishing class distinction and gender expectations. Furthermore, Mohsin's satire uncovers the paradoxes of femininity which is consumer-driven, and reveals the narrowness and performative side of it. It is argued in the study that *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* is a critical study of the interdependent relationship of gender, class and consumerism, revealing how elite female identity is created, controlled and marketed in a consumerist social order.*

Keywords: *femininity, consumer, womanhood, qualitative, critical, identity, superficiality*

Introduction

Background of the Study

The *Diary of a Social Butterfly* is a satirical novel penned by talented Pakistani writer and journalist, Moni Mohsin. The novel satirises the upper class lifestyle in an entertaining manner and ridicules the habits, cares and social life of the upper class in Lahore's high society. This story gives the reader a glimpse into the complex nature of today's society, its cultural norms, and the lavish lifestyle of Butterfly, the protagonist who is a very fashionable socialite who lives in luxury and excess.

Mohsin has a considerable knowledge of Pakistani society and his sharp and humorous portrayal of the class divisions and cultural norms of Pakistani society. Her journalism roots are reflected on her witty, observant and sometimes biting takedowns of the superficiality of the elite. The reader is cast as an outsider peering into this world, and seeing the extreme and sometimes hysterical actions of the rich and privileged. Butterfly herself is a woman who is carefree and chatty, naive in her indulgence in high society, without taking consequences into account. The narrative is presented as a diary, and her humorous, witty remarks and interactions give insight into a world where materialism and social competition reign.

The novel also examined issues of wealth, gender, marriage and expectations of society, as well as a theme of humor. Although entertaining, it also reflects the complicated social hierarchy of the Pakistani society and is not just a comical story. The novel, released in 2008, is a mixture of satire and social criticism, featuring memorable characters and providing readers with amusement and critique.

Mohsin points out importantly the influence of consumer culture, neoliberal values and materialism, particularly among the middle and upper classes of Pakistan. She explores the intersections of gender, culture

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and economics through Butterfly Khan. The novel depicts a society in which excess and showmanship is the norm, where a person's identity and actions are defined by their wealth. Mohsin also examines the impact of capitalism on role of women, demonstrating that with capitalism, women are valued based on their looks and consumption. Women are put in a position of constant spending and self-presentation due to the pressure to conform to the standards of beauty and luxury lifestyle.

Moreover, the novel implies that consumption is not just consumption of products, but also the creation of identity. Symbols of status are the basis for social value and cultural capital plays a central role in the life of the elite. Butterfly is one of these women who is depicted traversing the dual paths of tradition and contemporary consumer demands, simultaneously embodying both aspects. In the act of normalizing, Mohsin also, through irony, reveals underlying inequalities and social injustice.

Through Butterfly's point of view, the reader can appreciate the lack of meaning in the desire for money and prestige. The fact that she is fascinated with designer brands, luxury goods and social recognition is the evidence that the consumer culture is superficial and undermines meaningful relationships. Her encounters with other people tell us about the objectification and evaluation of women in terms of their looks, friends and adherence to ideal feminine traits. Even her professional identity is bound up in this image, rather than in intellect or ability.

Mohsin challenges the elite, but he also recognizes that class identities aren't solid and affected by global trends. The lifestyles shown are a mix of local and international elite cultures; luxury brands and consumerism being universal indicators of status.

To conclude, the story is about the Pakistani society but the concepts are universal. Mohsin shows how consumerism has the ability to influence identities, particularly gender roles, on a cross-cultural level. As the reader reads about Butterfly, they are asked to consider their own values, and the larger issues of a materialistic world run by social display.

Statement of the Research Problem

In the present-day world, one of the key aspects that define individuality is the consumer culture since people build their identity by associating their worthiness and social position with certain items and behaviors. For example, in *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*, written by Moni Mohsin, the main character lives by following the rules of the upper class, being obsessed with branding, and craving for social recognition. Although *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* presents a satire of the upper class, the issues of female identity construction and performance within the frame of the consumer society still remain topical.

The problem under discussion in the research is the lack of a critical analysis of the impact that the consumer society exerts upon female identity creation in the selected novel. Namely, what is essential is to consider the extent to which the main character is driven by her own perception of herself or is rather dominated by the societal expectations concerning the life of an upper-class woman, who strives to live in luxury and attract attention. Thus, it is important to determine whether the identity of the heroine is self-constructed or not.

Research Questions

1. How does consumer culture influence the construction of female identity in *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*?
2. In what ways does the protagonist negotiate her self-identity through materialism, social status, and cultural practices?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the role of consumer culture in shaping and redefining female self-construction in the novel.
2. To analyze how the protagonist's identity is constructed through her engagement with luxury, social performance, and elite cultural norms.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it contributes to the broader understanding of how consumer culture shapes and influences female identity, particularly within the context of contemporary Pakistani society. By analyzing *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*, the research highlights the ways in which materialism, social status, and elite

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cultural practices affect the construction of women's self-identity. It brings attention to the subtle yet powerful role of consumerism in defining personal worth and social belonging.

The study is also important from a literary perspective, as it offers a critical reading of Moni Mohsin's satirical work beyond its surface humor. It uncovers the deeper ideological concerns embedded in the narrative, especially regarding gender roles and class consciousness. This research, therefore, enriches existing scholarship by linking consumer culture with feminist literary analysis.

Furthermore, the study is valuable for researchers and students in the fields of literature, cultural studies, and gender studies, as it provides insights into the intersection of consumerism and female subjectivity. It may also serve as a reference for future research on similar themes in postcolonial and contemporary texts.

Finally, the study encourages readers to critically reflect on the impact of consumer culture on their own identities and social behaviors, making it relevant not only academically but also socially.

Literature review:

The power of consumer culture has been thoroughly explored as a determinant of individual identity, especially in late capitalist societies. In Baudrillard's (1998) view, consumption no longer serves to meet needs; it is a process of signification and people build identities by using symbols and goods. A very useful way of interpreting the role of material goods as symbols of social status and personal identity, particularly that of women in high-status social contexts.

Likewise, Featherstone (2007) suggests that consumer culture goes hand in hand with a process of lifestyle differentiation, whereby lifestyle is created with the help of fashion, leisure and consumption patterns. This would often give women a role as primary consumers, and thus create greater pressure on women for maintaining socially desirable identities. Such notions are reflected in the subject of *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*, a protagonist whose identity is intricately bound up in her consumption and social performances.

Consumer culture and class aspirations and Western influence are often associated with postcolonial societies. Bourdieu (1984) argues that cultural capital is important for class differences and consumption starts to be important for symbolic power. This is an elite society in Lahori that is portrayed in the novel, and imported brands, elite gatherings and language choices are all status symbols and cues to belonging. The earlier research conducted on the book, *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*, has been targeted towards the satirical aspects and the critique of the Pakistani elite (Rahman 2014; Ahmed 2018). But little research has been done specifically on the consumer culture and self-construction of women in the text. This divide suggests that there is a need for a more in-depth investigation that will look at how the protagonist internalizes the consumerist values and shapes her identity based on them.

Consumer culture is well theorised as a key element of modern capitalist societies; identity formation is increasingly a process that happens through one's consumption. From Jean BADUILLARD (1998), consumption is a system of sign making, so individuals can express their identity and social meaning through commodities instead of their use value. The idea can be used to build an understanding of the role that consumer goods play in contexts of social elites as markers of identity. Douglas and Isherwood (1979) also point out that it is a cultural process that people employ as a means of classification, of self and others. They believe that goods are not only functional, but social tools that shape meaning and identity boundaries as well. *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* demonstrates such behavior through the main character's addiction to brand name items, high society events and popularity.

Building on this, Mike Featherstone (1991) argues that consumer culture is tied to lifestyle formation, that is, the modern identity is fluid and is formed through the process of aestheticization of consumption. In this context, people are engaged in "performances" of identity, through fashion, through speech, through action, at all times, and especially in the case of the protagonist's social performances in the novel.

A feminist cultural studies lens shows how Rosalind Gill (2007) sees the "postfeminist sensibility" of neoliberal consumer culture as creating women as self-regulating, autonomous subjects. This seeming empowerment, however, often comes with appearances, sexuality and consumption, which are new disciplines. It can be helpful to examine the novel and understand how beauty and status ideals of the consumer culture affect the portrayal of female identity. Furthermore, Stuart Hall (1996) theorises identity as a "production" which is constantly being produced, constructed and reconstructed by the cultural representation and discourse.

The concept of actor network theory reinforces the notion that the character of the protagonist in *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* is continually negotiated in social interactions and through the use of cultural codes.

Arjun Appadurai (1996) speaks from the postcolonial position of discussing globalization and “modernity at large,” which is a world where the circulation of media and commodities is changing the local culture. Consumer culture in postcolonial societies such as Pakistan frequently serves as a means of projecting a sense of modernity and distant Western societies and shaping elite identity and social distinction. Bourdieu (1984) has a concept of cultural capital that also helps to understand the role that taste, consumption and lifestyle play in the class reproduction process. In keeping with this, the elite society of Lahore in the novel is a symbolic order that further validates social stratification and exclusion.

While satire, class critique and linguistic humour have been explored in Moni Mohsin's work (Ahmed, 2018; Rahman, 2014), little scholarly attention has been paid to the female identity construction through consumer culture. This space shows the necessity to read the text on the feminist-consumerist side because the protagonist creates and embodies her identity through the process of material and social consumption.

Consumer culture has been extensively theorized as an emblematic aspect of late modern societies in which identities are emerging in the realm of consumption, media and symbolic exchange. Zygmunt Baumann (2007) characterizes the current world as a “liquid modern” world: Identities that are mobile, unstable, and continuously built and re-built, in the process of consumer decisions. In this context, the need to constantly reshape oneself seems to be the constant demand, especially in terms of lifestyle and appearance, as it is in *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* where the elite female identity is represented.

Likewise, Pierre Bourdieu's notion of habitus (1990) elucidates the internalisation and manifestation of social structures in the life of everyday people, including in their taste and consumption. Class differences are often reinforced through the preference and behaviours of the people, who are shaped by the habitus. This is manifested in the novel's portrayal of the elite Lahori society, which offers consumption practices not just as choice, but as an enactment of class identity.

Judith Butler (1990) provides an important account of how identities are constructed by theorising performativity, which asserts that identities are not natural but are continually produced through performances, gestures and talk. The framework is especially helpful to analyse the female self-construction in consumer society, which constructs femininity itself as a performative identity, which is influenced by fashion, language and social display. The “society of the spectacle” theory by Guy Debord (1994) states that images and representations have a predominance in today's society, and that social relations are mediated through appearances. In a society like that, one's visibility is more significant than one's authenticity. In Mohsin's novel, the obsessions of the protagonist with the celebration of social events, branding and appearances are emblematic of this spectacle culture.

Slavoj Žižek (2009) goes on to challenge consumer ideology and argues that with current capitalism, people feel free when they consume, but their wants are shaped by ideology. Through this concept, the concept of empowerment in consumerist narratives that shape the choices of female characters can be explained. Furthermore, Naomi Wolf (1991), in her book *The Beauty Myth*, asserts that in modern-day consumerist society, the discipline of women is achieved through beauty norms, which value women based on their appearance and consumerist activities. The need for constant attention toward one's look and presentation is an aspect of gender dynamics apparent in the case of the protagonist. Arjun Appadurai (1996) is another scholar who focuses on cultural flows within a global context and the way in which media and commodities shape local identities. Within Pakistan's upper classes, global commodities play a significant role in establishing status through Western lifestyles and fashion products.

Representation is highlighted by Stuart Hall (1997) as being crucial for constructing identity, whereby meanings are produced in terms of cultural processes of signification. This indicates that the concept of female identity within consumer culture is not static, as it is socially constructed.

Despite previous research on satire, elitism, and linguistic portrayal in the work of Moni Mohsin (Ahmed, 2018; Rahman, 2014), there remains an evident absence of literature about the active role played by consumer culture in forming the female identity portrayed in the novel. To this end, this study fills the identified void through employing feminist, postmodern, and consumerist theories.

In this regard, the present research adds to knowledge about how female identity can be constructed, performed, and managed within consumerist and elite society contexts.

Research Methodology

The present study is qualitative in nature that examines the depiction of consumer culture and construction of femininity in Moni Mohsin's *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*. In terms of design, as a qualitative approach, it enables in-depth interpretation in terms of text meaning, social context and the interpretation of ideology patterns that are hidden in the narrative. The study is mainly text analysis based and emphasizes the role of language in underscoring the values of consumerism and how it constructs women's identity.

This study is built on a theoretical basis which is based on feminist theory, consumer culture theory and postmodern identity theories. The protagonist's actions and attitudes are analyzed and discussed from a critical perspective, using concepts such as consumerism as a system of signs, identity as a performance and femininity as a social construct. Theoretical lenses are used to understand how material items, social class and elite culture shape a socially constructed feminine identity.

The novel *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* by Moni Mohsin is the primary source of data, while the secondary sources consist of scholarly articles, books, and research studies on consumerism, feminism and post-colonial identity construction. Data are analyzed using close reading and interpretive textual analysis and themes such as materialism, social performance, class consciousness and gender representation are examined. The research used thematic analysis approach, which is an approach to the research that examines the contents of the novel in the form of excerpts if there are excerpts that are relevant to the theories used. Particular focus is placed upon the language, social interactions and consumption of the main character to gain insight into the construction and performance of femininity in an elite society dominated by consumption. This approach allows one to gain a full picture of the way that consumer culture and female identity formation go together within the text chosen.

Discussion and analysis:

Consumer Culture and the Construction of Femininity in *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*

Diary of a Social Butterfly by Moni Mohsin depicts a critical and satirical look at consumer culture in the urban elite of Pakistan and how materialist consumption, social visibility and class performance constructs femininity. The exaggerated character of Butterfly reveals the production and product of elite women in a hyper-consumerist culture that is defined by a sense of identity being intertwined with branded goods, social events and public performance.

1. Consumer Culture as a Defining Social Framework

The story builds the concept of consumerism as the main pillar of the lifestyle of the elites. Designer clothes, imported cosmetics, big parties and extravagant social events are all mentioned in Butterfly's diary. Brand names, luxury items and social networks are the main media for characters to maneuver amongst status systems.

Consumption is represented as a social language, which is a means to mark sophistication, modernity and upper class membership.

The diary format makes this more pronounced by enabling the reader to see into Butterfly's head and the internalization of consumer norms, where she is completely consumed by her desires, anxieties and ambitions for material acquisition.

Consumer culture is not just a backdrop, it's the social environment in which characters make meaning and social value.

2. Femininity as a Performance Rooted in Consumption

The novel depicts how the individual culture of consumers directly forms a very superficial and performative model of femininity. Fashion, cosmetics, decorum, and social behaviour are all part of the womanhood of Butterfly, and are all influential in shaping it, all within the parameters of the elite consumer norms. It supports Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, as femininity in the novel is not "natural" but active as a repetition of acts of consumption and display.

Consumer culture plays an important role in the construction of femininity, in particular through:

a) Appearance as a Commodity

The value of butterfly is dependent on her ability to present herself in the manner of the elite beauty standard. Clothes, visiting the hair salon, and attention to detail with regards to grooming are a big reason for her identity.

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- When a woman's body is a site of consumer investment, make-up, clothing and accessories become a means of gender performance.
- Beauty is considered a social responsibility and a product which improves marriageability and social capital.

b) Marriage and Social Visibility

The novel's marriage is like a marketplace in which women have to make themselves as attractive as they can by buying and selling themselves.

Femininity is built-up as something that needs to be bought, maintained and shown to gain access to the elite society.

The value of women is connected to a visibility at fashionable events, further reinforcing their status by making them visible in public.

c) Emotional and Social Labor

Butterfly is constantly involved in emotional work of friendship, parties, appearances. These activities are extensions of consumer culture – with consumer relationships transactional and femininity performed publicly.

3. Consumer Goods as Symbols of Class and Gender Hierarchy

Commodities are a symbol of class distinction and gendered expectation in the novel. When women get luxury products they use them to:

- be in competition with each other
- assert class superiority
- represent conforming to high level gender norms

This is in line with Appadurai's notion that objects have “social lives” and that they acquire cultural significance in cultural circulation. These items in the diary are representative of status but also help to uphold male and capitalist ideals of womanliness.

Butterfly's love for brands is testament to a simple fact: It's a sign of being a woman of her lineage, to be a consumer. Consumers' identities are increasingly defined by their gender.

4. Satire as a Critique of Consumerist Femininity

Through satire Mohsin exposes the self-contradictions and absurdities of elite consumer culture. Butterfly's innocent voice narrates the story:

- reminds people that materialism is hollow and empty,
- opposes the commercialization of women's lives,

Highlights the agency of the consumer as a constraint on women's agency.

The exaggerated performances of Butterfly, however, are a caricature of masculinity, a parody of “elite” femininity, and reveal the artificiality, competitiveness, and superficial emotionality of how femininity is performed in consumer societies.

The idea of female behavior and expression as manifested in consumer culture is a ridicule of empowerment and is a state of being caught in the cycle of conspicuous consumption.

Therefore, in Moni Mohsin's work particularly, ‘The Diary of a Social Butterfly,’ satire carries prevalent social messages with regard to gender, class, and consumerism in modern Pakistan. Thereby, the rationale behind Mohsin's choice of realism-humorism and irony that is characteristic of the satire genre can be viewed as depicting the interplay of the themes in Butterfly's personality and the environment Butterfly exists in.

Mohsin is the one who gives the accusing portrayal of the role that women have been given within the Punjab's new elite. Butterfly the main female character embodies the fallacious and sensual concepts that the society particularly the women's want to espouse; beauty, classy dressing and status. Thus, even though Butterfly's character might look rather *空*-headed most of the time, she can notice experiences and, to some extent, think about what is expected from women in society. Therefore, Mohsin is enhancing the understanding that women are still being sexualized based on their appearances and associated with men instead of commending them for their minds and accomplishments. This critique stands with the notion of feminists that presupposes that women are objectified and commodified by the society and reveals how it exists norms that limit women's opportunities for success. In her work of fiction, Moni, Mohsin unveils and clearly describes the roles and responsibility and constraints that is given to women among Pakistan's higher class society through the protagonist Butterfly. The main character of “The Diary of a Social Butterfly,” BL, Butterfly's main focus

in life is beauty, fashion, and rank, as is expected of everyone in society. The main character Butterfly painted as a woman with very simplified motivation and without any principles and goals in life whose behavior is depicted as rather silly and fickle on the one hand guides the audience and emphasizes the role of social expectations for dealing with an independent woman. However, Butterfly as a rather high-ranking geisha occasionally sees and hears enough to reveal women's freedom options within the framework of social relations set up by Japanese society of that time. From the description of Motorola given by Mohsin, it is revealed how women of this privileged class are valued for beauty and contacts more than their brains or skills. These marks of evaluation are stupid in the extreme and are typical of the state of complete devaluation of the woman's personality which regards her as a passive sexual object whose value is likely to be measured in terms of marketable beauty and the uses to be made of her. The interpretations for such renderings are quite far from the postmodern Bakhtinian feminist standpoint which frowns on objectification and commodification of women as it perpetuates hegemonic patrimony power over women and thereby fortifying gender hierarchy. Thus, by attracting the readers' attention to these norms of society that transforms women into pretty things only, Mohsin underscores the limited opportunities and options in the lives of women. Thus, her story becomes a protest against a world, which appreciates appearance bigger than essence and poses questions about the justice and the repercussions of sexualized aesthetic standard for women, while force to change paradigm of the evaluation of female worth in society.

Another close thematic concept is status because Mohsin describes and illustrates the lifestyles, and the ways of perceiving life of the upper class Pakistani women. Through Butterfly's contacts and the events that the socialite represents, Mohsin illustrates the dualism in inequality, the two being the affluent and the desperate. In these challenges of the elite, their love for class, power and possession which they are willing to protect even if it offends the feelings of the lower class or the general public is depicted. This portrayal is an accent on the ideas of the Marxist literature that the ruling class persists in ruling with the assistance of material and non-material resources, and possessing certain status, thus keeping the imperative of division of class. As far as the major topics of discussion are concerned, etiquette classes is one of those topics which is discussed rather more often in the "The Diary of a Social Butterfly" by Moni Mohsin that presents the life and the thinking of the Pakistani upper class. Mohsin through Butterfly, who is the main character of the novel, through her behaviours and the social activities she involved herself in makes the audience understand the inequalities as well as privilege in the society. Expanding the list of vices, plot demonstrates how much attention is paid to ranking, money and appearance or how significant the last one is in defining the elite. While this is quite relatable, such focus is found as a greed that kills sensitivity to, and responsibility for the common good because the two are just but a picture of the royalties who only care about the class that they are in and the image they portray. Mohsin's representation of this welfare rely shows the critique of class differentiation that Marxist criticism portrays the ruling class as holding a stranglehold in resource as well as cultural asset. Therefore, Mohsin demonstrates how the parties concerned, especially the youth, perpetuate and sustain according to their preferences the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and resources. This control as I have already mentioned assists in maintaining the elite status while on the same note, amplifies the helpless state of the helpless in the society to the same degree. Such technique is applied by Mohsin through parody and condemnation of the classist system in the society and the moral decay of the upper class, and she leads the readers how to protect themselves against the structure of the society that enables such criminal acts by the upper-class people. It above all functions as protest art regarding further continuance of class inequalities and the roles of the ruling aristocracy. **Consumerism:** In the narrative provided by Mohsin gender and class cannot be disentangled from consumerism. This preview of greed that seeks to make the consumers in this category rush and emulate others in the purchase of luxury commodities and fashionable trend is depicted by the director as a way of demanding a social space. Concentrating on the shop and brands, the body and beauty that Butterfly has may be viewed as and the symptom of the consumer culture. Regarding satire, Mohsin, employs this aspect presenting how consumerism affects people's attitude concerning what is appropriate in society. The story informs the reader that the main character is obsessed with external appearances and the purchasing of material possessions and is used as the portrayal of the evil of materialism which is typical in such movies and novels as social critique for the effects of capitalistic society, which aims at keeping the existing status quos and the separator social classes. Gender and class together form a very intimate relationship with consumerism in Moni Mohsin particularly in the article "The Diary of a Social Butterfly." The discussion of

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the latest trend in the fashion accessories or being concerned primarily with the material that debuts as the emperor of class and differentiation. Further, Butterfly's large and keen interest in shopping, brands and image spells out not only the consumerism that has become rampant within Butterfly's circle but also does it in the most questionable and disturbing manner. Similarly, Mohsin maintains the element of satire through Butterfly's fixation on the middle-class consumerist values while pointing out that such factors shape even character and the world's morality. In so doing, Mohsin successfully embodies this theme through her protagonist to reveal how vacuous the culture of consumerism is when it comes to destruction of relations and or interactions. Only in the last part of the shooting, the plot completely reflects the opinion that consumerism constructs power relations that sanction hegemony and social injustice. Therefore, by illustrating how the use of goods is essential in the elites' social status, Mohsin poses similar questions as critics with regard to tendencies in the capitalist society – about the continuation of dividing society within classes and the degeneration of people's genuine relationships. Some of the main values that are entailed in a consumer society are self-indulgence and arrogance, which wipe out the real and authentic human values, such as integrity, honesty, and sincerity for the power of vanity hence insincerities define most of the relationships of a consumer society. Therefore, through his work Mohsin navigates with audiences' thoughts regarding consumer culture and the overall signal it sends within society and challenges people to think about what else this construction of society offers. Moreover, contrary to principles of postmodern consumer culture that emphasizes personal identity through consumption of material objects and oppression of the Other, she attempts to transform consumption into the process which encourages authentic interactions between people and social justice.

In the author Mohsin satire enables her to dissect people's roles, activities, and consumption patterns in the Pakistani setting within the framework of class, gender, and consumption. Her work enables the audience to oppose such conventions as occasioned by both the Feminist and Marxist criticism whereby people are commodified. Thus, Mohsin's writing accomplishes the initial reason for postcolonial literature, which was to expose colonial and the postcolonial absurdity and injustice in their present forms and embodiments and the goal of contemporary literature – to make the world deservedly better and more equitable.

“Vaisay tau I am convent-educated. Even got first prize for reading and obedience in class one. But really, just look at floozie. She's known Dropsy since KG, when they used to sit next to each other in Little Sweets Hearts School on Jail Road only. Imagine! What a sleeves ka snake she's turned out to be. Back stabber jaisi na ho tau” (p.1,2).

The speaker once says the following – I grew up, my father was in the forces, my mother was convent-educated – which suggests she comes from an upper-middle-class background. This is seen from the fact that the convent schools found in South Asia particularly admit the middle and upper classes, which create social stratification privileges based on education.

This education also comes with requirements on the kind of behavior expected from the receiving party, and this is seen from the mention of prizes for reading and obedience which are some of the noble behaviors considered appropriate in such higher standards learning institutions.

The speaker names another character as floozie and sleeves ka snake, which are unacceptable terms for any female. This is in line with the findings of the paper that portrays the elite society in the narrative as judicial.

Such language shows how women are labeled and classified depending on how they behave, this being due to cultural and social practices. This term “floozie” is especially emblematic of the commercial culture that objectifies women in light of their conformity or non-conformity with the appropriate norms of *décence* and morality of the late 19th century commercial culture. The presence of a ‘back stabber’ points to competition and probably conceivably unhealthy relations within such a society. The other social values learned in the course of the film reflect elite's relationships which imply shallowness and self-serving motives that result in betrayal and distrust.

This correlates with the commercialization of relationships and self-identities in the society where the focus is on class stratification and personal gains in the relationships rather than the bonds. With reference to the passage one can see how women especially in the elite of Pakistani society are harshly policed. These words to describe the other woman suggest that there is a culture of branding women and their behaviors like objects.

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Spain, women have identity according to the demand of the commercial culture which education, dressing code, and behavior are capital assets which needly can increase or decrease. The plot portrays certain principles concerning the submissive attitudes that women should have in societies. The fact that the speaker gloats in the fact that she got a prize for obedience shows how such qualities are considered desirable in this culture.

The insults and rivalry suggest the expectations of women's conduct and the desire for female submission to particular standards to remain acceptable to society. In *Diary of a Social Butterfly*, Moni Mohsin relates how commercialization structures the gendered stories of the self and people in society through the depiction of vanity, cut-throat rivalry of the beauty, and the objectification of women and relationships within the elite Disposable Pakistanis. Finally, there is stress on how women should behave and what happens to those who do not fit the molds set in the commercial culture, the text thus focuses on the commercial culture impact on gender constructs and structures.

“what to do, yaar? My marriage was empty.’ Humph! As if marriages are thermoses, empty or full. Crack jaisa” (p.3).

Marriage is viewed as similar to a thermos – as in empty or full –, which references how relationships and self-fulfillment are considered in the context of the protagonist's social circle. This can be viewed as a commodification of a key social institution, marriage, which means that the worth measured here is teasingly quantifiable by physical and materialistic factors rather than by the emotional and individual ones. The careless attitude to an ‘empty’ marriage demonstrates the role of consumerism in the relationships where people are seen as products or commodities whose value is determined by one's usefulness or the visual appeal of the product. This can be seen to depict a culture in society today where one is defined by the success or failure of a goal as per the rest of society and not one's self. In this connection, the protagonist's complaint of an empty marriage can also be considered as a result of the societal pressures of women to find happiness through marriage. This is in consonance with cultural and social paradigms of womanhood that consider a woman's status and relevance based on her marriage and house hold responsibilities. The essence of humor and satire in these lines “Humph! As if marriages are thermoses, empty or full. Crack jaisa.” helps in tearing down the above social conventions. Through parodying of the state of affairs that marriages can be ‘empty’ or ‘full,’ the protagonist subverts the major discursive orthodoxy that imposes pressure on women to fit into the model of either of them. The phrase “what to do yaar?” give a sort of helplessness and hence show that the protagonist feels that he has no control over the things. This further illustrates how the commercial culture affects people in formulating their lifestyle by forcing them to embrace what can be considered as success even if it does not bring happiness in their lives. In the terms of the above work, it reflects how the commercial culture, or more broadly, the social construction of reality defines not only the values which are regarded as significant and worthy, but how the specifically individual worth is conceived as well. The given attitude towards marriage as something unimportant and easily decided in this dialogue is the sign of a more general narrative identity constructed according to the principles of consumer culture and social expectations. These lines from “*Diary of a Social Butterfly*” can be said to make commentaries on the manner in which commercial culture alters the narrative gender identities and the norms of the society by portraying the materialistic and commodified representation of marriage in the society of the protagonist. Sarcasm and satire help in exposing such vain ideals by Moni Mohsin, and at the same time highlight women's subjugation to traditional femininity. Thus, the conflict of the novel's protagonist against these expectations speaks volumes about the commercialization of individual and collective subjectivities.

“Ah', said Janoo, putting down his papers, 'that would be most unfortunate. Most unfortunate indeed! Twenty years hence, Kulchoo will have a small, un remarkable wedding because of my regrettable lack of social skills. But fear not, my dear. I may be a social disaster but luckily you have yourself to rely on. The indefatigable socialite who hasn't missed a single function of a single wedding in the 15 years that we've been married” (p.22).

Thus, Janoo sarcastically recognizes his regrettable lack of social skills overtly contrasting with *Butterfly* whose social spirit is portrayed as ‘indefatigable’. Janoo asserts that it is his wife's duty to enforce the etiquette that determines the families' status, which privileges the common culture that wife's must uphold the family image. The given passage reveals the fact that women are expected to be the social link in the circles of the elite. *Butterfly* constant attendance of social functions show a gendered nature of what was expected of a woman with regards to sociality and building up of family social networks. The statement about

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having missed 'a single function of a single wedding' is also informative pointing to the fact tarsiers Thus, the embellishment of social functions is identified as a fundamental feature of class status. Indeed, marriages and other related functions represent one of the most common places where social stratification is evident and overemphasized. Janoo's constant self-deprecating remarks about his inability to court properly and lacking social skills, Butterfly's polished and graceful courtesy are the indicators of social capital, the necessity of which is established by the fact that she is the embodiment of the higher class. This sums up how mobility and status preservation are linked with the other in separating groups and their management across and within functions. The focus on going to functions indicates an objectification where interaction counts is seen as cash value and fits into the consumption styles. The necessity of interacting with other people and going to weddings and functions thus becomes a way of utilising and demonstrating capital. That Butterfly is called an "indefatigable socialite" shows how consumers' existence is defined by consumer culture. It is not only she who tends to go out to attend various social occasions but the society that has embraced consumerism in its totality, where going out and being seen are the key to success individually, paternally and maternally. It is for this reason that Moni Mohsin's text employs humor and irony as it relates to gender, class, and power as a result of consumerism. Butterfly's representation as an active society lady and Janoo's sarcastic jokes about his inability to fit into the same social circles subversively decry the strong expectations put on women to maintain social class through participation in social events. This only goes to prove that prevailing culture in society, which reduces the intrinsic worth of the woman to her ability to mobilize and maintain social relations in the failure of which such relations would not be feasible, especially to uphold the class privilege. Furthermore, exploitation of social relations as consumerist relations is clear; indeed, the presentation of self and the self/other construction reflects consumer culture. Even through this parody, Mohsin plays a role in gender, class and consumerism debates, where she tries to tell the audience how shameful it is to remain in the upper circle of society and turn a blind eye to other people's problems.

"Empty? Boring? She has house, social life, money, servants, status, cars, jewellery. What more can anyone want? Oh, and she also has husband and child. I think so you are just jealous. You've always been jealous. Even in school you were jealous. I remember how you took out the eyes of my dolly that Daddy got from Bombay. Because i had dolly and you didn't. You've always been like that-jealous, sarrhial, mean and nasty" (p.166).

Here, the gender expectations and women's roles as witnessed in the elite society are depicted. The character's obsession with material things and her status, combined with the traditional view on female roles as wives and mothers, represents how women are expected to be valued as they are, as objects of desire that preserve the specific lifestyle. The setting of having a husband and child as part of what makes a woman complete represents the expectations of women by the society. The use of house, social life, money, servants, status, cars, jewellery discriminately shows that; These are the pleasures that can be enjoyed by only 'class A' Style. Thus, rejecting the idea that this life could be 'empty' or 'boring,' the speaker demonstrates that, according to the novel's values, material riches and social positions should be enough to provide people with happiness. This perspective very much highlights the class bias with what is considered as a fulfilling and enviable life. The essence of consumerism can be viewed as the main focus of the passage, and by far the primary concentration on material items or things and their relation to status. The arrogant sense of possessing items such as jewellery, cars and a house to mention but a few, and the servants also captures consumer products in relation to social image and self esteem. The incident of dolly from Bombay mentioned in the childhood also supplements the fact that consumer goods are a symbol of superiority and a cause of jealousy. The untidy condition of Moni Mohsin in this passage poses social satire in terms of gender and class transformation due to consumerism in the context of the elite group of Pakistan. From this viewpoint, the female character's self-identification relies not only on the value of possessions and importance of the rank and status. With respect to this critique, it can be noted that superficiality and moral illiteracy of the upper class is another theme that Mohsin seems to touch upon in all her novels: the pressure that women have to conform to societal expectations through consumerism, particularly of branded goods, as well as the repression of female sexuality is another related theme. All in all, the text lines from "Diary of a Social Butterfly" represent Mohsin's contemplation regarding gender, class, and consumerism; moreover, these factors influence people's identities and the changing perception of values.

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From this Marxist- Feminist point of view, a detailed examination of the provided text lines from 'Diary of a Social Butterfly' by Moni Mohsin shows how social class, sex and commerce of women's self images in a capitalist society are intertwined. In this analysis I bring together the results concerning the connection between economic status and gender roles and their consequences, including the continuation of inequality and social distancing. After making an analysis of the symbol that is attached to the character, it is evident that the use of a house, money, servants, status, cars and jewelries shows that wealth and social class are core to the character's identity. From a Marxist perspective, these elements shame the idea, so characteristic for capitalism, that the worth of a man or woman depends on their ability to gain and spend money. By being proud of her belongings, the character merely reflects the assimilation of capitalist notions in which one's value is determined by earnings and material possessions. It also reveals features of the traditional gender roles because the character speaks of having a husband and a child, as the things that make life complete. This corresponds with the domestic sphere and the endowment protocol, where the role of a woman was considered to be that of a wife and a mother. The Marxist-feminist lens disapproves this for it aligns women to the domestic area, making them rely on men, and, thus, have no independence. The use of materialism with reference to wife and mother, property, and status is evident regarding how women's identities are produced within capitalist and patriarchal societies. Again the worth of the character is more than the value of items owned by the character, which also the character is equally enjoyable and supposed to complete the societal roles expected of women and especially housewives. This stereotyping makes women some mere consumption and sexual objects for the upper class people's display, which aligns with Marxist feminism in seeing how capitalist systems work hand in hand with gender inequalities to perpetuate classism and socio-economic injustice. What is most evident when analyzing the given scene is that the shout "jealousy" hides class consciousness. The memoir about a childhood episode when the character played with the dolly brought from Bombay is an example of social stratification and desire for material goods' envy at a young age. This anecdote proves that people of a capitalist society are taught to be competitive and envious from a young age due to the employed social class differences. The notions of class and gender inequality are reflected in Mohsin's text through the lens of Marxism and feminism, as the writer shows that women's bodies are a commodity in a globalized world of consumerism and patriarchal societies. The character depicts the oppression by acculturated social norms in as much as the feeling of worth in the woman emanates from oppressor structures such as wealth and feminine docility. The text reveals the shallowness and the lack of meaning in the life narrowed down by materialism and patriarchy, implying that both the systems enslave a person, especially, a woman.

All in all, one can state that all the images from 'Diary of a Social Butterfly' express the Marxist-feminist point of view about the connection between class and gender and consumerism. It further demonstrates how the constructions of women under capitalist and patriarchal system of socio-political relation worked on the process of commodification of women, perpetuation of the divide of class and social inequalities.

"Before she could say anything, I said, 'Hi, how are you? I'm only here because I'm flying out from Karachi to London, na, rented a flat there, na, right on the back side of Albert's Hall. Luckily, by then it came her turn at the till and Iran off. Just about managed to get into the car before bumping into anyone else. Can you imagine how my nose will be cut if I don't get the visa now? I'll never be able to show my face in society" (P.53).

The happy, narrating character says, 'I put up a flat right on the back side of Albert Hall,' which alludes to a specific class and focus on the possession of material things. This shows how in the society having status is linked to the ability to afford property and scored big in estates.

The words "he was flown out from Karachi to London" is another way of stressing mobility, which, in this case, correlates with the character's high social standing. Thus, air travel, especially international, can be regarded as a privilege of the upper class and only the wealthiest people.

The issues in relation to visa also bring out the social factor, considering the character's worry of not getting a visa and how it will embarrassment him socially ("how my nose will be cut if I don't get the visa"). It depicts a society in which people's value is partially quantized by how they can get inside and how they can navigate through the layers of the exclusive circles.

Such representations include the phrase "I'll never be able to show my face in society" meant the pressure that is placed on women to look a certain way. The use of "nose cut" has a symbolic connotation of

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shame, explaining how women's reputation can easily be tarnished in society and the ensuing social implications of any the slightest infraction of codes of morality.

In hurried and defensive response ("Hi, how are you? I'm only here because,...") the character seems to lack freedom of choice and is always expected to justify her actions, underlining the protagonist's position of woman as constrained and constantly judged. Sexual arousal is demonstrated as an imperative the man cannot control, paralleled by action that wants to avoid any further communication ("Luckily, by then it came her turn at the till and I ran off"). The escape from the situation indicates the pressure on women that evokes the desire to avoid being judged.

The informal way of talking about renting a flat in a rich area (Albert Hall), and the lack of concern toward the task's meaning beyond signifying consumer status also quickly highlights consumerism aspect. Conspicuous consumption represents the public aspect of the character's personality and her social status.

Conclusion:

The observation of *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* shows us how Moni Mohsin has created a strong satirical picture of consumer culture in which identity, especially female identity, is so integrated into materialism, social performances and class consciousness. This story portrays how the pervasive structure of consumerism is not just social and cultural but also personal—how it influences social relations, personal desires, aspirations, and self-worth. As the protagonist Butterfly, Mohsin depicts the language of consumption as a means of status and belonging, as brands, luxury and elite social events serve as markers of identity.

The study also reveals that the ways in which femininity is performed in the novel are not fixed and natural, but are socially constructed in accordance with the consumerist expectations. Women are portrayed as always performing their selves in terms of being seen, or not seen, in their roles as actresses, wives, homemakers, and mothers, as well as through their looks and emotional work, all of which are subject to regulation by the demands of the elite consumer culture. This sense of femininity is consistent with theories that conceptualize gender as performative and as being socially constructed, reflecting the internalization and reinforcement of dominant cultural norms by women.

Furthermore, the results suggest consumer goods and lifestyle are used as symbols of distinction of class and hierarchy of gender in the novel. In the case of the elite female subject, the ability to consume, display and maintain social visibility is the defining characteristic of her status, and the system of material wealth is the foundation of social worth. Mohsin's satirical approach is a critique of the contradictions of this system, revealing the emptiness, artificiality and emotional superficiality of consumer-based identities.

The novel also, from a wider critical viewpoint, reveals the role of consumer culture in maintaining the dominance of patriarchy and class, restricting the ability of women to act and at the same time encouraging them to see consumption as an empowering experience. In the over-dressed and over-made up figure of Butterfly, she reflects and critiques the feminine image of the elite, revealing the way women are being sold in the capitalist and male-dominated system.

To sum up, *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* is a subtle critique of consumerism, which highlights the effect that consumerism has on the female identity in the upper echelons of society in Pakistan. Using satire, Mohsin uncovers the intersections of gender, class and consumption and ultimately unearths that femininity in such a context is not a natural identity but a constructed performance that is formed by social expectations and materialist values. Thus, the novel invites the reader to reflect on the consequences of consumer culture on the gendered identity and social relations in the modern world.

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