

## Original Article

# Exploring Human Complexity: An Analysis of Major and Minor Characters of Mohsin Hamid's Novel 'Moth Smoke'

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## Abstract

A comprehensive character analysis of Mohsin Hamid's novel "Moth Smoke" interprets its characters to expose the intricate behaviors of people and social structures in the text. The study uses descriptive-qualitative methodology to analyze major characters Darashikoh Shezad and Mumtaz and minor characters Murad Badshah and Aurangzeb (Ozi) to understand their personalities and motivations and roles. The researcher analyzed the novel's text to examine character behavior and internal thinking by conducting documentation research and analyzing library materials. Data collection methodologies following principles of repetition and collection along with similarity and contrast led to comprehensive analysis which data triangulation strengthened its validity. An analysis of the book has revealed destructive outcomes from uncontrolled desires through Darashikoh's drug and criminal patterns and shows societal gaps and illegal affection in Mumtaz's storyline. Minor characters Murad and Ozi offer important understandings about societal differences as well as personal histories of the main characters. The research study suggests future investigations into Hamid's language usage to track the integration of Pakistani cultural aspects within his use of English so scholars can better understand cultural identity through "Moth Smoke."

**Keywords:** Mohsin Hamid, Darashikoh Shezad, Mumtaz, Murad Badshah, Aurangzeb, character

## INTRODUCTION

All people can find value in the human-created works expressing beauty that comprises literature (Pattison, 2022). Literary works show strong associations with expression because they contain human qualities such as emotions and energy and beliefs thereby generating admiration (Mauer, 2023). Through literature writers use this medium to convey their intellectual thoughts (Swarniti, 2020). Every literary work contains creative elements that fulfill readers with beautiful aesthetic pleasure. Yurizka (2022) agrees that authors produce literary works to bring enjoyment and understanding which the community uses in real life.

According to Pattison (2022), literary works serve three primary purposes: entertainment, providing information, and offering insights into language usage. Literature encompasses a variety

of compositions, including stories, dramas, emotional expressions, and explorations of ideas (Bennet, 2023). One prominent form of literary work is the novel, which is a lengthy fictional narrative born from the writer's imagination or experiences. Novels create a unique world that enriches the field of literary studies, bridging the gap between human reality and offering deeper insights compared to plays or poetry (Aliyev, 2021).

An actor playing in a story represents a character focused on the primary figure of a novel being the main character. The number of people appearing in the narrative becomes a common question just like "How many people are there in the novel?", alongside other similar inquiries (Labatut, 2019). Through character and disposition readers understand the natural character of people according to their personal

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interpretation. According to Pelican (2020) characters transform into dramatic or fictional story actors. The process of carrying events which allows for story creation is known as characterization whereas the manner in which authors portray their characters is termed characterization (Auerbach, 2025).

When characters appear in the narrative they will bring the story to life by facing multiple conflicts. Characterizations become interesting when they either perform actions or create reactions that result from their behavior (Piper, 2017). The literary world contains novels as parts known as characters. The character elements significantly contribute to the overall framework represented by other elements (Chaturvedi, 2016). The author selected this novel to serve as research material for character analysis because novels demonstrate characters along with their defining features using various creative methods. Literary works possess two types of elements which include intrinsic elements as well as extrinsic elements (Susic, 2020). Intrinsic elements of a novel exist as the elements which participate directly in structure construction. The work itself is built by elements characterized as intrinsic according to Seo (2013). Novels are formed through intrinsic elements that include theme, plot, character, point of view, setting, language style and mandate. Extrinsic elements operate by external forces which contribute to the creation of works from their outside context including background production of literature and author biography and socio-cultural environment (Chen, 2016). The research review assesses intrinsic content elements through its examination of characters together with their characteristics.

Novels are filled with situations that make the story captivating and exciting. They have elements like attraction, romance, drama, intimidation, and conflict, which all work together to create a meaningful and engaging experience for the readers (Fatehi, 2016). Characters are the heart of any novel because without them, there would be no conflicts or interesting events. By observing the characters' dialogues, actions, thoughts, appearances, attitudes, interactions, and the settings they find themselves in, readers can understand their personalities (Kim, 2021). Characters are closely connected to other elements in a novel, as they play a vital role in showcasing these elements. In a fictional story, characters serve as a source of substance (Smith, 2022). The success of a story can be judged by

how well the writer portrays characters that feel like real human beings, allowing readers to form emotional connections and grasp the writer's intended messages (Klarer, 2023).

Shafak (2024) divides characters into several types: Based on the aspect of role, namely the main character and additional characters. The basic functions of character manifestation include the protagonist together with the antagonist. The character falls into two categories: simple character and round character. There are two categories of character development: static characters and developing characters according to DeGuzman (2024). The character reflection leads to typical and neutral types of character development. Speaking from this perspective one understands that a character represents an individual who participates in stories or events. A narrative work and dramatic plot features "characters" representing real people for readers to understand their displayed moral characteristics through dialogue and behavioral actions (Fatehi, 2016).

The person who delivers the story belongs to the definition of character and the characterization of disposition and character defines the moral nature and approach of each character (Piper, 2016). A novel requires active characters to function because personality-based storytelling represents one of the main elements (Seo, 2013). A story shows people in a clear way according to Pelican (2020) in his definition of characterization. The author uses characterization to create character depictions by placing attributes on story characters while describing their physical and mental aspects of the story structure (Massey, 2015).

"Moth Smoke" by Mohsin Hamid is an exciting novel about a character named Darashikoh Shezad (Awan, 2016). He loses his job and gets caught up in some bad stuff. We learn about Darashikoh through what he says and does. He often feels unhappy with his life and does things that are not good. He becomes interested in his friend's wife and gets into drugs and crime (Fitri, 2022). This shows us that Darashikoh Shezad struggles with making good choices and gets drawn towards bad things. The novel shows us several important characteristics of Darashikoh through both his spoken words and his behavioral actions. He feels disappointed with his existence then proceeds to make unwise choices. When he falls for his friend's wife his behavior turns towards unlawful activities that include drug use along with crime involvement (Ramzan, 2020).

Thus we understand that correct behavior poses difficulties for Darashikoh because he frequently picks mistaken paths.

The widespread interest in social portrayal in *Moth Smoke* by Mohsin Hamid reveals a major gap in scholarly research since the book fails to provide thorough character analysis. The novel's social themes generate significant public interest but academic research focusing on detailed character investigations especially concerning major and secondary characters remains scarce. The current study addresses the insufficient analysis of character development in *Moth Smoke* by conducting an extensive study targeted toward this key deficiency. This study fills a research gap by doing complete personality examinations of Darashikoh Shezad and Mumtaz plus Murad and Aurangzeb (Ozi).

This research investigates different character personality traits plus explains what keeps these characters together and what impacts their actions. The study examines how social norms during life events contribute to character decisions as they progress through the story. The research explores both Darashikoh and Mumtaz as its central characters plus studies Murad and Ozi because these supporting characters show how society breaks morally and separates people based on money. Hamid uses his exploration of complex human behavior and social segregation to create a deep metaphor about the societal forces that oppose individual wishes in "The Minaret." By analyzing character development the results enhance our perception of the novel's thematic structure as well as its exploration of identity and moral conflict.

The study proceeds to the literature review to review character study research in literature as well as vital theoretical frameworks. Research approach together with data collection methods and character analysis techniques used for *Moth Smoke* will be described in the methodology section. The investigation will present its findings based on character analysis while the conclusion will summarize major contributions along with future study recommendations.

### **Theoretical Framework: Psychodynamic Theory**

Sigmund Freud developed psychodynamic theory to explain how unconscious mental processes steer human behavior according to Traylor (2022). This theory suggests that what we do along with our mental processes and emotional reactions result from subconscious

wants combined with previous happenings as well as internal struggles which stay hidden from self-awareness. Based on their early childhood experiences and repressed memories unconscious processes express themselves through behavior and dreams and human interactions (Barber, 2016). This hypothesis has expanded through time and Carl Jung's work alongside others resulted in better explanations regarding human behavior that emphasized self-development alongside subconscious urges and mental consciousness-involuntary conflicts.

Through characters in Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke* the author develops behavioral responses which originate from personal needs combined with latent psychological conflicts about which his characters lack self-awareness. Daru demonstrates the powerful opposing forces between his deep-rooted wants and the social rules that bind him. Daru struggles internally due to his social downfall from a privileged group and his wish to recover his previous position (Malcolm, 2017). His actions demonstrate his intense mental turmoil because he wants to recover his former life yet he feels great shame about losing his prosperity. His intricate psychological state creates self-destruction and drug addiction alongside aggressive conduct (Herron, 2018). A psychological need for retaliation against a system that has mistreated him functions as his main motivation toward choices that lead him deeper into self-destruction while showing how his internal fighting shapes his downfall.

Personal experiences from the beginning of life especially those connected to family life impact personality development as well as behavioral patterns (Li, 2024). Through Daru's background raised in luxury followed by his loss of class status the book demonstrates how his inner tensions develop throughout *Moth Smoke*. His life experiences control both his emotional instability together with his poor response to family financial decline. Ozi as another central figure displays behavior that results from the profound effect of his powerful family background dynamics. The mental processing of Ozi becomes intricate because he faces both paternal expectations alongside his need to uphold his affluent way of life (Herron, 2018). Ozi uses past experiences as the foundation for his actions because family influence determines both personal choices and social interactions. Mumtaz controls her emotions as she handles both social rules and her own desires.

The inner drives form our moral ability



according to psychodynamic theory. The article Moth Smoke tracks characters who act on instinctive drives they cannot consciously control according to Rout (2024). Daru engaged in crime beyond mere monetary troubles because beneath those stresses he sought to punish and avenge. His personal conflicts force him to act unethically as shown in his story. Similarly, Mumtaz's affair with Ozi, despite her initial moral reservations, reveals her unconscious need for excitement and escape from the confines of her repressed emotions. Traylor's psychological tests (2022) show that ethical responses come from hidden brain activity according to character decisions shown here.

The basic psychological ideas about how people develop their identities help researchers study personal traits in Moth Smoke. People usually struggle to connect their real identity with their imaginary future self and it happens most frequently during both personal and outside obstacles as Malcolm states in 2017. When Daru feels overwhelmed it is because he cannot reconcile his present situation with his past self. He leaves his elite background to live in low society which causes both internal self-doubts and external identity confusion. The ability to live his present life does not match his previous lifestyle that splits his sense of identity inside his mind. The main figures Ozi and Mumtaz experience problems in defining themselves. Ozi, despite his outward success, struggles with his internal conflict between societal expectations and his personal desires. Mumtaz experiences dual pressure from her hidden feelings and community expectations because she struggles to determine her purpose in her familial life and romantic union with Ozi. The psychological complexity that arises from identity exploration and self-awareness shows how thoroughly mental complexities are connected to understanding oneself (Barber, 2016).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### A Study of Themes and Characterization

The powerful narrative of Moth Smoke by

**Table 1**

Character Relationships

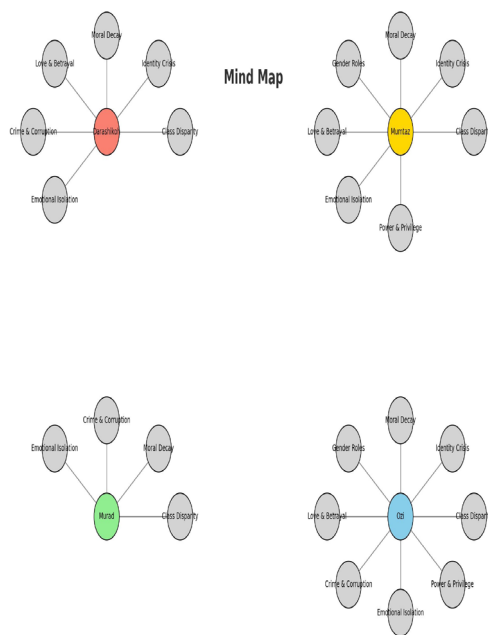
Character	Relationship with Daru	Effect on Daru
Darashikoh	Self	Inner conflict, downfall
Mumtaz	Lover	Love, guilt, passion
Murad	Friend & Drug Supplier	Push into crime
Ozi	Best friend turned enemy	Betrayal, class envy

Mohsin Hamid depicts ambition and decay within the scorching summer environment of Lahore Pakistan. The story tracks middle-class banker Darashikoh Shezad through his life downfall after jeopardizing his position by acting without restraint at work (Qasim, 2018). After he loses his employment due to an irrational action that brings financial ruin along with social decline he starts dealing drugs and commits crimes while developing forbidden love feelings toward Mumtaz who is married to his class-wealthy friend Aurangzeb (Ozi) (Afreen, 2022). Darashikoh Shezad battles continuous internal struggle because he desperately wants his identity back and his original status while destroying his ethical foundation. The seemingly collected socialite Mumtaz hides behind a man-made identity to expose corruption as a discreet investigative journalist (Jamshidi, 2024).

Through her forbidden relationship with Darashikoh she both liberates her suppressed existence while simultaneously driving themselves and others towards destruction since she matches his internal conflicts which stem from social norms and marital disappointment and hidden identities (Hamza, 2023). Ozi claims elite status but ignores the moral misconduct around him to maintain power over all who serve under him including Darashikoh (Heidari, 2023). Though minor Murad Badshah manages to establish himself as a central figure who brings both entertainment and ruin to Darashikoh by guiding him into criminal activities. The narrative progresses into a tragic inspection of societal class differences together with moral uncertainty as well as oppressive social norms as Darashikoh makes increasingly desperate decisions (Jeanniard, 2022).

Through these characters Hamid presents two-fold narratives which showcase both individual downfall while reflecting the social battle between privilege and the lost dreams of the urban Pakistan community (Fatima, 2021). Moth Smoke presents both the story of a man's ruin along with a study about how social systems reshape identities and undermine ethical values and sever interpersonal bonds (Rehman, 2019).





**Fig. 1.** Mind Map

### Literary Insights into Moth Smoke

As the foundation of this research, the literature review presents a critical examination of previous studies and current research, unveiling the gaps, trends, and contributions in the area of interest.

Fatima (2021) perceives the two by saying that the heroes are in the stories principally not depicted as entertainers yet rather responders to activities facilitated towards them and the people around them. In this manner, their objections are rather to kill the enemy's objectives while the rivals are depicted as the aggressors. " In a specific account, the two kinds of characters can be perceived or examined by the results of their activities, the age, genders, identity, and aptitudes (Ullah, 2022). Characters in fiction can be well named major and minor, static, and dynamic. A critical character is a huge figure at the purpose of intermingling of the story's action or subject. The huge character is each so often considered a hero whose conflict with an adversary may start the story's dispute (Yurizka, 2022). Supporting the significant character is at any rate one optional or minor characters whose limit is incompletely to light up the significant characters.

Minor characters are routinely static or constant: they continue as before from the soonest beginning stage of work beyond what many would consider possible (Pattison , 2022).

Dynamic characters, then once more, show a difference in disposition, reason, conduct, as the story progresses. There might be major and minor characters in a work. Characters that change practically nothing, if by any means, are called static characters. Characters that change altogether are called dynamic characters (Malcolm, 2017). Fifthly, a round character is one who is, undoubtedly, reliable with life. It is a character that has numerous exceptional and at times even conflicting character characteristics. A character that experiences a type of progress or headway is in the story, which is normally a direct result of something that transpires/her.

Moreover Kim (2021) the true way to determine round characters is by their ability to create compelling emotional experiences. A character without any surprises should be classified as flat but when it fails to persuade the reader it may claim roundness although its true nature remains one-dimensional despite life-like qualities found within fictional narratives. Through single and combined usage the author achieves his goal to transform humanity by adding various aspects through his work.

Existing studies such as Muktasim (2018) performed an analysis of Edna O'Brien's 'The Little Red Chairs' protagonist through his research. Research explored multiple characteristics of this character through their confident attitude and wise thinking as well as their alluring behavior. The research investigated the

multifaceted nature that enables the character to fully contribute to the novel. Fitri (2022) conducts research to explore depression in the main character of Jasmine Vargas My Heart and Other Black Holes and the character's efforts toward depression recovery.

Moreover, the research by Rizka (2020) explores similarities and differences between the Paper Towns book and its movie adaptation by John Green. The elements of both books and films consist of intrinsic parts alongside extrinsic elements. The researcher explores what is present in characters and characterization and setting because those are intrinsic aspects. The original book contains many unique characters yet numerous of them vanishes when transformed into a motion picture (Labatut, 2019). The movie omits several characters who lack influence over its central story threads. The novel offers a more elaborate depiction of the environment when compared to how the film presents it. Characterization in the novel remains intricate even though its transformation into a film does not require changes to already established characterization elements.

Text interpretation relies heavily on the interpretation of narrative characters as well as their meaning to the plot. Additionally, the research conducted by Heidari (2023) examines fictional character semantic codes through semantic theory principles while integrating "Raymond-Kennan" and other theories in a narratology-based character analysis approach in Maryam Basiri's "Involved in Love" novel. However, Jamshidi (2024) performs psychological criticism of Riyad Al-Qazi's novel "Bait Al-Qazi - Al-Arab Al-Akhir" through descriptive-analytical methods while incorporating Karen Horne's personality theory to identify different personality types present in the novel in addition to studying the neurotic traits and examining effective causes that impact character formation.

In contrast scholar like Patmarnianta (2016) conducted a research study focusing on The Fault in Our Stars as a novel authored by Green. Within his works The Fault in Our Stars holds a special place as one of John Green's novels which present authentic life experiences. The research examines the personalities expressed by Hazel and August as the two principal characters from the story. This study examines the main characters of The Fault in Our Stars through their personalities which belong to Hazel and August. This study analyzes novel dialogues and

character quotes from The Fault in Our Stars while using printed and online sources from books and journals as supporting material.

Meanwhile, Wijayanti (2020) research analyzes main character conflicts in the Sidney Sheldon 1998 novel "Tell Me Your Dreams" through a combination of discourse analysis and textual analysis methods. Through embracing a discourse framework the analysis marks down how formal language methods show characters' internal and external conflicts through analyzed dialog patterns within the story. Furthermore, Fatima (2021) examines Mohsin Hamid's "Moth Smoke" novel by applying the formalist approach. The research seeks to study both ethical and artistic components in the novel through an examination of presentation structures above content structures. The analysis of Mohsin Hamid's "Moth Smoke" requires investigating four main aspects including time and geographic location and the development of events along with conflicts and character meaning and symbolic elements.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research approach employed in this study is known as the descriptive-qualitative method. As defined by Kim (2017), the descriptive-qualitative method refers to the procedures used in examining the outcomes of literary works, ensuring their alignment with real-life situations depicted in novels. ervation, analysis, and interpretation, without the inclusion of hypothesis testing. Additionally, Furidha (2023) suggests that the use of descriptive language in writing allows for the creation of clear mental images of individuals, animals, objects, places, or events, stimulating the reader's senses. Writers intentionally select descriptive details to engage the readers and capture their interest.

### Sample

Characters of "Moth Smoke " by Mohsin Hamid have been taken as the sample for this research

### Source of the Data

The main source of this study relies on a novel called "The Moth Smoke" authored by Mohsin Hamid, who is a Pakistani American writer. Published in 2000 by Grant Books, this fictional work spans 245 pages. It has received praise and acclaim from various critics, particularly from the United States, where it has been hailed as a masterpiece by Mohsin Hamid. The novel

has garnered numerous positive responses, suggesting that it is a highly engaging and worthwhile to read.

### Method of Data Collection

To obtain the data, researchers employ library research and document analysis methods, which involves skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation. According to Dodgson (2017), researchers are urged to rely on their own knowledge and experience in order to evaluate the characteristics of the characters.

This evaluation process encompasses considering five distinct approaches: examining the character's actions, scrutinizing personal and environmental descriptions, analyzing dramatic statements and thoughts, taking into account what other characters say about the character in question, and considering statements made by the author in their role as a storyteller or observer.

### Technique of Data Analysis

The researcher in this study is analyzing collected data by categorizing it based on specific criteria. Researcher is paying attention to important elements such as plot, theme, characterization, symbolism, and setting but to answer the research problem, main focus of the research is on the major characters Darashikoh Shezad and Mumtaz, as well as the minor characters Murad Badshah and Aurangzeb of the "Moth Smoke" by Mohsin Hamid.

According to Ohman (2023), there are three principles that help identify characters:

- Repetition: This means emphasizing the characterization of a character multiple times or using different words to strengthen their portrayal.
- Collection: Since characterization is often described throughout the plot in most fiction, character identification requires collecting all the relevant data. This ensures a complete and clear description of the character.
- Similarity and contrast: This principle involves comparing a character with another character to highlight their similarities and differences.

In this study, the researcher focuses on the collection principle for character identification. However, the researcher may also use the repetition and similarity/contrast principles if needed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and results of the research are being presented in this chapter, which discusses the characters. Once the data has been gathered, the researcher has formulated the conclusions. The findings have included the data used to create the categories. The analysis has focused on the major and minor characters in Mohsin Hamid's "Moth Smoke," exploring what the characters have said, done, and thought, as well as what other characters have said about them.

### Analysis of the major character Darashikoh Shezad:

#### A. Type of character

In "Moth Smoke," Darashikoh Shezad is a truly compelling and a round character. He is depicted with a rich complexity, showcasing a wide range of emotions, motivations, and inner conflicts. The author takes the time to provide intricate details about his background, beliefs, relationships, and personal struggles, which all contribute to making him a multidimensional character.

#### B. Physical Appearance

*"A hard man with shadowed eyes, manacled, cuffed, disheveled, proud, erect. A man capable of anything and afraid of nothing. Two guards accompany him, and yes, they are brutes, but they would offer scant reassurance if this man were not chained. He is the terrible almost-hero of a great story: powerful, tragic, and dangerous. He alone meets your eyes."* (page 8)

*"He seemed the perfect partner for my first extramarital affair. He was smart and sexy, and since he was one of Ozi's best friends, I knew he'd keep his mouth shut."* (Page 158)

*"I have no moles. Not even one. I didn't know that, but Mumtaz has looked and looked, and now she's given up."* (Page 172)

The above textual evidence describes Darashikoh Shezad as a tough guy with mysterious, shadowed eyes. He looks disheveled and is handcuffed and chained, accompanied by two brutish guards who offer little comfort. Despite his tough appearance, he exudes a proud and confident demeanor. He is the kind of person who seems capable of anything and fears nothing. He catches your eye, standing out as a powerful, tragic, and dangerous figure in a fascinating story. Additionally he looks smart and sexy, it's mentioned that he doesn't have



any moles on his body, a detail that has been confirmed by a character named Mumtaz.

### C. Educational Background

*"He was a student of mine. He distinguished himself by attending my lectures and taking notes. It was this second characteristic, note-taking, that really caught my eye. So one day I said 'What do you think you're doing?' To which he replied, 'I'm sorry, Professor?' And I responded, 'No, you're not. You've been doing it for weeks. You're taking notes.'" (Page 36)*

*"It is. I soon realized Daru had potential, so I encouraged him to pursue a Ph.D. Which he did, for a while." (Page 36)*

"I met him when he began his master's. So that would have been another ... two years. Two years of dissertation work." (Page 36)

*"No I met him while I was at Punjab University, when Ozi was off studying in the states." (Page 29)*

During discussion with Mumtaz the professor Julius Superb explained that Darashikoh Shezad has been his student and has distinguished himself by actively attending lectures and displaying remarkable intelligence. The professor emphasized that Darashikoh has consistently stood out among his peers, showcasing his dedication and eagerness to learn through diligent note-taking. In discussing Darashikoh's potential, the professor highlighted that he has seen great promise in him. Recognizing Darashikoh's exceptional abilities, the professor has encouraged him to pursue a Ph.D., as he believes it is a natural path for someone as talented as Darashikoh. The professor confidently stated that Darashikoh's intelligence and capabilities have always been evident, and his pursuit of a Ph.D. is a testament to his remarkable talent and passion for knowledge.

Furthermore it is mentioned that Darashikoh Shezad was a student of Punjab University. Murad recalls meeting him during his time at the university while Ozi was away studying in the United States.

### D. Family Background

*"Khurram uncle was my father's best friend at the military academy. He occupied a cushy staff position as an ADC in Rawalpindi in '71, while my father died of gangrene in a prisoner-of-war camp near Chittagong. Then he slipped into the civil service, specializing, it's said, in overpaying foreign companies for equipment and pocketing*

*their kickbacks." (Page 73-74)*

*"I have no real memories of my father. I turned two the summer his regiment was sent east. His photos and the stories I've heard have built in my mind the image of a quiet, courageous man, a soldier's soldier. He was the best boxer at the military academy, and he drove a motorcycle. I have his ears, people say. Strange things to inherit, ears. Small and lobeless, like a pair of half-hearts. Otherwise we look nothing alike." (Page 74)*

The above quotes from the novel shows that Darashikoh Shezad's father was a soldier in the military. He was best friends with Khurram Uncle, who had a comfortable job in Rawalpindi while Darashikoh's father was in a prisoner-of-war camp and eventually died there. Darashikoh doesn't have many memories of his father, but he has seen pictures and heard stories about him. His father was described as a brave and quiet man, known for his skills in boxing and riding a motorcycle. They also had similar ears. On the other hand, Khurram Uncle later got involved in the civil service and was accused of overpaying foreign companies for equipment and keeping the extra money for himself.

*"And I find myself thinking of my mother, beautiful, wasp-faced, with high cheekbones and hollow cheeks, her strict expression softened by sad eyes and a small, round smile. Never any jewelry, holes in her ears shriveled shut, still-black hair pulled into a bun. How young she always seemed, young enough to be mistaken for my sister the year she died. But not the day she was buried: bloodless, all color drained from her face, wrinkles visible in her pale skin like creases on a ball of paper." (Page 121-122)*

"Darashikoh would remember having a cup of hot tea with her before lying down on his charpoy, his arms crossed under his head, staring up at the stars. He fell into a deep sleep, so deep that he never heard the firing of the bullet that would claim his mother's life." (Page 107)

*"His mother may have been asleep as well, for when her son found her dead the next morning, she was lying on her charpoy with her eyes shut. Or she may have been awake. She may have heard the repeated coughing of a Kalashnikov being fired into the sky. But even if she did, she probably thought nothing of it: there were two weddings in the neighborhood that night, so the celebratory sound of automatic gunfire was only to be expected. Of course, the bullets might not have come from those weddings..." (Page 107-*

108)

*"Indeed, it is possible that only the one bullet was fired that night, for only one was found in the morning. It pierced Darashikoh's mother's throat from above, passed through the charpoy, and rolled, spent, to the edge of the roof. Her death was probably not instantaneous, since her spinal cord was not severed by The injury. The coroner was of the opinion that she bled to death in silence over the course of some minutes, unable to get up or to make a sound. The pool of her blood was already dry when the lightening sky roused Darashikoh from his sleep." (Page 108)*

The given textual evidence describes that Darashikoh Shezad's mother was a beautiful woman, with a slender face marked by prominent cheekbones and sunken cheeks. Her stern countenance was softened by a touch of sadness in her eyes and a gentle, rounded smile. She never adorned herself with jewelry, and her ear piercings had closed up long ago. Her black hair, still vibrant, was always neatly pulled back into a bun. Despite her mature appearance, she had a youthful aura about her, often mistaken for Darashikoh's sister before her untimely passing. However, on the day of her burial, her face had lost all color, turning pale and lifeless, with wrinkles and lines etched onto her skin like creases on a crumpled piece of paper. Tragically, she met her demise in her sleep, completely unaware of the bullet that would claim her life. The next morning, Darashikoh discovered her lying peacefully on her charpoy, eyes shut, perhaps having heard the distant sound of gunfire during the previous night's wedding celebrations. Little did she know that one of those bullets had pierced her throat, causing a slow and silent bleeding to her death. It was only when the morning sky began to lighten that Darashikoh awoke from his deep slumber, realizing the heartbreaking loss he had suffered.

## E. Professional Life

### i) Job in Bank

*"I'm in the office by eleven minutes after ten, cold because I'm soaked and the air-conditioning in the bank is always too strong. I smell like a garage on a windless day, and I'm sure I look a mess." (Page 19)*

*"Raider sees me and shakes his head. Raider's real name is Haider, and his dream is to become a hostile takeover specialist on qWall Street. He's the only man at our bank who wears suspenders." (Page 19)*

*"Raider's talking about my client, Malik Jiwan,*

*a rural landlord with half a million U.S. in his account..." (page 20)*

*"I'm not one of your serfs, you bastard. And I want you to get the hell out of my chair. 'Mr Jiwan, I'm not trying to be disrespectful."*

*"Your tone is disrespectful." (Page 20)*

*"I'm very sorry, sir,' I say. 'I'm sorry, Mr Jiwan'. They don't say anything. 'I don't know what came over me,' I go on. 'It won't happen, again. I'm very sorry."*

*"My BM says, 'You're fired, Mr Shezad.' ( page 23)*

*"How did you get your previous job?"*

*"Through a family friend", I admit. Ozi's father, as a matter of fact.*

*"Murad Badshah grins. 'Perhaps you should see the gentleman again. What he did once he can do twice.' (Page 40)*

It is clearly mentioned in the provided textual evidences that Darashikoh Shezad has been working at a bank, but one day he arrived a little late and was soaked from the rain outside, feeling cold and uncomfortable due to the strong air-conditioning in the bank. His colleague Raider, who always wears suspenders, saw him and shook his head disapprovingly. Darashikoh has a client named Malik Jiwan, a rural landlord with a sizable amount of money in his account. However, during an interaction with Mr. Jiwan, Darashikoh lost his temper and spoke disrespectfully to him. He quickly realized his mistake and apologized, assuring Mr. Jiwan that it wouldn't happen again. Unfortunately, his boss, referred to as "BM," has just informed him that he has been fired, stating that his tone was disrespectful. When Miurad Badshah asked about how he obtained his previous job, Darashikoh admits that he had secured it through a family friend, specifically Ozi's father. Murad Badshah, with a grin, suggests that Darashikoh should consider reaching out to the same gentleman again, as he managed to help him once and might be able to do it again in finding another job opportunity .

### ii) Criminal Activities

*"You never know. Your friends might be interested. It's not much. I'll throw it in for free with what you're buying."*

*"I examine it. 'It looks like hash to me."*

*"It's mixed with charas. But believe me, the*

*heroin is there.' I slip it into my pocket and thank Murad Badshah, turning down his offer to smoke a joint, because I don't want to arrive at Raider's place too late. On my way I break off a healthy chunk of hash for myself. I'm almost out, after all, and five hundred for therest is still a bargain."*(Page 136)

*"Maybe I should ask Murad Badshah if I can borrow his revolver."*

*"When I'm not with Mumtaz, I usually have nothing to do. When I'm not with Mumtaz and I do have something to do, I'm generally selling hash. It isn't much money. And even if it does buy me petrol and food, I don't like doing it. I don't like the way I think I look to other people when I'm doing it, and I don't like the way they treat me."*(Page 173-174)

*"You sold drugs to my son?" Shuja's father asks me."*

*'No.'*

*"One of the men holding me slaps the back of my head, and suddenly it all makes sense. They're going to kill me. Shuja's dad is a sick bastard whose son does pot, and I'm going to pay for it."* (Page 182)

*"my legs slip out from under me, and I curl into a ball as they kick me, waiting for them to stom on my head, screaming until I lose my breath. I pass out once or twice, briefly. When my eyes open, Shuja's father is standing over me, saying something. He's pointing a shotgun at my head, and I can only whimper, blood and foam spraying from my lips. Then he kicks me in the face."* (Page 182)

*"I have ha gun. If he hurts you, I ll kill him."* (Page 229)

While discussing criminals activities Darashikoh became increasingly involved in criminal activities, it was Murad Badshah who intensified his interest in such actions, particularly in the realm of drug trafficking. At first, Murad enticed Darashikoh by offering him free samples of drugs like hash mixed with charas and heroin. Despite his initial reluctance, Darashikoh eventually succumbed to the allure of financial gain and began selling hash himself. However, he harbored a dislike for the perception others had of him during these transactions and the treatment he received as a result. The consequences of their illicit endeavors took a grave turn when Darashikoh was accused of selling drugs to Shuja, leading to a violent encounter with Shuja's father. This confrontation

involved brutal physical abuse, including kicks and a shotgun pointed at Darashikoh's head. In the midst of the chaos, a friend offered protection by wielding a gun. Through these events, it becomes evident that while Darashikoh was drawn deeper into the criminal world, it was Murad Badshah who played a significant role in fostering his involvement and the subsequent dangers he faced.

*"I wore red, the darkest crimson, a color that blends into black in the dark and flatters my figure by day. Darashikoh was inside, for all the world a tastefully dressed patron of the shop, but he carried death in his undershorts and hunger in his heart. Yes, armed robbery is like public speaking."*

*"The signal I awaited was simple: when Darashikoh placed his pistol against the head of the guard standing just inside the entrance of the shop, clearly visible through the window display Iwas to come in and fleece the place."* (Page 78-79)

In the given scenario of robbery Murad Badshah is depicted as wearing a deep crimson color, almost bordering on black, while Darashikoh Shezad is present inside the location during the occurrence of a robbery. At a specific moment, Darashikoh places a gun against the guard's head, clearly visible through the window display, thus serving as a signal to Murad Badshah. This signal prompts Murad Badshah to enter the premises and proceed with the act of looting.

## F. Unlucky

*"I raise my head. It's my BM. There's a security guard beside him." "Yes, sir?"*

*"You're fired, Mr Shezad."*

*"But, you see, sir, I'm really very sorry. Don't fire me. I'll work a month without pay. 'You have a serious psychological problem, Mr Shezad. Your severance pay will be sent to your home by registered post. You need to stop crying, collect your personal items, and go home.'" (page 22)*

*"I never won a championship when I boxed for GC. Our coach used to say that the guys who win championships are the ones who decide they aren't going down, no matter what. I was one of the best boxers on the team, and I worked hard, but he still disliked me. He told me I wasn't a real boxer, because there was only so much pain I was prepared to fight through. My last fight was for the All-Punjab. I was TKO'd in two rounds with a bad cut above my left eye. The coach said I was a coward."* (Page 229).



The above lines from the novel shows that Darashikoh Shezad, the unfortunate protagonist of “Moth Smoke,” encounters a series of unlucky events. Firstly, he is fired from his job despite his sincere apologies and offer to work without pay, reflecting his streak of misfortune. Additionally, his unsuccessful boxing career is highlighted as he never won a championship despite being one of the best boxers on the team. The coach’s disdain for him and accusation of lacking the determination to endure pain further deepens his sense of misfortune.

#### G. Poor

ZM: *Why did he stop?* JS: *“Money, I think. His girlfriend had just left him for a textile baron’s son. He got a job offer from a bank, and he couldn’t resist. He told me it was impossible to make a living in academia or development.”* (Page 37)

*“Do you need any money?” Tinky phupo’s husband ask, ...”* (Page 55)

*“He needed money to have his power and air-conditioning and security restored, and he swore that nothing would stand in his way. He, a man who hated guns, came to accept that he would have to use one.”* (Page 109)

These lines from “Moth Smoke” show how important money is to the characters. Darashikoh Shezad stopped doing academic or development work because he needed money. His girlfriend left him for a rich person, and he got a job offer from a bank, which he couldn’t resist. This tells us that he believed he couldn’t make enough money in his old jobs. Another part talks about Tinky phupo’s husband asking if Darashikoh needs money, which means money affects how people interact with each other. Lastly, Darashikoh really needed money to have basic things like power, air-conditioning, and security. He even thought about using a gun, even though he didn’t like guns, because he felt that was the only way to get the money he needed. These lines show that money plays a big role in the characters’ lives and can make them do things they wouldn’t normally do.

**Table 2**

Key traits of Darashikoh Shezad

Trait	Intensity
Psychological Conflict	9
Social Status Decline	8
Criminal Involvement	10
Sexual Desire	7
Unlucky Events	8
Family Trauma	9
Identity Crisis	10

#### H. Sexual desire

*“She pulls up to my gate and stops. Then she turns and kisses me on the cheek, her hand curling around the back of my head, touching my neck and my hair. We stay like that for a moment, and I down’t move, my arms at my sides, afraid of doing anything to make her leave. But she leans away from me and smiles, and I have to get out. We don’t say goodbye.”* (Page 52)

*“I want to touch her, to kiss her, to feel her skin. My hands explore my own arms, the arms they come from, my skin pure pleasure, exciting me.”* (Page 86)

*“Once Manucci’s gone, Mumtaz puts her arms around me and pulls me close. We kiss, and she gives me a long lick, like a cat tending to its paw. I hug her, squeezing, and her ribs flex with the pressure. I feel my face flush with excitement, and at the same time I’m surprised by how comfortable this is, how new but also familiar.”* (Page 167)

In the novel “Moth Smoke,” the main character, Darashikoh Shezad, and a woman named Mumtaz share some intimate moments that reveal their sexual desires. In one scene, Mumtaz kisses Darashikoh on the cheek and touches his head and neck affectionately. Darashikoh is hesitant to make any moves that might push her away, so he stays still, feeling a strong desire for her to stay. He imagines touching and kissing Mumtaz, and the very thought excites him deeply. In another instance, after someone named Manucci leaves, Mumtaz embraces Darashikoh tightly, and they share a passionate kiss. As they hold each other, Darashikoh experiences a rush of excitement and warmth, surprised by how comfortable and yet new this closeness feels. These moments reflect the complex emotions and sensations that arise from sexual desire, highlighting the impact it has on the characters’ lives.

The table below summarizes the key traits and psychological dimensions of Darashikoh Shezad. It visually captures his emotional instability, moral downfall, and complex internal struggles, as discussed in the analysis.

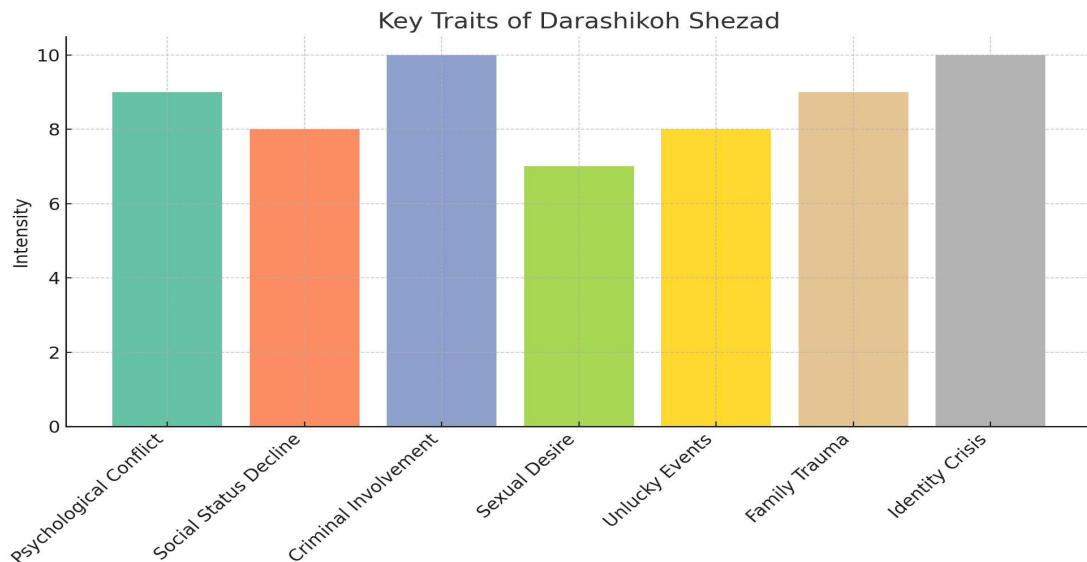


Fig. 2. Keys Aspects of Darashikoh Shezad

## Analysis of the Major character Mumtaz

### A. Types of character

Mumtaz in the novel “Moth smoke” according to my interpretation is Multidimensional because she has a wide range of emotions and complex range of relationship with Darashikoh Shezad, Aurangzeb Ozzi, her Son and with other minor characters in the novel.

### B. Physical Appearance

*“Mumtaz steps in, wearing track pants, expensive-looking running shoes, a T-shirt, and big shades. She’s followed by a very curious Manucci, grinning sheepishly.” (page 112)*

*“Mumtaz takes off her shades and hangs them from the neck of her T-shirt, between her breasts. She has broad shoulders, not thick but wide, and she lounges in her exercise clothes with the relaxed physical confidence of an athlete.” (Page 113)*

*“Mumtaz has six moles. Two are black: behind her ear and on her hip, in the trough of the wave that crests at her pelvis. Three are the color of rust: knuckle, corner of jaw, behind knee. And one is red, fiery, at the base of her spine, where a tail might grow.” (Page 171)*

*“The muscles of her neck flare, taut when she turns, when she inhales before speaking. She has the long torso of Sadequain’s imagination. And solid, strong legs. One half slender, one half less so. A mermaid. Her breasts are small and wonderfully round. One hangs half a rib lower. Her fingers are thin. Nails short, unpolished. Veins raise the smooth skin of her hands before*

*subsiding into her forearms. Roots feeding blood to her grip. And her mouth is wide and alive.” (Page 202- 203)*

*“My twenty sixth birthday reminded me that I was still young.” (Page 156)*

Mumtaz, as described in the given quotations from the novel “Moth Smoke,” has a distinct physical appearance. When she first appears, she is seen wearing track pants, expensive-looking running shoes, a T-shirt, and big shades, exuding an air of luxury. As she takes off her shades and hangs them from the neck of her T-shirt, it is revealed that she has broad shoulders, conveying a sense of strength. She carries herself with a relaxed physical confidence, reminiscent of an athlete. Mumtaz possesses six moles, each with its unique color and placement. Two moles are black, one behind her ear and another on her hip, while three moles are rust-colored, located on her knuckle, the corner of her jaw, and behind her knee. The final mole is described as a fiery red one at the base of her spine. Her neck muscles are defined and tense when she moves or speaks, and her torso is elongated, resembling the artistic depiction of Sadequain’s imagination. Her legs are solid and strong, one half slender and the other slightly more robust, giving her a mermaid-like appearance. She has small, wonderfully round breasts, with one hanging slightly lower than the other, adding to her unique charm. Mumtaz’s fingers are thin, her nails short and unpolished, while her hands exhibit prominent veins that gradually fade into her forearms. Her mouth is wide and vibrant, suggesting liveliness and expressiveness. Overall, Mumtaz is portrayed as a youthful woman with

an athletic physique, distinctive moles, and an alluring presence.

### C. Family Background

*"I remember what it felt like to tell him how my father used to beat my mother, once so badly she lost her hearing in her left ear. How my brother never cried, not even when I almost died of pneumonia and he spent the entire night awake with me in the hospital. How upset I was when I finally got my period, at fifteen, because I'd accepted that it would never come."* (Page 149)

Mumtaz's family background, as revealed in the excerpt from "The Moth Smoke," is marked by a history of domestic violence. Her father subjected her mother to severe physical abuse, resulting in her mother losing her hearing in one ear. Mumtaz's brother, on the other hand, displayed emotional reserve, never shedding tears even in difficult circumstances. Mumtaz herself experienced distress when her menstruation was delayed until the age of fifteen. These experiences of violence, emotional suppression, and personal concerns have likely shaped Mumtaz's upbringing, impacting her emotional well-being and outlook on life.

### D. Double life

*"A double life has to begin somewhere. There has to be a first lie, a first deception. And mine began when I decided to start working as an investigative journalist called Zulfikar Manto. It wasn't because Ozi would have objected that I didn't tell him. (He married a woman he slept with on the first night, remember that. He wasn't a close-minded man.) It was because I wanted to create a life that he knew nothing about."* (Page 157)

In the book "The Moth's Smoke," Mumtaz talks about her secret double life. She explains that every double life has to start somewhere, with a first lie and a first act of deceit. Mumtaz's double life began when she decided to work as an investigative journalist using the name Zulfikar Manto. It wasn't because her husband, Ozi, would have been upset if she told him. (Remember, he married someone he slept with on their first night together, so he wasn't close-minded.) Mumtaz wanted to have a life that

Ozi knew nothing about, a life she could keep separate from their relationship. This decision took her on a journey where truth and lies mingled, leading her to discover more about herself and find personal happiness, even though it meant keeping secrets from her husband.

### E. Guilt

*"My fault, of course. Because I should have known better. I should have known I wasn't the marrying sort, even then. But I didn't. Besides, I was in love".* (Page 148)

*"And the more I thought about it, the less power I seemed to have to end it. I felt guilty. More than that, I felt selfish. I tried to convince myself that I wanted the child as well, that childbirth was an expression of female power, that it would make our bond even stronger."* (Page 150)

*"My affair with Daru was, at first at least, the most liberating experience I have ever had. I felt bad, of course. Selfish. But I also felt good."* (page 158)

*"It's me again: Mumtaz. Now commonly called 'the monster.' Sometimes even to my face. Which makes my story, I suppose, a kind of monster story. With Daru among my victims."* (page 241)

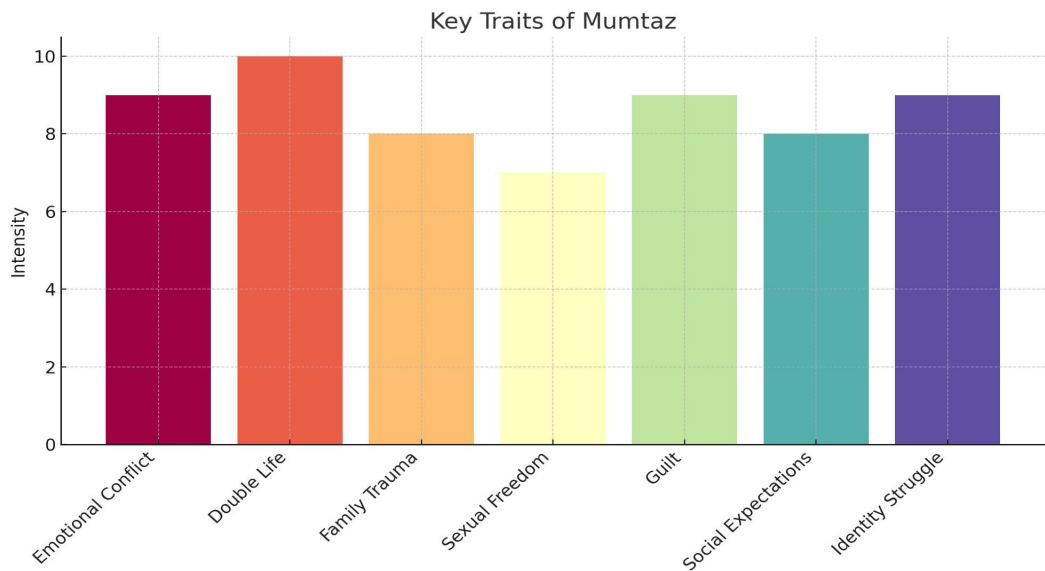
In the novel "Moth Smoke," Mumtaz feels really guilty about a lot of things. She blames herself for her failed marriage because she should have known she wasn't the type to get married, but she did it anyway because she was in love. She also feels guilty about being pregnant because she thinks it's selfish and she tries to convince herself that having a baby will make her relationship stronger. Mumtaz also feels bad about having an affair with Daru, even though it made her feel free. She even calls herself a monster because she knows she hurt people, including Daru. Mumtaz's guilt comes from different parts of her life, like her failed marriage, being pregnant, and having an affair, and it makes her feel really bad inside.

This table presents a concise overview of Mumtaz's character traits, highlighting her emotional duality, struggle with identity, and resistance to traditional roles within a patriarchal structure.



**Table 3**  
Mumtaz character traits

Trait	Intensity
Emotional Conflict	9
Double Life	10
Family Trauma	8
Sexual Freedom	7
Guilt	9
Social Expectations	8
Identity Struggle	9



**Fig. 3.** Key Aspects of Mumtaz

### Analysis of the minor character Murad Badshah

#### A. Type of character

Murder Badshah is depicted as flat character throughout the novel because of his consistent nature.

#### B. Physical Appearance

*“Besides, he has thick bones, the kind that can hurt your hand if you aren’t wearing a glove.”( Page 219)*

The above texttual evidence shows that that Murad Bahdsh has a physically strong and robust appearance.

- Physical strength: The mention of “thick bones” implies that Murad Bahdsh has a robust and muscular build. He likely possesses considerable physical strength.
- Endurance: The reference to his thick bones suggests that he may have enhanced endurance and resilience due to his sturdy skeletal structure.
- Intimidation factor: The need for a glove to protect one’s hand while interacting with Murad Bahdsh implies that his physical

presence can be intimidating. This aspect of his appearance could potentially deter others from challenging or confronting him.

#### C. Education

*“I received my MA in English twenty-some years later and was of course unable to find a job.”( page 61)*

Murad Badshah spent more than twenty years to complete his MA degree in English. However, after finishing his studies, he faced a tough time finding a job. This means that even though he had a higher degree, he couldn’t find work in his field. It shows that Murad encountered difficulties in his education and was disappointed by the lack of job opportunities available to him.

#### D. Family Background

*“My father was a gold jeweler, the son of sons of gold jewelers from time immemorial. He died before I was born. My mother was of a more modest background and unloved by the members of her husband’s family, my uncle, who worked for the British Council library.” ( Page 61 )*

Murad Badshah comes from a family with different social backgrounds. His father belonged to a long line of gold jewelers, which means they

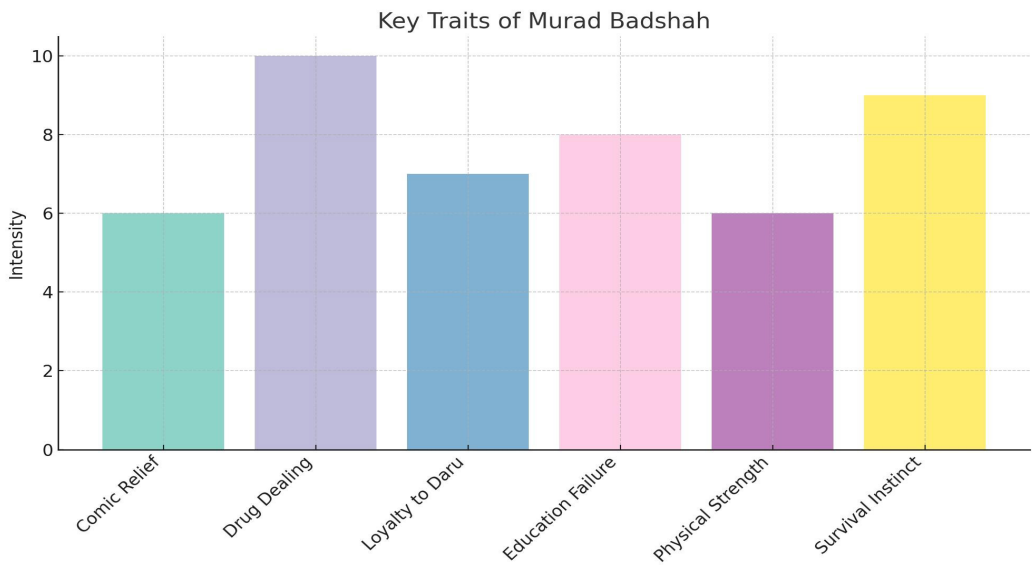
were skilled and successful in making and selling gold jewelry. Sadly, Murad’s father passed away before he was born. On the other hand, his mother came from a simpler background and was not well-liked by her husband’s family. Murad also had an uncle who worked at the British Council library, which is an organization that promotes cultural exchange and education. So, Murad’s family had a mix of jewelry expertise, modest origins, and a connection to intellectual pursuits through his uncle’s work at the library.

E. Drug dealer

*“Hello, gangster”, I say to him, Murad Badshah’s my dealer: ( Page 39)*

**Table 4**  
Key Traits of Murad Badshah

Trait	Intensity
Comic Relief	6
Drug Dealing	10
Loyalty to Daru	7
Education Failure	8
Physical Strength	6
Survival Instinct	9



**Fig. 4.** Key Aspects of Murad Badshah

**Analysis of the minor character Aurangzeb (Ozi)**

A. Type of character

*Ozi in “Moth Smoke” by Mohsin Hamid is generally considered a multi-dimensional character. Because he exhibits complexities and contradictions throughout the novel.*

B. Physical Appearance

*“Aurangzeb, the best friend: righteously treacherous, impeccably dressed, unfairly sexy.” (*

*“He flashes a grin down at me. ‘I also have some first-class, A-one quality charas.” ( Page 40)*

In the novel “The Moths Smoke,” it is indicated that Murad Badshah is a drug dealer. This is evident from a conversation where the narrator refers to Murad Badshah as their dealer. Additionally, the mention of “first-class, A-one quality charas” suggests that Murad Badshah is involved in selling illegal drugs, specifically a type of concentrated cannabis called charas.

The following table outlines the attributes of Murad Badshah, emphasizing his role as a flat character representing street-level survival, failed systems, and moral ambiguity.

*Page 7)*

*“Ozi was magnificent. He was gorgeous, a fantastic lover, open-minded, smart, charming, funny. And he was, is, the most romantic man I’ve ever met. He feels love deeply and he’s almost belligerent about showing it.” ( Page 148)*

Ozi in the “The Moths Smoke,” is someone truly special. He has an amazing sense of style and is incredibly attractive. Even though he can be tricky at times, there’s something about him that draws people in. Ozi is not only good-looking but also a great lover. He is open-minded, smart,

and funny, making him even more appealing. But what makes him truly unique is his romantic nature. He loves deeply and isn't afraid to show it, sometimes even in an intense way. In short, Ozi is a fascinating person who combines charm, intelligence, attractiveness, and a passionate approach to love.

C. Rule breaker

*"It was a red light,' Mumtaz points out."*  
*"So? He could see me coming."* *"There are rules, you know", "And the first is, bigger cars have the right of way."* ( Page 25)

Ozi broke the rule by not stopping at a red light. He didn't follow the traffic law, which is there to keep everyone safe on the road. Ozi might have thought he could go through because he believed bigger cars always have the right of way, but that's not true. He was overconfident and didn't understand that traffic signals determine who can go at intersections. Breaking the rule like this is risky and can cause accidents. It's important to follow traffic rules to protect ourselves and others.

D. Ozi's kindness and love for Mumtaz

*"And I couldn't bring myself to confront Mumtaz*

*either. Because I didn't want to lose her. You see, I knew things hadn't been going well in our marriage for some time. And even though I wasn't sure if I could ever forgive her, I still loved her and I didn't want her to leave me. Can you understand that? If you can't, you've never been in love, not really."*

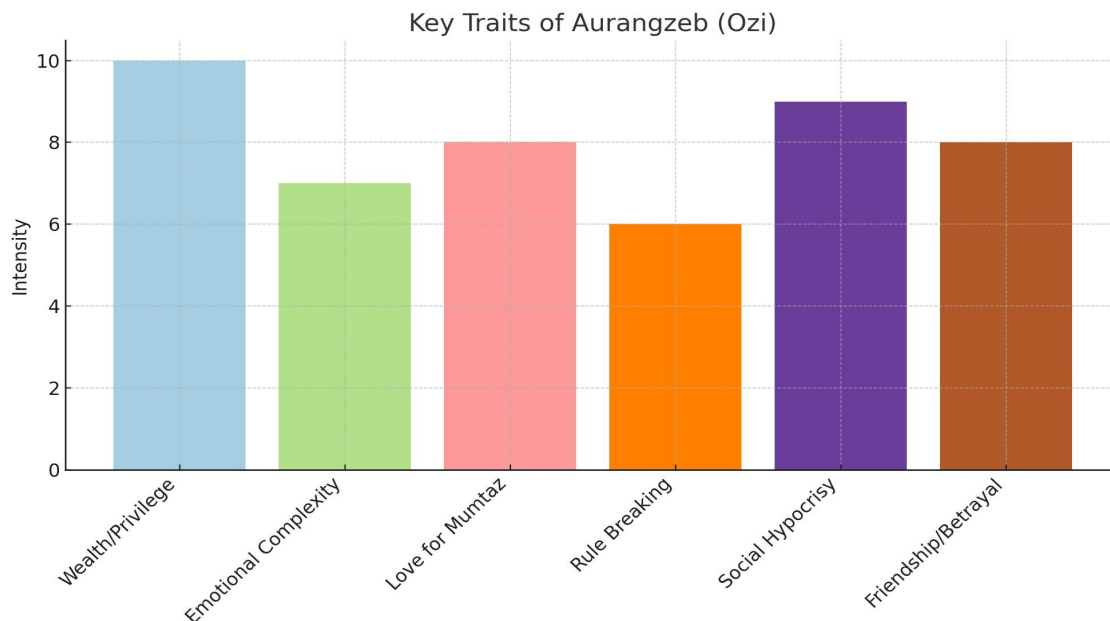
*"But she left me anyway. And even though she denies it, I know she left me for Daru. My one consolation is that they won't be seeing each other for a while."* ( Page 193)

Ozi really loves Mumtaz, but their marriage hasn't been going well lately. He is scared to talk to her about their problems because he doesn't want her to leave him. Even though he's not sure if he can forgive her for what she did, he still loves her very much. When he found out that Mumtaz left him for someone else, it made him feel really hurt and betrayed. Despite their problems, he wants to protect Mumtaz and doesn't want her to be with the other person. Ozi expresses his affection for Mumtaz despite their challenges which proves he sincerely cares.

This trait table illustrates Ozi's privileged background, emotional contradictions, and symbolic representation of societal hypocrisy and corruption among the elite.

**Table 5**  
Key Traits of Aurangzeb

Trait	Intensity
Wealth/Privilege	10
Emotional Complexity	7
Love for Mumtaz	8
Rule Breaking	6
Social Hypocrisy	9
Friendship/Betrayal	8



**Fig. 5.** Key Aspects of Aurangzeb



Thematic Reflections Through Character Lenses

The main characters in Moth Smoke reflect or stand against major book themes when we

compare them in a thematic table. The characters show us societal problems through their inward motivations and outer surroundings to support Mohsin Hamid’s observations about society.

Table 6

Key Themes in Novel

Theme	Darashikoh	Mumtaz	Murad	Ozi
Class Disparity	Victim of declining social status	Comfortable yet conflicted by class privilege	Represents lower economic class	Embodiment of elite privilege
Identity Crisis	Struggles to reconcile past and present self	Leads double life as Zulfikar Manto	Stable identity, but marginalized	Maintains superficial persona
Moral Decay	Engages in drugs and robbery	Adultery and deceit	Drug dealing, moral flexibility	Complicit in corruption
Gender Roles and Expectations	Not a focus	Challenges traditional female roles	Not central	Traditional masculine dominance
Love and Betrayal	Affair with Mumtaz; betrayal by Ozi	Affair with Daru; discontent in marriage	Support role in Daru's betrayal	Feels betrayed by Mumtaz
Crime and Corruption	Deep involvement in criminal acts	Indirect through Daru's actions	Dealer and robbery accomplice	Benefits from systemic corruption
Emotional Isolation	Feels abandoned, misunderstood	Feels trapped in societal role	Survives on street wit	Emotionally unaware, detached
Power and Privilege	Excluded from elite circles	Enjoys social freedom as Ozi's wife	Lacks power, resourceful instead	Symbol of inherited power

Character Comparison in Moth Smoke

Moth Smoke explores complete social connections between main characters and supporting figures to reveal human relationships. The development of Darashikoh Shezad into criminal behavior comes from his decision to get lost in both drug use and social isolation which creates a complete character. His emotional distress dominates him at this stage and leads him to develop serious faults inside himself. Mumtaz openly shows who she is because she needs to meet personal targets with personal and social culture standards. Despite feeling incarcerated Mumtaz pursues independence and reveals herself because she always wants to undo her relationship with Darashikoh. Through her search for independence Mumtaz reveals the personal struggles she faces due to cultural female standards.

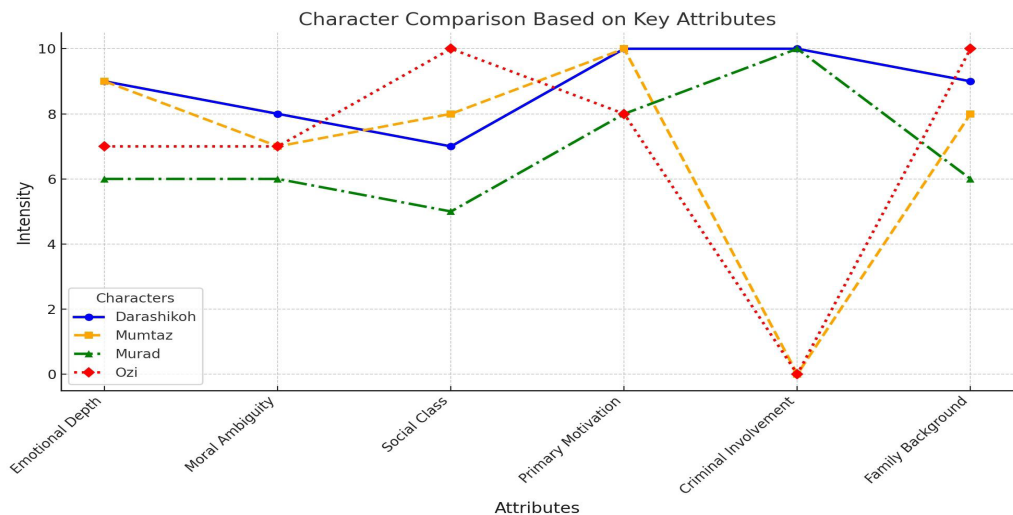
The novel shows how Murad Badshah and Aurangzeb contrast with main characters when

they join the story. The criminal gang leader Murad shows street punk behavior including illegal drug distribution methods that help him preserve his business success. His life choices caused many strong episodes that made his own path contradict his present values and show social unfairness in Pakistani culture. Ozi demonstrates his upper-class identity from beginning to end through his development. Ozi seeks unity between his dominant position and social standing since he tries to merge both tactics using severe behavior and emotional reactions. Despite his attempts to look rich Ozi demonstrates clear signs of both moral and emotional meltdown.

The text unites several social types while also comparing how someone handles personal ethics and recognizes themselves. The author shows how society controls us alongside our personal journeys to becoming better people as seen in the split personalities of Ozi and Murad.

**Table 7**  
Character Comparison

Attribute	Darashikoh	Mumtaz	Murad	Ozi
Type of Character	Round, Complex	Multi-dimensional	Flat	Round
Emotional Depth	High	High	Low	Moderate
Moral Ambiguity	High	High	Moderate	Moderate
Social Class	Declining Middle Class	Upper Middle Class	Lower Class	Elite
Primary Motivation	Redemption, Resentment	Freedom, Identity	Survival	Power, Control
Criminal Involvement	Yes	No	Yes	Indirect
Family Background	Lost both parents, trauma	Abusive father, troubled past	Orphaned, raised poor	Privileged upbringing
Role in Plot	Protagonist	Love Interest	Comic Relief/Enabler	Antagonist/Foil



**Fig. 6.** Character Comparison

## CONCLUSION

The character analysis of major characters Darashikoh Shezad and Mumtaz, along with minor characters Murad Badshah and Ozi, from the novel “Moth Smoke” revealed a captivating exploration of human complexity and the interplay of personal choices and external influences. Darashikoh’s descent into the world of drugs and crime, driven by ambition and resentment, highlighted the destructive consequences of unchecked desires. Mumtaz symbolized both desire and destruction, her enigmatic nature unraveling themes of class disparity and the allure of forbidden relationships. Murad and Ozi, though minor characters, provided essential insights into Darashikoh’s past and the socioeconomic divisions in society, respectively. The novel shows in detail how people behave and interact to demonstrate all the ways humans act and influence each other.

## Future Research Suggestion

The researcher proposes further academic efforts that explore how Mohsin Hamid integrates Pakistani cultural elements into his native English writing. Language researchers examine how Mohsin Hamid seamlessly integrates English writing conventions with

Pakistani cultural elements. The academic focus would enable researchers to examine both how Mohsin Hamid preserves authentic locations in his writing and how language helps him address identity elements.

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