

# Unmasking Certainties: A Deconstructive Analysis of Mohsin Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*

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**Abstract:** It has been established many years ago that a literary work can be interpreted in many ways, thus having no certain meaning. The present study aims at deconstructing the dominant theme of individuals' struggle in the novel "How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia" by Mohsin Hamid. With the application of the *Difference*, as a tool, the study tries to explore the non-centricity, and free play of signifiers in the novel. Furthermore, the study identifies the binary oppositions in the novel and subverts them by the application of deconstruction theory, given by Derrida. Moreover, the study sought out that the structure of the language of the text of the novel is embedded with discontinuities and contradictions and the discourse of the text is unlikely to be unitary and unambiguous. The results are discussed through the qualitative analysis of the novel and by the application of the certain concepts of deconstruction theory. The results suggest that the deconstructive interpretation of the novel "How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia" is rarely definitive; instead it seeks to always problematize the meaning of text and suggest the depths to which the text operates. The significance of this study lies in providing a new perspective regarding man's struggle to survive in the society.

**Key Words:** Deconstruction, Derrida, Reference, Hamid, Binary Opposition

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Literature

The word literature is used to describe written and sometimes spoken material. This word is derived from a Latin word "Litteratura" means "writing formed with letters". Most commonly, it refers to the works of creative imagination including drama, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, journalism and in some instances song as well. Literature provides a kind of blueprint of human civilization. From the writings of ancient civilization like Egypt and China to Greek poetry and philosophy; from the epics of Homer to the plays of Shakespeare; from Jane Austin and Charlotte Bronte to Maya Angelou, literature gives insight and context to all human societies. It is important for us because it addresses us, it affects us deeply and it is universal. Literature is more than a historical or cultural representation of societies; it can also serve us as an introduction to the experiences of new world.

### 1.2 Novel

Fiction is born out of the society in which it lives and thrives. It continuously influences the living styles of the society. It does not ignore the changes in the society, synchronic or diachronic, rather portrays them in a befitting manner. For this purpose, a fiction writer portrays an ideal world which teaches, delights, and improves upon the existing set of circumstances. As he constructs a world of fiction, which, though abstract, is beautiful and attractive.

### 1.3 About the Author

Mohsin Hamid is one of those Pakistani writers who are recognized and appreciated for contemporary literature. He has lived both in Lahore and California from his childhood, so Hamid has dual identity. He is renowned for writing the novels: *Moth Smoke* (2000), *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) and *Exit*

*West* (2017). Toni Morrison and Joyce Carol Oates were the mentors of Hamid, under whose supervision he developed his love for writing and as a result he wrote the first draft of *Moth Smoke* for a fiction workshop of Morrison.

### 1.4 Plot Overview of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*

Hamid's both novels *Moth Smoke* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* were set in Lahore in which he combined the political situations with personal state of mind. In *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, he employs second person narration with no names for characters, any dwelling and country in which the story is set. The story is about a boy rising from poverty to wealth when moves from a village to metropolitan city. He starts earning his livelihood as a DVD delivery boy and later finds "the pretty girl" whom he loves till the end of his life. Meeting and separating many times, both share a shaky relationship. The boy goes through different phases of his life for becoming a successful businessman such as DVD delivery boy, a university student, a man selling expired canned food and finally having a business of bottled water. It is interesting to find that how Hamid has depicted a rural boy as progressive individual who acknowledges the importance of education in present age and it is also a key to success.

### 1.5 Research Questions

- How can the various conflicting interpretations, a text produces, be used to demonstrate the instability of language?
- How do the binary oppositions, which are unstable and mutually dependent on one another, interweave the selected text?

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

The study will supplement the understanding of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* with an insight of the major

themes of the novel and their interpretation with perspective of Deconstructive criticism. It will add up to the existing researches, knowledge, and interpretations of the literary work.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Jacques Derrida and Deconstruction

From 20<sup>th</sup> century, language and its meaning phenomenon has become sociological and philosophical study subject. For Derrida, the language, which forms the meaning, has become problematic so he developed "Deconstruction" concept for solving this problem. Derrida emphasized that meaning can be constructed independently. Deconstruction is a critical thought method, given by Jacques Derrida, which criticizes linguistics and its fixed bases [13]. Derrida wanted to liberate the meaning of language from the shackles of Western logo-centricism. For structuralist philosophers Urry and Keat, *the language is structure of regularities, so every natural language lies under the words of those who speak that language as their mother language; the word addresses the actual linguistic action* [18]. Derrida criticized it and claimed that an individual can establish different meanings in the text and as a result language gets liberation. He was of the opinion that deconstruction is all about "the plurality of meaning" [1].

Postmodernism plays a vital role in understanding universe, criticizes rationalism in modern era and brings forth irrationalism. Derrida, Baudrillard, Deleuze, R. Barthes, Lyotard, Wittgenstein and Foucault are the philosophers of poststructuralist thought and they are also in favor of postmodernism which questions modernity [11]. According to Derrida, it is the duty of postmodernism to deconstruct the world and its understanding can be gained through finding opposite of everything. The concept of Deconstruction *has suggested a method in which we can subvert these oppositions only by showing that one of the opposite terms can only exist within another* [16].

Deconstruction is a response to structuralism which asserts that language shapes an individual. Balkin criticizes this approach by asserting that structuralists have ignored the relation between language and culture. He further describes that deconstruction nourishes the language with the assumption that it has universal, cultural, flexible and historical meaning [1]. Deconstruction is a helpful method for revealing the implicit meaning and leads to establish unexpected meaning in the text.

### 2.2 Différance

In French, "différance" means alterity and difference which is derived from the verb "differ". Derrida transformed "e" into "a" and made it "différance" which means both to postpone and to make different. For him, deconstruction is "the separation of a text by itself" [13]. For deconstructionists, *there is no direct and overlapping relation between the signifier and the signified, conversely to the*

*Saussurist graphemics. According to them, the signifier and the signified are always separated and produce new meanings* [10].

### 2.3 Metaphor

Derrida's concept of metaphor is expressed as "inexistence of clear meaning" [20]. The Western concept of meaning is obsessed with self and reality which suppresses its meaning. For Derrida, metaphor is a way of immobilizing and liberating the meaning.

### 2.4 Trace and Decentralization

According to Derrida, *reads the 'trace' concept in a general writing problematic which cannot be degraded to the grammè and only to audible things; in other words, the record of symbols, and which therefore resists to any sensual or symbolic definiteness and to the ontic reductionism*" [2]. Trace is neither verbal nor visual and it will bring its reader towards the event or a text. Decentralization means that there is no centre or self which results in the hypothesis that there is no fixed and unique reality.

According to Barbara Johnson, *The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or arbitrary subversion, but by careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text itself* [12]. He finds out that a text can be organized through clashing forces which provide basis for deconstruction. Furthermore, for Jonathon Culler, *to deconstruct a discourse is to show how it undermines the philosophy it asserts or the hierarchical oppositions on which it relies* [5]. Deconstruction exposes several contradictions in a text as there is always a gap between text's assumption and reader.

Cleanth Brooks, in *The Well-Wrought Urn* (1947), has given a new critical reading of W.B. Yeats' poem, *Sailing to Byzantium*. He finds out some oppositions and tensions in the poem. He suggests that the word "artifice" weaves many contradictions and also indicates that Yeats is interested in "artifice of eternity" not in eternity only [3]. For him, the irony of the poem not only transcends the natural world but also the human situation as well. The "unreal city" in *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot and *Byzantium* are equally unreal; *they acquire significance only by being contrasted with each other* [14].

Jonathon Culler, in *The Pursuit of Signs*, describes parallelism in the poem *London* by William Blake: *The Church will be an oppressor of the sweep as the Palace is an oppressor of the soldier* [6]. This poem suggests different perspectives which makes speaker's position as an observer and observed. Its repetitive structure indicates that the speaker is entangled in vicious circle and unable to liberate himself.

Binary opposition is the key to ideological framework of the text. In the poem, *Mending Wall* by Robert Frost, Lois Tyson has found binary opposition in the disagreement between the neighbor and the speaker [19]. He asserts that conformity and nonconformity weaves the

structure of this poem as binary opposition and the wall works as metaphor.

## 2.5 Binary Opposition

Binary opposition is a pair of relevant ideas that are reversed in meaning in a critical theory. Binary opposition is an essential idea of structuralism, which recognizes such differences are essential to all language and thought and they are considered as an essential organizer of individual viewpoint, tradition, and language. Derrida notices that such coupling of opposites innovated by structuralism does not perform that way. Language does not function in any clean way, *unless a distinction can be made rigorous and precise, it isn't really a distinction* [8]. It always flows over with contradictions and connotations and stuffed with opposed ideas and beliefs.

## 3 Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The present study employs qualitative mode of inquiry. Qualitative Research suggests comprehending social phenomena within its natural setting [4], [15], [7]. By using a qualitative research technique, researchers want to collect better information and get more extensive picture of problems, situations or activities [17]. They want to find the why and how of a scenario, not only what, where, and when.

### 3.2 Theoretical Framework

For its theoretical framework, this research draws upon Mohsin Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* in the light of the theory of Deconstruction. A textual deconstructive analysis is done to draw out the desired results out of this research.

### 3.3 Data Sources

*How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* by Mohsin Hamid is used as the primary source of data for this study. Moreover for the analysis of the novel, some terms of the deconstruction approach such as logo centrism, difference, and the concept of binary oppositions are included in this research.

## 4 Data Analysis

The data analysis is carried out by applying specific concepts of Deconstruction theory such as logo centrism, difference and binary opposition. The present study will find out the traces of Derrida's deconstructive theory in Hamid's novel, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* which will uncover the fact that it has no fixed meanings.

### 4.1 The Idea of Difference in the Novel

According to difference theory, a text has no originality and centrality. The significance of a literary work neither lies for author's purpose nor for its concern for finding truth. The idea of difference will help to find out uncertainty of human nature in this novel.

#### 4.1.1 Uncertainty of Characterization

Hamid's characterization of characters embodies both loyalty and infidelity, so it is difficult to judge a character from one perspective. His characters possess various complex characteristics.

##### 4.1.1.1 Uncertain Characterization of Pretty Girl

Hamid has not given name to any of his characters in the novel. The character of pretty girl is introduced in chapter three when the protagonist is a teenage boy. Firstly, the appearance of pretty girl is uncertain as depicted by the author, *No milky complexion, raven tresses, bountiful bosom or soft moon like face for her. Her skin is darker than average, her hair and eyes lighter... as though she has been drawn with charcoal* [9]. For Derrida, the language is ambiguous so there can be several interpretations. Here, the description of the girl is totally different from the name attributed to her. Throughout the novel, she is called as pretty girl despite her less than average beauty.

She is described as an ambitious girl who is ready to break the conventional norms of Asian society. She belongs to a poor family whose father is addicted to alcohol and mother is not well. So, she has to work outside the house. In fact, she and her mother are compelled to earn by her so called father in order to fulfill his need for alcohol. There comes a point in her life when she is ready to sell her virginity just for the sake of becoming a successful model in the world of fashion. After passing many years, she again appears in the novel as a bold lady and enjoys her fame in the society. Her bold nature is illustrated as, *when she kisses you on the cheek in plain view of all of these hundreds of people...* [9]. She is also addicted to smoking and drinking wine. Both the protagonist and pretty girl have enjoyed sexual intercourse many times without having any fear. Her bold nature becomes ambiguous for us when after having enjoyed sexual relation with the boy in a hotel, she forbids him to stay there as Hamid narrates, *She does not let you spend the night, however* [9]. So here, her attitude becomes uncertain because at one side she is meeting, kissing, drinking and enjoying illicit relation with him but on the other side she is not ready to allow him for staying at night with her.

Furthermore, uncertainty of her characterization is revealed when sometimes she becomes so passionate for the protagonist that she takes his mobile number for further communication. There are many instances in the novel when she is not responding to any message and call of the boy. From deconstruction perspective, the characterization of pretty girl has no fixed centrality and the interpretation can be done from more than one perspectives. Her uncertain qualities lead us to dig out several meanings.

##### 4.1.1.2 Uncertain Characterization of the Wife

According to Derrida's view, the meaning of a word is not stable, certain, and unitary, and its meaning comes from the relationship with other words, likewise the

character of the wife of the protagonist is also unstable, abstruse and its significance comes from its connection with the other characters which are themselves unstable and uncertain and thus the whole phenomena results in a state of undecided nature of the characters.

The protagonist's wife is also another nameless character in the novel which is helpful for revealing uncertainty of her characterization. She is less than half of her husband's age but depicted as a strong woman from the very beginning of their marital life. She proposes two conditions before marrying him ...*first that she be allowed to complete her university, a lengthy course in law, and second that she not be tasked with producing any children while studying* [9]. At the same time, she is presented as a caring wife as well when the protagonist is disturbed due to rivalry in his bottled water business. *She desires to be a comfort* [9] for her husband in each and every possible way as a wife can. It is also asserted in the novel that sometime her mind is distracted towards other male students in the university due to *her own desire sometimes to respond* [9] but she shudders this idea of responding and believes that it will impure her marriage.

Despite all this, she decides to leave him and remarries another man who is similar to her outlook and age. Such unexpected action from her side shows no centrality of her character. At one time, she is portraying herself as a true wife but at another moment she spares him when he is in vicious circle of difficulties regarding business and health. When the protagonist gets a heart attack and is hospitalized, there he finds his *ex-wife, along with her new husband*, [9] for showing her generosity. Furthermore, Hamid asserts, *She returns to the hospitable each day, usually minus her husband...Under her supervision, second and third opinions are sought, a new cardiologist identified...* [9].

So, the wife's character becomes uncertain due to her ambiguous characterization. Someone may interpret that her husband is not paying much attention to her which becomes the reason of her separation. Again she is responsible for such behavior because it is she who does not allow her husband to establish any kind of conjugal relation as she wants to get herself educated. Furthermore, she also does not want to have any responsibility of baby in order to live her life freely. Again, she is portrayed as a true human being when she informs him that *her brother, whom she now wishes had never been born, has absconded abroad with the funds your company raised for its planned acquisition...* [9]. So, the wife's character also displays such kind of uncertainty that one cannot affirm if she had the only good side or the evil one. The significance of her character is constantly deferred through her own evasive thoughts and actions which tend to serve as the play of signifiers in the language of the text and thus the meaning or the certainty which is to be attained in her character, is never attained.

#### 4.1.1.3 Uncertainty of the Self-Help Book

Mohsin Hamid's novel, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, consists of twelve chapters in the disguise of a self-help book. He writes this novel as a guide for its readers for improving the financial status from poverty to wealth, through a step by step process. Hamid asserts its aim in the first chapter, *Move to the City, This book is a self-help book. Its objective, as it says on the cover, is to show you how to get filthy rich in rising Asia* [9]. For becoming rich, it is necessary to move to a city for getting more opportunities and as a result the protagonist shifts there with his family. In the second chapter, *Get an Education*, Hamid writes, *Textbooks, those whores, are particularly explicit in acknowledging...* [9] that they offer self help to the readers. Here, ambiguity is found that at one time the book is providing guidance and on the other moment book is called a whore. It is degrading for calling any book a whore but from deconstructive point of view, the author has, consciously or unconsciously, hinted about the so called better and self helping education system of his country. There are more and more degree holders with no satisfactory jobs as depicted through protagonist in the novel. He is a brilliant student but punished by his teacher for answering correctly.

The third chapter, *Don't Fall in Love*, again is an uncertain title in this novel, which is forbidding the readers from falling in love but within itself contains a love story. Hamid asserts that it is worrisome for a person to love someone when he is trying to become rich but at the same time presenting his protagonist as a lover of the pretty girl whom he loves till the end of his life. The 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Dance with Debt*, is a further illustration of uncertainty in the novel. Basically, dance is an activity which is carried out in a moment of happiness and joy but the incidents depicted in this chapter are totally contradictory to the title, such as, *Your parents have died, your surviving sister and brother survive no longer, your wife has left you and married a man...your son has chosen not to return after studying in North America...* [9]. Furthermore, *...your second heart attack takes place in ICU... and his company is consequently bankrupt* [9], so he is not a happy person who is enjoying a prosperous life but the word dance is self contradictory in relation to its description.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Focus on the Fundamentals*, there appears the most uncertain notion about this self-help book that it cannot provide any guidance. Hamid asserts, *I should consider at this stage confessing to certain false pretenses...this book is going to maintain a little longer its innocence or at least the non justiciability of its guilt...* [9]. From the first chapter to the 9<sup>th</sup> one, this novel possesses the form of a self-help book but suddenly it asserts that it is unable to provide any further guidance to its readers. Hamid apologizes in the last chapter, *Have an Exit Strategy*, for not making this novel a real self-help book, *This book, I must now concede, may not*



have been the very best of guides to getting filthy rich in rising Asia [9]. Thus the tool of 'difference' when applied to the uncertain description of the self-help book, it is revealed that it sets out to show that the conflicting ideas within the text and the given titles of these chapters serve to disintegrate the seeming certainty of the structure of the text and its meaning into an indefinite array of incompatible and undecided possibilities.

So, it is revealed that the text of the novel is uncertain in nature, where the characters of the play fall into the area of Difference, modifying their character from one type to another and the process is continued until they find a certain meaning for their fluctuating signifier such as their identity. We just face the free play of signifiers, as Derrida considers, which are always moving and so do the characters of this novel as well which are unstable and undefined from one side.

#### **4.2 Binary Oppositions in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia***

Binary opposition is basically a concept of structuralism that concedes an individual's propensity in regards to opposition. For Saussure, binary opposition is a means of establishing meaning of the language in which each unit is determined against what is not. While Derrida suggests that these are irrelevant oppositions. The structure itself moves towards the conflicts and consequently the structure of a text shatters within the text. Deconstruction is against the ideology of structuralism. In Hamid's novel, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, there are many pairs of binary opposition such as strong and weak, gain and loss, subordinate and independent and life and death. It is the confrontation to such contradictions that reveals the limitation of human minds and its disconnection with the world. The two poles in binary opposition exist for each other's existence, which forms an intense tension, thus ambiguity and paradox come into being.

##### **4.2.1 Strong vs Weak**

*How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* deals with the binary opposition of strong vs weak very aptly, as this novel is about becoming rich and wealth brings power as well. The protagonist tries to become rich and gets his aim but unfortunately loses all his wealth. When he was a child, he was weak and dependent on his father, who was a cook, for the accomplishment of his needs. Even he is presented as a fragile boy who is terrified of his father's presence in the house and unable to communicate with him properly. For instance, in his childhood, he is suffering from Hepatitis E and his father asks about his health before going to city...perhaps the first sentence he has uttered to you directly in months. You are in pain and frightened. So the answer is obviously no. Yet you say, Yes [9]. All this happens due to his father's strong personality and the protagonist's weak personality. A father also symbolizes protection, power and

shelter as these stereotyped ideas are always associated with such figure. Now, from deconstructive point of view, the reverse of these binary oppositions reveals another interpretation. As the time passes, the protagonist is exposed to the world of power and wealth. His father is left alone after his mother's death and his health is also becoming weak day by day. Now the power shifts from father to son as described in the novel when the protagonist is telling about his family to the pretty girl, *I live with my father. Well, he lives with me. But I have my own place now* [9]. There would be no weak if there is no strong so here the son is asserting his power by telling his father's fragile condition.

Furthermore, the protagonist's mother and grandmother are also the representatives of strong vs weak opposition. The presence of one is the result of the absence of the other so both women try to be strong whenever they find the opportunity. In the presence of grandmother, mother becomes weak and performs all the chores as per the directions of her mother in law. Though the mother is described as *vain and arrogant and head strong* but she cannot assert her power in the presence of her mother in law. Now, by taking reverse of this opposition, it is expressed in the novel that the mother *waits for the older woman to die* [9]. She wishes so because she wants to be the only authority in the house. Her dream comes true when she and her family leave the village and move to the city and there she is the only strong woman in the house, establishing her power.

##### **4.2.2 Gain vs Loss**

There are many examples of gain vs loss binary opposition in the novel as it is a fact that the loss of something for someone is a gain for another person. The novel is all about the struggle of boy for becoming rich in Asia through bottled water business. He starts earning by delivering DVDs as a junior delivery boy with low income and a bicycle for delivery. On the other hand, there is also a senior delivery boy with high income and motorcycle for delivery. So, the senior is gaining much more than the protagonist, *This man's salary is twice yours and his tips several times greater, for although your work is more strenuous* [9]. Furthermore, the senior is also enjoying a good rank as compared to him. Here, Hamid has presented the protagonist as a person who is unable to achieve a high rank in job and no satisfactory salary despite more labor as a result it seems that he is not gaining as much as he is losing. By deconstructing this hierarchy, there appears another interpretation which asserts that the junior is gaining more as compared to his senior. Hamid writes...and because of this you have developed speed as well as stamina. You have been exposed to a wide range of people... [9]. Though he is not prosperous financially but physically and mentally he is enjoying his life. He is also free from paying installments to the moneylender for providing conveyance,

while his senior has to pay it as he is using motorcycle. The meanings associated with these oppositions are not certain as they are interdependent on each other.

Another example of such binary opposition is illustrated through the incidents of protagonist's downfall. There comes a time in his life when he is left alone, his wife has left him and remarries, his son has gone to America for studies, his business collapsed and he receives two heart attacks. His loss is the gain for many other characters in the novel such as by leaving him his wife finds another man, his son gets higher education and moves ahead for better future and his brother in law gets prosperity from his business funds. From the lens of deconstruction, the reversal of this opposition will establish another meaning. The protagonist's loss also brings many achievements in his life when he regains his senses after heart attack; he finds all his scattered relations such as *your nephews are here...your ex-wife*. He also feels relaxed at losing his business because of the *rising tide of frustration* among poor against the rich. The biggest achievement is the company of pretty girl whom he finds after losing all his wealth and relationships. Both remain with each other till the end of their lives. While living with her, he also receives the love and care of his son, after his return, *you are surprised to hear the bell ring and find yourself in the presence of your son* [9]. They all enjoy his cooking and movies which he brings at home and they also go outside for entertainment. It can be said here that his loss of wealth and health does not really prove as a loss but in reality it proves as an achievement for him.

#### 4.2.3 Subordinate vs Independent

For shaping the life of pretty girl, the role of his father is really significant though the description of his character is very little in the novel. It is he who forces her to go outside for earning and as a result she is exposed to the male dominated society, where everyone uses her for his own sake. She loses her virginity when she is a teenage girl and works in a beauty salon. So, she becomes an independent girl who supports her family and also saves money to make her future bright. Her father is dependent on women for money as Hamid asserts, *Her father, a notorious drunk and gambler rarely sighted during the day, sends his wife and daughter to earn back...* [9]. After describing him as a dependent character, Hamid further depicts him as an independent human being who does whatever he wishes to do such as, *He seizes what money he can from his wife and daughter and heads out to the bar...* [9]. Despite his dependence, he remains independent and this thing leads her mother to perpetual muteness. Her role as an independent person shifts towards a subordinate character that is ready to surrender before the will of her father.

There is another instance of such binary opposition in the novel when the protagonist is moving towards a

prosperous business and he encounters a rival. That rival is another successful businessman who is trying to threaten him with the help of a gunman, a young boy. For the sake of his safety, he arranges a guard who is always present with him. So, he is the boss and independent while the security guard is his subordinate employee. This scenario is changed with deconstructive reading when the gunman of the rival party again appears on the scene. He is ready to shoot the protagonist but his guard protects him and murders the gunman. By seeing the death scene, the protagonist becomes uneasy and unable to respond as an independent human being. Hamid describes his subordinate condition, *Reoccupying his seat, he tells you to drive, and when you do not seem to understand, he repeats himself, and you quickly obey* [9]. This statement asserts that now the guard has occupied an independent position and leading him for further action while the boss is obeying him without any question and doubt.

In addition to subordinate vs independent binary opposition, the protagonist and pretty girl are presented as independent characters who achieve their goals of becoming wealthy persons. He becomes a successful businessman and has good relations with bureaucrats, politicians and brigadier. On the other hand, the pretty girl is also spending a luxurious life by becoming a model, hosting a cooking show and later running her own boutique. By reversing their positions, the subordinate conditions can also be observed in the story. Both are too much dependent on their assistants for running their business and a time comes when they have to resign from their positions due to the absence of their assistants. In her case, when her assistant dies who was running her boutique, pretty girl decides to wind up her business, *She must also sell her shop and conclude certain matters* [9]. She becomes subordinate to her assistant that despite hiring another person for running her boutique, she sells it. On the other hand, the protagonist has become a subordinate character for his brother-in-law, who is assisting him in the business. He has awarded him with the ranks of deputy and chief officer but he deceives him and runs away with all the funds for maintaining the business.

#### 4.2.4 Life vs Death

In this novel, life vs death opposition can be demonstrated through the characters of pretty girl and the protagonist. Both are unable to enjoy a healthy marital relation despite loving each other and only enjoy meetings at different places. When they are alive, their healthy relation remains dead as they are not connected in any legal bond. They are only able to enjoy an illicit relationship and do not think of having a prosperous life. By reversing this life vs death phenomena, there can be found another interpretation that is they both find life after their death. It is only their death, which liberate them from all the

shackles of life and lead them towards their desired life. Pretty girl dies before him and now he is at the verge of death in the hospital, *but then the pretty girl enters...she takes your hand, and you ready yourself to die...and you are ready, ready to die well...and the pretty girl holds your hand, and you contain her* [9]. Here, the protagonist's willingness to die is in fact his desire to live with his beloved. His all worldly relations are present around him in the hospital but he is only thinking of pretty girl and ready to enter in the kingdom of life, in the disguise of death.

To sum up, the binary opposition between presence and absence is actually comparative. They depend on each other and change into each other in particular circumstances. They coexist in a relationship that one can't exist independently without the other one, thus obtaining either party's own definition.

### 5 Conclusion

The present study examines *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* from the lens of deconstruction theory. It tends to

show that the text does not contain complete and certain meanings, instead it is a structure of symbols and signs which are proposed to establish meanings but none of them set precise meaning. Derrida's concept of difference focuses on the uncertainty of the text in order to liberate it from traditional binary opposition and western logo-centralism. Thus, the meaning of the text has different interpretations in different contexts, situations and circumstance. By deconstructing the binary oppositions, the privileged term is reversed and it is revealed that these binaries are dependent on each other. To explore that the text of the novel is free play of signs and it contradicts itself in many ways such as in the uncertainty of characterization of the major figures in the novel, uncertainty of the self-help book and to identify binary oppositions such as life vs death, independent vs subordinate, strong vs weak in the selected work and analyze that the oppositions are hierarchical, unstable and mutually dependent on one another.

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