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Traces of Marxism leading to Color Prejudice in the Novel based Drama

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Abstract

The character of Parizaad from the drama Parizaad, aired on Hum TV in 2021, is the subject of the current study. Using Marxist theory, we were able to better understand the character of Parizaad in the narrative. The qualitative analysis of the data was carried out by the researcher. It's possible that Marxism had an influence on this drama. Hashim's Urdu novel Parizaad shows the terrible reality of Pakistani society in all its complexity, and is a must-read for anybody interested in the country's history. For a change, it's a breath of fresh air to read a story that takes on Pakistani society's laws as well as the rich and powerful in such a straightforward way. Numerous Parizaad have died as a result of the current societal system crushing them under its weight. Race, injustice, and socioeconomic inequality are just a few of the issues that are addressed in it. It has been identified that the drama portrayed the racial and class discrimination in the society through realistic lens and exposed the plight of the poor, marginalized and often ridiculed poor class.

Key Words: Marxist-Racism, Parizaad, Pakistani Literature, Class Difference

Introduction:

Part of this research effort is devoted to Parizaad, a fictional character from Mr. Hashim

Nadeem's novel *Parizaad* (2014). All literary genres, in one way or another, illustrate society's social, political, and moral difficulties; as a result, literature serves as a real reflection of society in its entirety. The book is an extremely effective tool in discussions on culture and community. It is necessary to understand the historical context of Marxism theory before we can have any feelings or thoughts concerning the function of *Parizaad* and Marxism theory in general.

The Marxist theory asserts that society is confronted with a wide range of conflicts, including social divisions such as racial discrimination and inequality, and difficulties such as economic injustice. Karl Marx gave this notion and highlighted that society is divided into classes based on material possession. The upper class always exploits the poor owing to its control over the means of production whereas the poor suffer because it only has means of labor. Moreover, Marx was of the view that all human history is actually the history of class struggle i.e. an attempt to take control and dominate on other classes. Main concepts in Marxist theory include: Exploitation and Alienation, Labour theory of Value, Base and Superstructures, Dialectical Materialism, Historical Materialism, and class consciousness.

Pakistani novelist Hashim Nadeem is a well-known personality in the country's literary community. Because of his exceptional writing, he rose to prominence in the public eye. In addition, he is the author of *Abdullah*, a love story that will have you swooning. Hashim Nadeem is a novelist who also works as a film producer and director. Hashim Nadeem is a novelist who is widely regarded as one of the most gifted writers working today. With an open mind, he writes with a sense of freshness and affection, which infuses his work with life and vitality.

As a writer and director of films, he has also worked in the production and production management industries. In recognition of his work on *Abdullah*, he got critical acclaim and nominations for a number of national and international film awards. *Parizaad* novel is his magnum opus, and later he wrote the plot and dialogues for the drama based on the said novel.

The plot of *Parizaad* is a little out of the ordinary. Despite its outlandish premise, *Parizaad* was a very successful television show in India. Having begun with a youthful, deep-toned teenager who is going through the agony of life and its unforeseen circumstances, fans have been left in awe of the performers and authors since the journey began.

Following its release, the show quickly became a topic of discussion and memes on social media, owing to its similarities to the novel of the same name that served as inspiration. While there were some dubious instances of blackface being employed, the overall storyline and the acting abilities of the artists more than made up for it.

The protagonist, Parizaad is depicted as a young Muslim boy from a working-class household has been persecuted because of the color of his skin. In spite of being highly skilled pianist and a gifted poet, owing to his poor background as well as his dark complexion, Parizaad fails to impress anyone rather is a subject of continuous mockery due to the irony that his name carries.

It also portrays the difficulties that the working class has to deal with. At one point in his life, Parizaad had a desire of becoming a master pianist. Parizaad's mother has a personal connection to this, and as a result, some may consider it to be juvenile.

He goes through a tough struggle to have the ends meet and works as low wage laborer. Upon encouragement of a friend he established himself as a well-known poet in his hometown but later sells his most valued poetry, in order to assist his brother-in-law and two other friends who are in a desperate condition due to a family tragedy. Parizaad aspires to be recognized in the world and therefore tries to earn money with all means possible and makes controversial moral choices including spying on others. Later he gets his aspiration met when he becomes CEO of the company he worked with and becomes a part of elite class. However, he discovers how shallow and empty the rich life actually is where only the wealth is deemed important. He eventually gives it all up and goes on spending his time in seclusion.

The fact that Parizaad refuses to follow conventional plotlines distinguishes it from other current television shows on television. The difficulties of married life are not discussed in detail in the episodes of this show. Instead, it emphasizes themes like as poverty, sibling rivalry, sacrifice, growth, love, and the discovery of one's true self. In contrast to other shows, this one addresses issues of social significance that are rarely addressed. Colorism and gender identity are just a couple of the issues that are addressed in the film.

Statement of the Purpose

Discrimination on the basis of class, caste and color is quite common in Pakistani setting and the research aims to explore this dimension as depicted by the writer. The character of Parizaad from the drama and novel of the same title is the subject of the current study. Using Marxist theory, we will be able to better understand the character of Parizaad in the narrative. We will also search for racism factors in this novel.

Research Questions

This research will answer the following main questions,

- How have the Marxist social classes have created discrimination on basis of color in Parizaad?
- How in Pakistani society the discrimination on the basis of colour and caste is deeply entwined with the class difference?

Objective of the Research

The objectives of this research are;

- To identify and analyze the factor of Marxism in drama Parizaad
- To highlight the portrayal of racial discrimination in the drama.

Theoretical Framework

A qualitative investigation based on Marxist theory and the book Parizaad is being carried out in this area. It takes its theoretical foundation from the ideology of Karl Marx, especially his view of class discrimination due to materialism. The idea is furthered to incorporate the racial discrimination, color prejudice and caste system, all of which according to Marx are the superstructures of one base structure that is the economic or material foundation. All these superstructures are erected by the capitalists in order to alienate the lower and subjugated classes and perpetuate their inferiority.

Research Methodology

This research paper falls under the paradigm of qualitative research. It followed Textual Analysis Method of research. The episodes were watched on the YouTube channel of HUM TV. The drama was originally in Urdu language which was transcribed in English by the researcher. Textual close reading of the transcript of drama for the finding of hidden arguments and points of view were aided by the use of theoretical frameworks, which are employed by researchers. Karl Marx's Marxism theory was applied to the drama Parizaad and the characters were analysed through this aforementioned theoretical perspective. Furthermore, relative studies were taken into account.

Literature Review

Based on the idea that matter is always changing, Marxism is by far the most advanced theory of human history. Marxism's discovery of a live objective reality, rather than an intellectual's fancy, is the source of this change. The same process of change is taking place all over society, changing quantity into standard. Other world philosophies ignore paradoxes and strive to depict the world without applying formal logic, and their processes are built appropriately. To grasp all that happens in the cosmos in the Marxist sense, however, one must first understand its dialectical contradictions. Confusion and interrelationships in society can be explained and contextualized, as can their interrelationships and the consequent situation. As a political ideology, Marxism recognizes that the circle of love extends far beyond the area of beauty and covers the entire human race.

Eyerman describes it as an ideology that explains the reasons for the pains, sufferings and exploitation and the notion that advocates social change. Marxism is an opposite to the dominating ideology of elite class. (Eyerman, 1981: 48).

Marxism in its essence the struggle of working class against the oppression and persecution of upper classes. It challenges the capitalistic social structure based on inequalities and propogates the idea of a society which is free of any discrimination and where all humans enjoy equal and dignified opportunity to live and prosper. Swell and Woods (2000) describe Marxism as the philosophical system developed by Karl Marx. Marx was inspired by the notion of dialectics of

Hegel but focused on identifying and establishing its relation with the material world rather than the idealistic world of Hegel. the ideas of Karl Marx are the basis of Marxism which is also known as “Scientific Socialism” which are focused on the struggle of the labour class and aims at creating an equal and better society i.e. socialism. (Sewell and Woods, 2000).

Howe (1983) argues in his book that the purpose of Marxism is to demonstrate how our social, political, and economic structures have been distorted so that only the upper class benefits while the lower class suffers. Individuals from all socioeconomic classes should have equal access to the means of production, distribution, and commerce under the Marxist system of distribution.

Marxist analysis has been applied by various researchers on Pakistani literature. Bina Shah’s *Slum Child* (2010) reflects discrimination of class and exploitation that is a very prominent problem of the Asian society. Set in the slums of Karachi, the novel shows the socio-political scenario of the city and the class discrimination. Lower classes at that time were suffering a great deal from the social and economic challenges and issues of society while the upper class was indulged in their usual activities inspired by Western consumer culture. Shah highlighted the topics of exploitation, economic disparity, classes division, problems of immigrants and identity issues. (Muhammad Asif Asghar, 2018).

Mohsin Hamid’s *Moth Smoke* (2000) is another Pakistani novel that deals with the themes of Marxism and class struggle. Aurangzeb and Daro, two fast friends, belonging to different social classes always view the other in the light of the social class that he belonged to. When analysed from Marxist point of view it was concluded that socio-economic and political system gives strength to the elite class and suppresses the lower classes. The problem can be solved only by restoring the balance through trimming of power of the upper classes and giving suitable equality to the lower classes. (Azad, 2016)

The Drama *Parizaad* also focuses of the same theme of class struggle. The protagonist suffers discrimination at the hands of people owing to his colour and class. The series is relatively new and requires to be explored through critical lens. A number of critical studies available on the drama have been reviewed.

Shafqat Hussain (2022) has explored the double consciousness and capitalist attitude in drama

seriel Parizaad and concluded that owing to the white legacy of racism, brown people of sub-continent, consider themselves superior to the African black people. Moreover, the capitalistic and materialist attitude of society is visible in the drama where the socio-economic condition and position of a person determined the level of respect he gets.

Humaira Siddiqua Malik (2021) draws a parallel between Joseph Andrews and Parizaad and concludes that both novels have a number of similarities including the class struggle, the attitude of rich towards poor and exploitation of poor. Joseph Andrews had the beauty and charm and this was exploited by the rich women who wanted to tempt him. Parizaad, devoid of apparent charm had got the talent and wealth which become a source of attraction towards him. Thus, in spite of being centuries apart, both works depict how the morals and attitudes of society depend upon the appearances. (Malik, 2021)

When broadcasted on Television, several media critics also wrote features about the drama highlighting the portrayal of Parizaad as a dark-skinned person in the drama which shows the stereotypical black/dark tone with lower classes. The actor, playing Parizaad, is overloaded with makeup to appeared black coloured.

Rajaa Moini (2021) is one such critic who pointed out the purposeful blackening of the face of Ahmed Ali Akbar (the actor playing the role of Parizaad) to fit in the character of a poor and ugly man. This indicates the cultural and social attitude towards colour and class which is deep rooted in the history of the region. Indian film industry also has the history of donning actors with black/dark skin make-up when they are to be shown as poor or belonging to lower class. (Moini, 2021)

Mahnoor Jalal (2021) has also shared the similar views. She wrote that the blackening of faces in Pakistani drama and entertainment sector reinforces the stereotypical notion that associates beauty with fair skin while dark-skin treated as a stigma. The drama Parizaad also indicates the same prejudice against dark-skinned people. The drama industry in the country has a great role in perpetuating this colour/class identity and discrimination. (Jalal, 2021)

Most of the studies with Marxist perspective in Pakistani context has been applied on novels but this study explores the dimension of television drama. Parizaad presents a unique standpoint

as in this drama, the main character not only struggles to identify himself in his own class but rather succeeds in becoming part of another class thus gives the insight of two different social classes through the lens of a same person. Marxist analysis of this work thus explores the dimensions that have not been touched in Pakistani literature so far.

Analysis

Parizaad was written by a well-known author. It was later announced that the novel Parizaad, authored by the renowned Urdu storyteller, playwright, and commercial writer Mr. Hashim Nadeem, would be released in English. In a relatively short amount of time, he has amassed a considerable following. Hum TV aired a television series based on the novel Parizaad (2014), which is currently in its second season. Many others are currently witnessing this masterwork, which depicts a very different story than the one that is being told. The intricate plot of Parizaad depicts the realities of contemporary society. This story's protagonist, Parizaad, has a dark complexion that makes him appear unsightly and harsh to the eye. Mr. Hashim Nadeem Baloch, a well-known Urdu novelist, penned this narrative in a basic language that effectively shows Pakistan's grim reality in a straightforward manner.

There is no doubt that Mr. Hashim Nadeem's novel is Marxist in essence. To comprehend Marxism, it is vital to grasp social ecumenicism, racism and the foundation of the class structure. Despite this, Hashim's Urdu novel Parizaad shows the grim reality of Pakistan. Pakistani laws and the powerful and wealthy are freely challenged in this wonderful story, which illustrates how the poor and unattractive are treated therein. This cruel society has led many Parizaad into slavery.

In Parizaad, all of these aspects were tackled, including injustice, class inequalities, racism, satire, and poverty, amongst other things. The protagonist, till he is poor, is treated with mockery and prejudice by others. He is under appreciated for everything he does for his family; he is deprived of the love and always suffers abuse at the hand of others. However, it all changes once he gets the wealth and his social standards is raised.

The name of the protagonist is a constant source of amusement or criticism of the people around him. Parizaad means very beautiful or someone born of an angel. *Paristan* in Pakistani legend and folk is the mysterious land around Mount Caucasus (*koh-e-kaaf*), the people of which

are amazingly beautiful and fair-skinned. The protagonist, on the contrary, is dark-skinned labourer whose name is always mocked. Even his family is taunted for the name that is given to him.

“What is the name you have given him? The whole neighbourhood is laughing at us because of it”

“Parizaad? At least he should look like Parizaad but he is -!”
(Nadeem, 2021)”

He, himself, has to bear such racial slurs and abuse since childhood because of his name and identity to such an extent that he becomes habitual of it. It highlights how the society leaves permanent marks on the individual and how deep-rooted the social discrimination becomes.

“Ever since childhood, from the time I could comprehend I have only ever seen surprise and contempt in people’s eyes. Time they come to my name. I am used to it now” (Nadeem, 2021)

The class and colour discrimination remain a permanent part of the life of Parizaad. So much so that he begins to accept it as a norm.

“I am not sad about my humiliation. I was fated for that”
(Nadeem, 2021)

Parizaad faces humiliation due to his skin tone when the wife of his boss Behroz Karim refuses to accompany him as a security guard with her in car because she thinks it will not look appropriate for her.

“You think to get in my car. My friends will mock me”
(Nadeem, 2021)

In his personal life, Parizaad is rejected due to his appearance and complexion. He is attracted towards a girl of his neighbourhood named Naheed. However, Naheed rejects him and chooses

another character Majid due to his wealth as well as good looks. Instead of protesting or complaining about it, Parizaad accepts this considering himself that Majid was more worthy a companion for Naheed because of the aforementioned qualities.

*“The one who was worthy of her, proposed and won her.
Majid was worthy of her” (Nadeem, 2021)*

Such humiliation and rejections leave him completely devastated and makes him feel so inferior of himself that he desires that no one could see him.

*“People Say, ‘love is blind’. I wish that the people we
loved, were also blind. Who could possibly love me?”
(Nadeem, 2021)*

He even desires to change his complete identity and modify his face and tells the same to Seth Behroz Karim, his boss. He says that he does not want to die with the same face he was born with.

However, as the drama unfolds, it becomes obvious that all the humiliation and rejections were not because of his appearance only but because of his social class. His poverty was the reason for the discrimination against him. When he gets wealth, he is respected and treated well by those who earlier rejected him. Even the mother of a character Lubna, agrees to marry off her daughter with him for monetary gains. She tells Parizaad that a man’s wealth is the greatest measure of his worth, not his face or personality.

*“This thing called face, looks, personality...these are
problems to do with the lower middle class. A man’s face,
personality and his worth are all measured by his money.
(Nadeem, 2021)*

She advises Parizaad that once he acquires wealth, his fault will not be deemed as flaws rather everything he does will be appreciated.

*Make yourself so rich that these so-called ‘faults’ that
you have in your personality... they start to look like ‘style’ to*

*the world. And then you will find a thousand girls like my
Lubna” (Nadeem, 2021)*

Marxism is a prominent topic in Parizaad, and it is emphasised in this sentence. That Parizaad is fantasising about Seth Behroz Karim and money is quite obvious in this image. Why did Parizaad assume the wealthy wanted to collect as much wealth as possible while they spent their days in the same spot and had 24 hours in a day to do so? If you don't have money, you won't be able to tell what something is worth.

*“I couldn't stop thinking about Behrooz Kareem.: "What's
a man intended to do with all that money?". Those extra
hours, "how do they become a treasure for the wealthy and a
burden for the poor?" There are the same amount of hours in
the day for rich and poor people (Nadeem, 2021).”*

Upper-class individuals are damaging lower-class people's lives and wailing "justice," but they really mean "just us" when they say it. Seth Behrooz is an outspoken critic of capitalism and the persecution of the poor by the wealthy. These lines might express a sense of vulnerability and weakness.

*"A person's wild tongue and terrifying words are more
capable of wrecking a man than these technologies.”
(Nadeem, 2021)*

Throughout the drama series, the discrimination between poor and upper classes is constantly established. The rich get all the benefits first and later it is poured onto the poor drop after drop. Even state works to support and perpetuate the dominance of rich.

*“The voices of impoverished people are consistently
ignored at police checkpoints, whereas the voices of wealthy
people are consistently heard.” (Nadeem, 2021)*

The lines that follow criticise an upper class that does not reside in the area, which comes as a

bit of a surprise. Poor and middle-class people all across the world, but particularly in Pakistan and India, are subjected to persecution and exploitation.

"He says he hopes this salute would serve as a "reminder that money is the most powerful possession in today's society." (Nadeem, 2021)

The propensity of money, as explained by Marxism, to reshape the world is demonstrated in a stunning fashion by the words of this literary work. Those who own significant wealth are admired and respected by all since it is a great force in this world. Everything gets a different meaning and treatment when it is uttered out of the mouth of some influential person.

Poetry of a poor is deemed useless in the eyes of the world while even the curse words of rich sound like poetry to the people. (Nadeem, 2021)

In the third episode, Parizaad was on the edge of committing suicide until poet Nasaaz intervened and saved his life another highlight of how helpless the lower class feels in a capitalist society.

One of Marx's key notion was how the bourgeois exploit the poor by controlling the means of production and having all resources to themselves. In the drama, Parizaad is forced to sell his product i.e. his poetic work to some other person with resources. In this way, he is deprived of what he has produced while the other person just having the power to purchase gets the product for himself.

Alienation of a class from other is another of Marxist tenets. In Parizaad, the protagonist always considers himself as an outsider among the rich people. This class consciousness takes root in his mind and he is always afraid to get mixed with upper class with the fear of humiliation. He declines the invitation of a party saying,

"I get all confused if front of too many people. All this good look in a black and white movie where a poor boy goes

to a rich girl's house, and everyone there makes fun of him”
(Nadeem, 2021)

The whole misery of Parizaad, all the persecution, exploitation and prejudice, as it is revealed was simply because of his socio-economic class. Once he gets the stigma of being poor washed away, all his other faults are gone. In his prophetic remarks, one of the characters Nasaaz predicts that

*“Society that is rejecting you today, it will bend before
you” (Nadeem, 2021)*

These words come true when Parizaad gets the wealth and is given the respect in the society which was missing when he had been poor. After getting rich, When Parizaad returns back home, he is received with open heart and much more warmth, only because of the wealth he has.

*“Oh hey, wow but my home is blessed today. “I knew the
good news was going to follow” (Nadeem, 2021)*

The characters in the drama are all subject to racial and class discrimination and no one from lower class was considered worthy of the upper-class person. One such character Babli is told.

*“You have fondness of the likes of a prince, but you live
in a working class neighbourhood” (Nadeem, 2021)*

All this data indicate how Parizaad has been treated with humiliation and insults because of his social class. Boundaries of class and colours get intermixed and while he is being mocked for his skin colour or name, the criticism was actually on his financial status as well. The treatment almost gets reversed when he becomes rich, indicating how fragile are the boundaries of class in a capitalist society.

Findings:

Through the analysis of the text as given above, it has been established that the racial and class discrimination is one of the recurrent themes in the drama and also indicates how this is deep rooted in Pakistani society. It reflects the true and heinous colour of the society where the standards of humanity are based solely on the material prosperity. The analysis has also indicated that the boundaries of class are thin and shallow and based on artificial and materialistic world and not a part of actual social structure. Parizaad and other characters have been subject of discrimination and social abuse owing to their social status. They are defined and identified according to the social class they belong to. Once that status is changed and Parizaad becomes rich, all his flaws are ignored.

Conclusion:

Marxism has always seen literature through the prism of human problems and issues, and this has been true throughout history. This method is commonly used to analyze literary works that are concerned with class tensions, poor glitches, and even the negative effects of capitalism. Marxism, as a social theory, is concerned with a wide range of themes, including social, cultural, financial, and other concerns. This school of literary criticism is concerned with the structure and formation of society, with a special emphasis on social conflicts and class differences. In the Urdu novel Parizaad, racist ideas and behavior are used to satirize authoritarianism and elite-class dominance over the economy. The lower class suffers significantly as a result of the racist ideas and behavior of the elites. Our social, political, and economic structures are built on the premise that the wealthy will benefit while the rest of us will be left behind. Marxism urges us to question this underlying premise. Mr. Hashim Nadeem's drama Parizaad, which discusses these issues, is a masterpiece that beautifully describes the plight of a poor and black people, in which a character named Parizaad encounters all of the circumstances of our so-called civilized and religious society, which does not respect people and their ideas.

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