



RESEARCH PAPER**Unveiling Urban Pakistan: Postmodernism in *Karachi, You're Killing Me!***

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ABSTRACT

This research critically analyzes Saba Imtiaz's novel *Karachi, You're Killing Me!* to explore the postmodern paradigm shift within urban Pakistan, particularly among the female working class. The study investigates the subversion of metanarratives, focusing on themes such as consumerism, commodity fetishism, and the power-knowledge nexus. Drawing from Lyotard's theory in *The Postmodern Condition*, Foucault's ideologies on power and knowledge, and Jameson's views on consumerism, the protagonist's actions are scrutinized to reveal the postmodern landscape. Employing textual analysis, the findings highlight Imtiaz's portrayal of Karachi's shifting societal norms, where Western influences challenge traditional Pakistani values and religious constraints. The study recommends further exploration of postmodern impacts on urban societies, suggesting strategies for balancing cultural preservation with evolving freedoms while addressing the complex dynamics of globalization and identity formation.

KEYWORDS Commodity Fetishism, Consumerism, Metanarratives, Postmodern Paradigm

Introduction

This study examines the prevalence of postmodernism within Pakistani female working-class society as portrayed in Imtiaz's novel *Karachi, You're Killing Me*. While postmodernism historically finds its origins in the Western world, the forces of globalization, technology, and media dissemination have facilitated its spread into South Asian countries, including Pakistan. Imtiaz's narrative illustrates how, in this globalized era, postmodernism has taken root in Muslim-majority nations like Pakistan, challenging traditional narratives of religion and culture. The protagonist, Ayesha, serves as a lens through which the complexities of postmodern behavior within urban Pakistani settings, particularly among women, are explored. Ayesha's confrontation of and departure from traditional metanarratives, including religion and cultural norms, reflect the impact of globalization and postmodernism on contemporary Pakistani society. While religion remains a significant narrative for many in Pakistan, the influx of global influences has catalyzed postmodern changes, introducing various postmodern elements into societal discourse.

Postmodernism, as a literary and cultural movement, emerged in the late twentieth century as a response to the dominance of modernist ideologies. It challenges the idea of a singular, objective reality, emphasizing instead the subjective and contingent nature of meaning and identity. Across various fields, including literature, postmodernism is characterized by fragmentation, intertextuality, and metafiction. Imtiaz's novel aligns with

this tradition, employing non-linear narrative structures, multiple perspectives, and self-reflexivity to deconstruct and reimagine conventional storytelling. *Karachi, You're Killing Me* explores themes such as identity, power dynamics, corruption, and media ethics through the experiences of its protagonist, Ayesha, a young journalist navigating the chaotic realities of Karachi. By dismantling traditional narrative conventions, the novel reflects postmodern skepticism towards grand narratives and absolute truths, inviting readers to engage critically with the complexities of contemporary urban life in Pakistan.

Literature Review

South Asia has given rise to several renowned English fiction authors, particularly from Pakistan and India. These writers, including names like Muhammad Hanif, Bilal Tanweer, Mohsin Hamid, Uzma Aslam, Moni Mohsin, Bina Shah, Kamila Shamsie, and Bapsi Sidhwa, enjoy widespread recognition in the global literary scene. They use their writing to shed light on regional issues, serving as a form of protest against the challenging societal conditions and aiming to raise awareness among international readers about their cultural, social, and political realities. In recent years, postmodern literature has gained prominence in South Asia, with writers from India and Pakistan at the forefront of this movement. These writers have utilized postmodern themes and techniques to challenge traditional narratives and offer unique perspectives on contemporary issues. Mohsin Hamid is one of the most well-known postmodern writers from Pakistan, with his novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* being a prime example of postmodern literature. The novel blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality, creating an ambiguous and unsettling narrative that challenges readers' assumptions about identity and belonging. Kamila Shamsie, another prominent Pakistani writer, explores the relationship between personal and national identity in postcolonial Pakistan in her novel *Kartography*.

In this novel Imtiaz has portrayed Karachi from a unique perspective. Karachi has a complex and dynamic political landscape, with multiple power centers and a history of ethnic and political conflict. Despite the challenges faced by the city, Karachi is a vibrant and diverse metropolis, with a rich cultural heritage and a thriving economy. Several Pakistani fiction writers have explored the complex and multifaceted nature of Karachi, portraying its political, social, and cultural landscape in their works. Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke* explores the themes of drug addiction, corruption, and violence, highlighting the darker side of the city. Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography* presents a more nuanced and complex view of Karachi, exploring the city's cultural and linguistic diversity. Similarly, Mohammed Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* presents a darkly comic view of the city exploring the themes of gender, religion, and class, highlighting the everyday struggles of the city's residents.

Qasim (2022) in her article "'It's Karachi, Its, Where Life and Love Come to Die': Representing Gender, Space and Identity in *Karachi, You're Killing Me* (1)" investigates the depiction of gender, space and identity in the novel *Karachi, You Are killing Me*. The article investigates representation of gender in the novel that how female face challenges in managing her complex gender role in Pakistani society. And also, the article explores the characterization of identity showing the conflict between Ayesha's identity being modern and independent women and with traditional identity expected by her family and society.

In addition, Zaheer et al. (2022) in their article "Self-Othering in the novel *Karachi, You're Killing Me!*" explains the process of 'self-othering' in the novel (Zaheer et al., 2022, p.401). The article argues that the protagonist indulges in the process of self othering and it can be reflected in the way she tries to alienate herself from chaotic elements of Karachi and exceeded herself with some prestigious and liberal aspects of society by going against

the traditional patriarchal practices of society. The article examines the ways which the protagonist Ayesha's 'self-Othering' is manifested (Zaheer et al., 2022, p.402). It also shows that how re-orientalism works in postcolonial discourse and how it depicts Orient as appeals to global audiences and portrays stereotypes about them. Muhammad Abdullah (2021) in his article "Emergent Sexualities and Intimacies in Contemporary Pakistani Women's Fiction: A Postfeminist Reading" analyses contemporary Pakistani women's fiction, specifically how it portrays sex and intimacy while being loyal to religious and regional sensibilities. The article contends that these texts disprove the notion of Muslim women as victims, as they depict. The article explores the concept of 'sex and sexuality' in both novels *Beautiful from this Angle* by Maha Khan Phillips and Imtiaz's *Karachi, You're Killing Me* (Abdullah, 2021, p.44). Both Protagonists of the novels fully enjoy their sex lives and view sex as a common, biological human need. Similarly, Muhammad Abdullah and Safeer Awan (2020) in their article, "Islamic Post feminism and Muslim Chick-Lit: Coexistence of Conflicting Discourses" discuss the complexity of Pakistani feminism, which is influenced by 'Islamic feminism, post-colonial feminism, and post-structuralist feminism' (Abdullah & Awan, 2020 p.93). The article examines contemporary Pakistani Anglophone writings by young women and their portrayals of female characters in works such as *Beautiful from this Angle* and *Karachi, You're Killing Me*. Abdullah and Awan suggest that these works challenge the stereotypes of Asian-Islamic-femaleness by portraying unconventional, yet realistic, free and forward-looking female protagonists. In *Karachi, You're Killing Me* Ayesha is presented as a stylish and independent young woman. She is free to go on parties and date and also smokes and drinks a lot of alcohol. In *Beautiful from this Angle* the protagonist Aynah, who makes no apologies for her life of casual sex and recreational drugs. Her lifestyle was also against the stereotype set by west for Pakistani female.

Furthermore, Samar Zakki and Nighat Ahmad (2022) in their article "Glocalism, disguised oppression and parochialism: a study of *Karachi, You're Killing Me!*" discuss that this novel presents a local city, country, people, and culture but the apparent focus on the local is actually "disguised oppression" (p.348). Despite being written by a local author and published by an international publishing house, the focus on the local is presented from a "parochial perspective" that underscores all the negative aspects of it, reinforcing. the researchers argue that the representation of the local in Imtiaz's novel is problematic and reinforces the colonial narrative, perpetuating the oppression of the locals and inducing an inferiority complex in the public.

Theoretical Framework

This study probes into the postmodern paradigm shift through the lenses of Lyotard's critique of metanarratives, Fredric Jameson's exploration of consumer culture and commodity fetishism, and Michel Foucault's concept of the intricate relationship between power and knowledge. These theoretical frameworks collectively weave a rich narrative tapestry, inviting a comprehensive exploration of how postmodern ideals intersect with the experiences of Pakistani working-class women in a society undergoing rapid transformation. The discourse surrounding postmodernism gained momentum with the publication of Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* in 1979. Lyotard's perspective on postmodernity is characterized by an incredulity toward metanarratives. He contends that in the postmodern world, there is a skepticism towards overarching narratives, which were once central to modern philosophy. According to Lyotard, these grand narratives no longer hold credibility, and society has transitioned to smaller, localized narratives. While these localized narratives may lack universal truths, they offer a more nuanced understanding of contemporary realities. Lyotard's critique suggests a shift from linear, grand narratives

to fragmented and diverse narratives that better reflect the complexities of modern society. As he articulates:

The narrative function is losing its great functions, its great heroes, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goals. It is being disbursed in clouds of narrative language elements – narrative, but also denotative, prescriptive and so on. (Lyotard, 1994, p.24)

Lyotard's characterization of postmodernism highlights the dissolution of traditional narrative structures and the emergence of fragmented, multiplicitous narratives. This perspective challenges the notion of a singular truth and emphasizes the importance of localized knowledge within specific contexts. In the context of Pakistani society, Lyotard's framework provides a lens through which to analyze the erosion of traditional metanarratives and the proliferation of diverse narratives among working-class women, reflecting the broader shifts towards postmodernism in contemporary culture

The fragmentation and skepticism towards metanarratives evident in the novel are reflected in its non-linear narrative structure, which departs from traditional notions of plot and character development. Instead, the novel offers a fragmented and multi-perspective portrayal of Karachi. By applying Lyotard's ideas on the postmodern condition, we can better understand how the novel both mirrors and critiques the social and cultural landscape of contemporary Karachi. This analysis contributes to the ongoing discourse about the role of literature in a postmodern world, illustrating how literature can serve as a lens through which to explore and interrogate complex societal issues. Furthermore, "Transforming Legal Narratives: Postmodernism in South Asian English Literature" by Nida Masroor and Mehwish Aslam (2023) explores postmodernism's influence on legal discourses within South Asian culture, complementing my research on the postmodern paradigm shift in urban Pakistan through Saba Imtiaz's novel. Both studies examine the deconstruction of metanarratives, whether in literature or legal contexts, shedding light on shifts in societal norms and ideologies influenced by postmodern thought.

Jameson's perspective on postmodernism adds another layer to our understanding of the postmodern paradigm. He views postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism, wherein the modernization process is complete, and nature has been commodified and lost. Jameson asserts that postmodernism reflects the fragmentation, commodification, and loss of history characteristic of the contemporary era. He posits that postmodernism entails the consumption of sheer commodification as a process, emphasizing the centrality of consuming or engaging with commodities and commodified products in late capitalist societies. This critique is exemplified in *Karachi, You're Killing Me*, which portrays a city shaped by the forces of globalization, neoliberalism, and sectarianism. The protagonist's pursuit of material goods reflects the phenomenon of consumer culture and commodity fetishism, wherein commodities become symbols of significance rather than mere utilitarian objects.

Moreover, due to protagonist association with media industry and journalism, Foucault's ideas about intricate relation between Power and Knowledge is also reflected and it shows how power dynamics operates in society. And this perspective also leads toward postmodern shift which is clearly visible through protagonist's character. Foucault's claims that knowledge is not independent and neutral but tied to power dynamics. As knowledge and power have intricate relationship and both functions mutually. He says:

“The exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information...the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power’ (Foucault, 1980, p.52)

Foucault’s believes that whoever holds power is capable to produce information and knowledge. Knowledge, in turn, is not neutral or objective, but is always shaped by power relations and is used to reinforce existing structures of domination. Despite of admitting that power is productive force, he asserts that power is something which also repress, so whenever there is power it causes restrictions for others. He expresses his ideas through following words, “Power is essentially that which represses. Power represses nature, the instincts, a class, individuals” (Foucault, 1980, p.90). By analyzing Foucault’s ideas of postmodernity with novel’s events related to journalism and media industry in terms of power and knowledge we can explore further layers of postmodernity.

Results and Discussion

Postmodern Lenses on ‘*Karachi, You’re Killing Me*’: A Critical Examination

At the heart of the novel *Karachi, You’re Killing Me* lies the journey of Ayesha, a young journalist in her twenties. Her story revolves around two pivotal goals, her earnest quest to find a suitable partner and her determined pursuit of excellence in her professional career. The novel lacks a narrative structure, as episodes of the novel are not well connected. Every chapter begins with a news headline. Ayesha embraces a Western lifestyle, engaging in frequent parties, excessive drinking, smoking, and consuming alcohol while maintaining her professional obligations. She resides with her father, who is employed in the field of advertising. She is surrounded by some colorful characters. These include her hard-to-please editor, Kamran, her close companion Saad, characterized as a playboy with a kind disposition, and her friend Zara. Ayesha’s role as a journalist involves covering a wide spectrum of events, ranging from Saiph-e-Sahabah rallies with their provocative slogans to the quirky Pakistani Fashion Week, where male models sport suicide bomber attire. Her journey as a single woman takes an unexpected turn upon encountering Jimmy, a foreign journalist from CNN. The story comes to an exciting Bollywood-style turn when Ayesha unexpectedly finds love in the midst of challenges. This gives us a glimpse into the life of a modern Pakistani woman in a city that’s always bustling.

Challenging Metanarratives: Postmodern Shift in Pakistani Female Identity and Lifestyle in *Karachi, You’re Killing Me*

Karachi, You Are killing Me portrays contemporary Karachi, through multiple aspects and angles. Imtiaz presents postmodern paradigm shift prevailing in Pakistan and this perspective is somewhat similar to Lyotard’s theory of meta-narratives. The narrative not only showcases the clash between societal expectations and personal aspirations but also explores the complexities of identity, relationships, and the evolving female experience in a cosmopolitan context. And in all this journey the protagonist strongly challenges the religious narrative which society had believe without imposing any question to its certainty. As Lyotard (1994) claims, “Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives” (p.24). A grand narrative or metanarrative is a single overarching story that claims to explain the world and human experience. Qasim Ali Kharal et al. (2022) in their article *Deconstructing the Metanarrative of Jihadism: A postmodern study of Fatima Bhutto's novel The Runways* write, “A metanarrative is, “a worldwide or totalizing social or culture narrative composition, which explains

knowledge and experience" (p.39). It seems Imtiaz's work also agree to Lyotard argument of celebrating individual narratives to promote personal freedom and happiness. As for as the traditional assumption about Pakistani females often center around themes of modesty, family values, and societal roles which in turn reinforce modesty, obedience and subservience in females. Islam also impose some restrictions on Muslim females to conform their modesty and grace. For example, covering their body properly while moving outside the house, having limited and formal communication with male members of society irrespective of their father, brother, husband and kids, mostly staying within the boundary of home and can only have females as their friends. Moreover, the term of 'Na-Mehram' is used for those male members that are not allowed for Muslim females and even touching them is considered as 'Haram' which means not allowed. Maintaining a specific distance from them is also obligatory.

Furthermore, it is not only religion which impose such restrictions but the strict culture also imposes some restrictions leading towards limiting them within houses. Such context builds an image of submissive and oppressive personality of females. But Imtiaz has rejected all these metanarratives in her work and has tried to show Pakistani females from a different angle. Similarly, Mehwish Malghani et al. (2019) in her work "Incredulity Towards Metanarratives: A Gender-Based Study of Sultanas Dream by Roqeyya Begum" highlights the rejection of grand narratives, particularly patriarchy, within the context of the short story. The study employs textual analysis to explore how Roqqeya Sakahwat Hussein challenges the dominant metanarrative of patriarchy in her work *Sultanas Dream*. Instead of adhering to traditional gender roles, Hussein's narrative presents a world where women hold positions of power, reason, and authority, while men are marginalized and constrained within boundaries. And this is what somehow Imtiaz portrays which is explicitly visible in the novel that protagonist defy and challenges the religious boundaries so her life style also questions her identity being Muslim. My research delves into the portrayal of postmodern themes and their influence on identity within urban Pakistani society. Correspondingly, the study "Postcolonial Reflections in South Asian Literature" the examines the impact of colonialism on identity, culture, and societal norms within the region. Both works highlight the multifaceted nature of postcolonial identity formation and the ongoing struggle for self-definition amidst the remnants of colonial influence. *Postcolonial Reflections in South Asian Literature*.

Ayesha lives an independent life free of restrictions and follows western lifestyle. This is what Samreen Zaheer et al. (2022) has explained in their work *Self-Othering in the novel Karachi, You're Killing Me*, "She gets up tired with an aching head because of excessive drinking at night parties with friends. This common picture of western society which Ayesha portrays connects her thoughts with the West" (p.405). The protagonist life style and her activities are totally against the Muslim life patterns. For Lyotard these narratives have made Society's mindset to evaluate what is good and bad for whom according to set standards. And this is what Lyotard (1984) has explained:

Thus, the narratives allow the society in which they are told, on the one hand, to define its criteria of competence and, on the other, to evaluate according to those criteria what is performed or can be performed within it. (p.20)

It means that these narratives bound people to perform certain actions and to avoid other ones. Lyotard questions the legitimacy of these narratives and claims that in postmodern world there is no space for them. Ayesha's character is true depiction of this concept that those narratives which have a legitimizing utility, no longer keep reliability. It depicts that "The narrative function is losing its functions, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, and its great goal" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 24). A lot of events and

even in her routine life Ayesha takes beer, vodka etc. as normal drink which is not allowed in Islam. Drinking alcohol is prohibited and termed as 'Haram' act for every Muslim either male or female. Ayesha spent her most of the income for alcohol consumption to bootlegger. When her friend Zara arrived at her home and brings beer she explains, "I take a long sip, and as the cold beer hits my stomach, I realize I forgot to have lunch and dinner and I'm running on a stale packet of chili chips I found in my desk drawer" (Imtiaz, 2014, p.05). At another event she says, "I need critical levels of alcohol in my bloodstream" (Imtiaz, 2014, p.130). According to the image of Pakistani female depicted above in religious and cultural context it is quite weird and absurd for female taking alcohol and enjoying it or in proper words it is a sin and even for society it seems disgusting act.

Lyotard defines narratives of society as pragmatic rules which are transferred from one generation to another through telling stories, he argued, "What is transmitted through these narratives is the set of pragmatic rules that constitutes the social bond" (Lyotard, 1984, p.21). postmodernism views religion also as a metanarrative and claims that all religious doctrines are just narratives stated from one generation to other. It is not the case that Ayesha admits herself a disbeliever that she is not Muslim but her actions question her Muslim identity. For example, in Islam sexual intercourse is only allowed between husband and wife who are declared as married through the Islamic process of marriage. Any other intercourse which takes place except this legal relation is demoted as 'Zina' which means unpermitted sexual intercourse. Imtiaz effort of portraying the prevailing postmodern impact in urban areas of Pakistan and specifically in working class females section becomes vivid when protagonist go for fulfilling her physical needs without getting married. She had boyfriends in past and when she met with foreigner journalist Jamie, she felt her dream has come true. She expresses her desire in these words, "All that coyness has reminded me that I really, really need to have sex, to feel someone's body pressing against me other than the cat's" (Imtiaz, 2014, p.115). For a Muslim woman it is necessary to get married for fulfillment of her physical needs but Ayesha do not think in this way. Her way of expressing the desire for fulfillment of physical needs betrays the notion of modesty of Muslim woman. After sleeping a night with him she narrates her experience as, "I felt like every single part of me had come alive, like a head rush, an erotic ice cream headache. Was it possible I'd actually spent so many months with this deadened body?" (Imtiaz, 2014, p.122). Going through such depiction of Muslim female in Pakistan is no more than a shock for both Pakistani and international readers. And this denotes that globalization had paved way for postmodernism.

The Consumerist Dilemma: Unpacking Commodity Fetishism in Contemporary Narratives

Karachi, You're Killing Me also portrays consumer culture and commodity fetishism which has become part of postmodern societies. Through, the life of the protagonist, the novel highlights the phenomenon that how in present era people feel inferior due to lack of commodities and consider themselves as worthless when they are unable to fulfill the standards of society in terms of financial gains. And in all this journey the protagonist suffers due to her low income and middleclass family background and she faces inferiority complex in her social circle too. In his book *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* Jameson (1992) defines, "Postmodernism is what you have when the modernization process is complete and nature is gone for good" (p.09). It means he links postmodernism with late capitalism. The writer also highlights same perspective through Ayesha's struggles while trying to meet the standards of society due to her low income and middleclass family background. The protagonist desire for brands, designer wear, and a luxurious lifestyle reflect how society have conditioned social status and success with luxuries and how it has shaped our perception of being successful in terms of

socioeconomic gains. The similar perspective is examined by Ekaterina Vadimovna Biriukova and Nadezhda Albertovna Larina in their study, "Representation of the Consumer Society in V. O. Pelevin's Novels of the 21st Century" which explores that how V.O. Pelevin critiques consumer society in his 21st-century novels, highlighting its focus on personal satisfaction, pursuit of material wealth, and the role of consumed products in determining social status

Jameson (1992) held the view, "Postmodernism is the consumption of sheer commodification as a process" (p.9). It means there is a significant emphasis on consuming or engaging with commodities and commodified products as a central process or activity. Late capitalism emphasizes the commodification of culture, where even personal identity becomes a commodity. People are identified by what they consume for example luxuries, brands and designer wears. Further consumerism enforces more focus on looks, fashion, style and image. That is why more emphasis is laid on external appearance and beauty instead of inner beauty. Ayesha being part of consumer society is also concerned about her clothes, figure and her looks. Because society perception is based on physical appearance. As in the novel:

And then came Hasan's birthday dinner, for which I had planned to look stunning—a dress from my favourite boutique, high heels, blow-dried hair. I was sitting at my desk, looking up the number of a salon to book a hair appointment... (Imtiaz, 2014, p.35)

These lines from novel depicts how much Ayesha is concern about her appearance. Before joining any event, she thinks about her looks at first and later about other things. This focus on appearance and the desire to present oneself in a visually appealing way is demand of society now. This is what Jameson (1992) says that in postmodern world there is an increase in the "aestheticization" of reality, it means that reality is viewed or experienced in a more aesthetically pleasing or artful way (p.09). This could be seen as a shift towards appreciating the aesthetics of consumer culture and commodities.

Drawing from Marxist theory, he introduces the concept of commodity fetishism, analyzing how consumer goods and images gain a mystical significance in postmodern culture. People tend to attribute a kind of fetishistic value to commodities, seeing them not just as products with practical use but imbuing them with symbolic and social meaning. At an event in the novel Saad expresses this aspect as, "I've got you for conversation,' he's always said. 'Oh, by the way, can you buy my mother something for her birthday? I'll transfer some money to your account. Take her shopping or something" (Imtiaz, 2014, p.43). The author has reflected the notion that people have conditioned expression of love and care with purchasing expensive gifts for each other. True affection, care, attention and love alone are not enough until expressed in commodity form.

Power/Knowledge Nexus

Karachi, You're Killing Me is a compelling exploration of the interplay between power, knowledge, and journalism within the backdrop of a postmodern shift in Pakistan. Imtiaz being part of journalism has uncovered some important facts highlighting how media plays a pivotal role in shaping power dynamics, with competing narratives and manipulation of truth. Another perspective which is clearly visible in the story is that power becomes a source of restriction for others and lemmatize their availability to certain sources. Imtiaz also portrays that how production of knowledge leads to gain power which is significant aspect of postmodernity. Such depiction can be further elaborated by

Foucault's views on postmodernity in terms of power knowledge and discourse. In *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* he says:

The exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information...the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power. (Foucault, 1980, p.52)

Power shapes discourse of society enabling people to think and believe in a certain way. The novel also portrays that in Karachi, media and journalism play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and, consequently, wielding power. Imtiaz explores that how access to knowledge leads for attainment of power and Ayesha who has middle family background thrives to get in power through production of knowledge in media industry. As Protagonist determines, "I will produce an excellent piece of investigative journalism this year, the kind that wins prizes, gets me headhunted to a fantastic job in New York, or at the very least, Dubai" (Imtiaz, 2014, p.15). Here reference to producing an excellent piece of investigative journalism implies an understanding of the importance of knowledge production within the field. It means that the protagonist recognizes that the ability to create meaningful and impactful knowledge can lead to recognition, prizes, and potential professional opportunities. The other angle of this phenomenon is that power leads to accumulation of knowledge. Imtiaz has tried to expose that how power creates and shapes truth and information. This notion is clearly visible in following lines, "In the distance, I see Ali interviewing the head of the Karachi police. I should really go over and listen but the cop is saying something" (Imtiaz, 2014, p.22). This highlights power dynamics related to knowledge, where Ali as a reporter holds the power to shape public perception, and the head of the police possesses specialized knowledge. The protagonist's choice to prioritize the conversation with the cop reflects a form of contestation and alternative sourcing of information within the power dynamics of knowledge dissemination. When she asks him what he is doing here, he informed her that he is guarding a bundle of sheets which is all what they covered of bombers. She suddenly became amazed. She was covering on bomb blast site and the cops had all the information about the bomber, for which she was being there. This reflects power controls what knowledge is produce and decide what is knowable by whom. In comparing my research with "The Knowledge and Power Expressed in the Movie: Focused on the structure of 'binary oppositions'", significant parallels emerge in their exploration of power dynamics and narrative strategies across different cultural contexts. While my research explores postmodern themes in urban Pakistani society, the latter study analyzes power and knowledge dynamics in a movie narrative using structuralistic methodologies, particularly focusing on binary oppositions between characters. Both studies acknowledge power as a key narrative tool and examine how characters navigate it within their contexts. By connecting these two studies, a deeper understanding emerges of how narratives explore power and knowledge dynamics, contributing to discussions on their significance in shaping narratives and reflecting contemporary realities.

Despite of the fact that power produce knowledge there is another important aspect linked with power which Foucault's views in terms of cause of restriction. It is quite clear that whoever holds power has ability to repress others as Foucault (1980) says, "power is essentially that which represses. Power represses nature, the instincts, a class, individuals" (p.90). The protagonist always faces restriction in her field because of other elite or powerful journalists or reporters. They cause hindrance in her journey of high achievements. For example, in the novel she was once covering on blast site and Ali who is reporter of country's largest news network with strong political background arrives on same site and disrupts Ayesha's interview with eyewitness. The eyewitness recognizes him

and forgets about Ayesha who was already there. Another event in the novel which reflects power causes restriction is mentioned in these following lines:

The political reporters for Urdu TV channels are the elite, so they get the best space, the biggest table, and the most food. The Urdu newspaper reporters form huddles based on their beats, the cameramen have occupied three tables for their equipment while the wire photographers sit on the periphery. Even though the wire agency correspondents are fiercely competitive, the photographers always travel in a pack because they feel they work better as a team and get more access. (Imtiaz, 2014, p.78)

The idea of where there is power, there is always restriction or repression for others is clearly observed here. The differential treatment received by the political reporters, such as getting the best space and food, may lead to limited opportunities for other reporters to access crucial information or resources. This demonstrates how power can lead to unequal distribution and access. As the political reporters for Urdu TV channels are the elite and they have power due to relationship with politics, it means their power is enabling them to create knowledge and shapes perception of society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the meticulous examination of Saba Imtiaz's *Karachi, You're Killing Me* illuminates the pervasive influence of the postmodern paradigm within urban areas of Pakistan, notably Karachi, where postmodern strategies such as the subversion of metanarratives, consumerism, and the intricate relationship between power and knowledge converge to shape the societal fabric. Ayesha's defiance of traditional religious constraints prompts a profound questioning of her Muslim identity, emblematic of a broader societal trend towards liberation from conventional norms and boundaries. This postmodern era witnesses a discernible shift towards individuals embracing freedom over restriction, challenging the very foundations of societal structure. Moreover, the narrative underscores a growing attachment to commodities at the expense of authentic human connections, as exemplified by the protagonist's determination of self-worth through material possessions and societal acceptance based on superficial brand associations. The symbiotic relationship between power and knowledge further underscores the pervasive influence of media in shaping societal perceptions and exacerbating inequalities, thereby perpetuating resistance among marginalized groups. Imtiaz's narrative serves as a poignant reflection of the complexities and contradictions inherent in contemporary urban life, inviting readers to critically engage with the intersections of culture, identity, and power in a rapidly changing world. Through Karachi's vibrant tapestry, Imtiaz portrays the evolving landscape of Pakistani society, particularly among working-class females navigating the shifting sands of postmodernity. In this light, *Karachi, You're Killing Me* emerges not only as a literary work but as a mirror reflecting the multifaceted dynamics of a society in flux, where tradition clashes with modernity, and individuals grapple with the nuances of self-identity and societal belonging in an increasingly globalized landscape.

Recommendations

Further research should explore the postmodern influences in other urban areas of Pakistan to gain a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics across different demographics. Strategies should be developed to balance cultural preservation with modern freedoms, addressing the impacts of consumerism, media influence, and the evolving identities of working-class females in the postmodern landscape. Additionally, media literacy programs and cultural dialogues can help individuals critically engage with societal changes and foster a more inclusive society.

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