

MARGINALIZATION AND SURVIVAL: A MARXIST STUDY ON TRASI'S *THE COLOUR OF OUR SKY*

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Abstract

*This study shows the enduring impact of Marxism on society through an analysis of the themes of resilience, survival, and sacrifice found in Trasi's novel *The Colour of our Sky*. Specifically, this study explores the relationship between these themes and Marxist history, focusing on how Tara and Mukta navigate their respective challenges while highlighting the impact of cultural and psychological factors on their lives. The experiences of Tara and Mukta serve as an example of the struggles faced by marginalized people, reflecting larger social and economic inequalities. By examining these themes, the study illuminates how historical Marxist concepts of class struggle and social justice still hold relevance in modern times. This research is important because it sheds light on how Marxist ideas continue to influence modern society and helps us comprehend how historical circumstances influence both individual lives and societal systems. The study emphasizes the significance of social and cultural influences on human development and survival by providing a greater understanding of people's coping mechanisms and the sacrifices they make through the lens of Tara and Mukta's journey. All things considered, this investigation makes it clearer how applicable Marxism is to the analysis and resolution of contemporary societal problems.*

Key Words: Struggle, Survival, Resilience, Societal System, Historical Circumstances

Introduction

The study of resilience, sacrifice and survival via Marxist perspective shows us the detailed understanding of the community or a society and the peoples fight within them. Trasi's *The Colour of our Sky* describes the life stories of two young Indian girls whose stories are interconnected with the themes of marginalization, resilience and injustice also. The aim of this study is to analyze these things as the examples of Marxist theory by studying how this novel shed light on the struggle for survival, social inequalities and class struggle. Marginalization is the roadmap by which few people or the societies that are forced to the boundaries of society and are repeatedly disallowed access to the rights, opportunities and the resources that are easily available for the other peoples of the society. The painful experiences of the lower class or the poor peoples in India are portrayed in *The Colour of our Sky*, which emphasizes on gender difference, caste system, and financial status. In *The Colour of our Sky*, Tara who belongs to upper or elite class always protects and tries to save Mukta from her fortune. Mukta belongs to the poor or lower class, forced into the custom of transforming a temple prostitute.

The manner in which Trasi reveals the life experiences of Mukta strongly highlights that how the inherent social and cultural norms or traditions continues the marginalization. Even it was officially ended, but the hierarchical system yet has a significant impact on the life of many people that are present in India, especially those peoples that are belonged from the poor class they are frequently victimized and disrespected. Trasi unveils the harsh realities of the society that the marginalized peoples must bear the injustice just because of their birth in poor family. The writer

uses Mukta's character as an example to show that how basic human rights are denied and how the people bear the specific forms of oppression.

In *The Colour of our Sky*, Trasi effectively portrays the class difference in the society through the examples of different life styles of Tara and Mukta. As the lower class (proletariat) is exemplified by Mukta, who struggles in poverty and abused. As the wealthy class (bourgeoisie) is exemplified by Tara, who lives a life of upper class and lives in full comforts. The exploitive capitalist system is represented by the Tara's father, who exploits the poor people or the lower class by hiring them in low wages for his own profit. The difference and the inequality in both Tara's and Mukta's lives shows the injustice of the society because of class division.

Marxist theory is based on the writings of Karl Marx, this theory's strong emphasizes is on how the upper-class effects on both society and individual or personal experiences. Karl Marx claims that the upper class (bourgeoisie) that possesses the production resources and the lower class (proletariat) who works for them for money, it makes two different classes in society. The fight between the upper and the lower class for equal rights and resources results in the societal conflicts.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The Marxist era in India shows the fight between the lower class and the wealthy class. Even though after the India's independence in 1947, the reflections of Marxism cover the whole nation's cultural, economic and social surroundings. Trasi's *The Colour of our Sky* gives a clear depiction of Marxism in India; it also gives a lens via to investigate the impacts and effects of the preexistent norms of the past on the lives of today's individuals. This study also shows that the how the characters in the novel navigates the Marxist surroundings, their fights with the challenges, opportunities, and the character's marginalization, survival and sacrifice are unusually impacted by the socio-historical context.

1.3 Research Objectives

- To investigate the resilience strategies through Marxism perspective in the characters of Tara and Mukta in Trasi's *The Colour of Our Sky*.
- To investigate the elements of survival via Marxist lens in the characters of Tara and Mukta in Trasi's *The Colour of Our Sky*.
- To investigate the various forms of sacrifice in the character of Tara and Mukta in Trasi's *The Colour of Our Sky*.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study has significance as it offers a Marxist perspective on the themes of resilience, survival, and sacrifice, explains the enduring impact of Marxism in India. By exploring the characters' experiences within the novel, this study aims to contribute to our understanding of Marxism and its reflection of historical heritage. It also highlights the complications of human resilience and survival in the face of socio-cultural and historical challenges, serving as a reminder of the long-lasting effect of Marxism on individual lives and societies. In the end this study looks to light up the complexities of Marxist India through the context of *The Colour of our Sky*, providing a brief and detailed understanding of the lasting impacts of Marxism on the lived experiences and the communities.

2. Literature Review

The most marginalized groups in society are facing difficult times, as evidenced by the recent growth in extremism, authoritarianism, displacement, and isolationism. Our main focus in this article is on cultural marginalization, which is one particular facet of marginalization in organizational theory. We contend that the literature currently in publication does not provide a sufficient theoretical framework to examine this phenomenon. We expand on the problematize the culture-as-toolkit concept in order to theorize cultural marginalization and discover strategies that marginalized groups may employ to deal with such situations. We combine this viewpoint with other cultural theories that give greater weight to power structures. The methods of cultural autonomy and survival that marginalized communities may engage in to protect their culture are conceptualized through drawings. Our theoretical contributions open up new research avenues to deepen our understanding of the general process of cultural marginalization and to guide future inquiry into the survival strategies of marginalized groups and how they might (re)gain autonomy. In doing so, we contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding the toolkit perspective by offering novel insights into how marginalized groups utilize their socio-culturally constrained cultural resources in distinct ways, compared with more resourceful actors and groups (Sasaki & Baba, 2024).

In Pakistani English literature, Sara Suleri is a highly regarded and illustrative writer of the postcolonial era. Her writings are much valued for their thematic issues. The term subaltern is a suitable way to analyze the chosen short story considering the new interpretation. Lower class struggles are the main subject of this work. It also draws attention to the suffering of those from lower social classes. *The Property of Women* illustrates the marginalization of lower-class individuals, particularly women. Through the lens of the subaltern concept, this study explores the postcolonial problems of the chosen short story to identify the idea of marginalization. The application of the idea of subaltern for membership in the socially marginalized group is the main topic of this essay. Using the protagonist Halima as a model, the researcher attempted to apply these two ideas to the chosen short narrative (Nadeem et al., 2023).

The analysis of the 2014 novel Parizaad's character serves as the foundation for the current investigation. The researcher used Karl Marx's theory of Marxism to analyze the character of Parizaad in the 2014 novel Parizaad. The data was analyzed by the researcher utilizing a qualitative approach. There is no denying that Mr. Hashim Nadeem's book has certain Marxist elements. Marxism is a conflict social theory that primarily studies racism, social ecumenism, the class structure, and other social issues. Hashim's Urdu novel Parizaad portrays the grim reality of Pakistani society in a similar way. This literary masterwork blatantly criticizes the laws of Pakistani society, the wealthy and privileged, and the way that people treat the ugly and impoverished. Many Parizaad have become part of the repressive society in which they live. It covers a wide range of topics, including racism, inequality, and class differences. Pakistan's terrible reality is depicted in Parizaad. In this society, where many people are subjected to the color race that is referred to as the gutter bugs, Parizaad has satirically critiqued the system. This book has poverty and simplicity, which can serve as a painful lesson for our cruel society (Shaikh, & Sindhi, 2022).

This study focused on Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove*, which tells the tale of Salma's journey from a little Jordanian town called Hima to the bustling metropolis of London. She must flee her home country to avoid being killed by her brother Muhammad, who intended to kill her due to her pregnancy and extramarital affair. Although she is successful in her attempts to alter her habits,

appearance, and mindset, her heart still resides in Hima, where her daughter is. The article's framework will be drawn from Bhabha's (1994) theory of othering, Pratt's (1991) idea of contact zone, and Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model (Iqbal, & Chaudhary, 2019).

Writer Abdullah Hussein is a liberal, progressive, communist, and open-minded person. He is greatly impacted by Karl Marx's intellectual ideas. Through his innovative methods, he had exposed the thieving strategies of capitalism, feudalism, and subjugating powers. Naddar Logg is one of his greatest works, in which he refutes the poverty, protests, processions, baton charges, and persecution of marginalized groups in society, including women, children, and laborers; capitalist exploitative strategies; the brutality of feudalism; the complexity of class differences; the idea of owner and slave; bribery, corruption, bargaining; and the black face of so-called pilgrims and religious scholars. Through an exploratory approach, the work highlights the rich tradition of Urdu novels (Ashraf, Asif & Rahim, 2023).

The notion that the reader is a producer of the text rather than a consumer is advanced by Barthes' five code theory. The text's plurality, or topology of codes, enables several interpretations that go beyond the confines of a specific location and time. As a result, Barthes' theoretical contribution is recognized for saving fiction reading from the confines of a particular cultural perspective and guiding it toward a more universal one. Recognizing that readers rewrite texts, this paper uses Barthes' theory which incorporates cultural, hermeneutic, semantic, and semantic codes as an analytical approach to analyze Amita Trasi's 2017 book *The Colour of Our Sky* in order to uncover what lies beyond the text, a web of shared socio-cultural norms that elicits intricate meaning modulations influenced by the relationship between subjectivity, power, and discourse in various historical eras and social and geographic contexts (Jadoon & Imtiaz, 2020).

The focus of the present investigation is the character of Parizaad from the show *Parizaad*, which aired on Hum TV in 2021. We were able to comprehend *Parizaad* in the story more fully by applying Marxist theory. The researcher performed a qualitative analysis on the data. It is probable that this drama was influenced by Marxism. Hashim's Urdu novel *Parizaad* is a must-read for anybody interested in Pakistani history since it depicts the horrifying realities of the nation's society in all its complexity. It's refreshing to read a narrative that, for once, tackles the wealthy and powerful as well as the laws of Pakistani society in such an honest manner. Many *Parizaad* have perished because of the existing social structure crushing them beneath its burden. It addresses several problems, including socioeconomic disparity, injustice, and race. It has been determined that the drama realistically depicted racial and class prejudice in society and highlighted the predicament of the impoverished, ostracized, and frequently mocked lower class (Meraj & Hassan, 2022).

The idea that social class borders are ambiguous and their conflict are examined in this study. The two books by Mohsin Hamid, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) and *Moth Smoke* (2000), have been chosen as the theoretical and conceptual framework as well as the research methodology for the investigation of post-Marxism. The research is important because it shows that Marxism is in crisis now and that its extension is required to address the globalized world's contemporary socio-political and economic conditions. The aim of this study is to underscore the elusive and ephemeral character of socioeconomic strata in Pakistan. The preliminary conclusion of this study is that Hamid's fiction challenges the prevalent Marxist ideology of the fixed class system in many global societies and that man will eventually be freed from such rigid social structures and economic constructs due to the elusive and circular nature of social class (Yar, Usman & Ahmad, 2020).

A sociological phenomenon known as marginalization occurs when an individual or a group of individuals in our society are shunned or marginalized. Marginalization refers to inequality based on the economy, politics, class, caste, religion, race, and, of course, gender. Women are defined by Simon de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* as the other those who are disadvantaged inside the patriarchal power system. In Sanskrit, the term devdasi refers to a female deva or god's servant. According to Hindu rites, devdasis are offered to or married to a goddess between the ages of eight and thirteen. As a result, they are unable to marry any mortal being, which ultimately reduces them to little more than sex prostitutes, according to Amita Trasi in her debut novel. In the heartbreaking tale of two young friends, Tara (a wealthy girl from the upper class) and Mukta (a devdasi girl who stays at Tara's house to escape her fate), *The Color of Our Sky* tells their heartbreaking journey. However, Mukta, who was destined to become a prostitute at temples, is abducted one night from Tara's home. The two girls are revealed to be stepsisters to us gradually throughout the narrative. Presenting the devdasis as the severely ostracized beings among the Others and their plight is the goal of this study (Wasima, 2018).

3. Research Methodology

This study critically investigates the themes of resilience, sacrifice and survival, also gives a brief understanding of the methodological strategies that are used in the Trasi's *The Colour of our Sky* through a Marxist lens. The research philosophy that is used in this study is interpretivism. After in-depth analysis of the text, qualitative research method is used to show the problems and the complexities of characters' lives and the daily life experiences. The population sample consists of marginalized characters that lack a specific numerical description because the study is qualitative in nature. The method of data analysis is guided by thematic analysis and reflexive interpretation, with the novel and additional sources being the primary focus of data collecting. The study seeks to offer a detailed view of the socioeconomic gaps and survival strategies represented in the novel through these methodological decisions. Qualitative research focuses on understanding social situations in their natural settings and contexts, using many sources of data to provide rich, detailed descriptions and explanations.

4. Textual Analysis

When I think back to that time, I think of my Amma's soft brown eyes and the way she told me stories or sang to me. how her eyes portrayed every emotion in a story, how they would move with the music in her voice. she would sing to me in her melodious voice (Trasi, 2017, p. 16).

Mukta's memories of Amma's storytelling and singing provide emotional resiliency. In a Marxist perspective, this resilience can be viewed as a reaction to the harsh reality of a capitalist society in which the working class frequently experiences severe challenges. Amma's emotional effort, shown through her stories and songs, gives her the strength to deal with these difficulties. This emotional support enables Mukta to stand and surmount the material and emotional hurdles given by their socioeconomic environment.

In a capitalist society, the family unit is the most important institution for reproducing labor force. Amma's caring function, especially her emotional care through storytelling and singing, is the very basis through which one can ensure the well-being of the family members. Such emotional support is often needed by their resilience, which helps people to be continued and engage within the framework of the capitalist system again. So, Amma's emotional labor can be considered crucial to sustaining the capability of the family to deal with economic challenges.

These beautiful memories of eyes and voice contrast completely with the rest of the outside world. These contrasts show how inside this family unit, emotional and cultural support from some

kind of relief to the hard economic strain outside. The toughness that develops from those intimate relationships is very essential for Mukta's survival in society, where the working class is constantly marginalized and exploited.

I took a deep breath and fumbled for my purse on the bedside table, delved into it, and opened the list of NGO's I had downloaded from the Internet. There were five names on it centers that dealt with missing or kidnapped children. I started dialing numbers. The numbers from the first three organizations rang, but there were no replies. The fourth organization politely took down the details and said they would contact me if they heard anything. When a man picked up the phone at the fifth agency, I hoped I could find an answer there (Trasi, 2017, p. 27).

In Tara's case, a main social issue that frequently has a more severe impact on the working class and oppressed populations is brought to light by her need for assistance from NGOs in regards to missing children. Reliance on non-profit organizations is a sign of a potential deficiency in state resources, as lower socioeconomic groups may not have access to sufficient state protection and must instead rely on these groups.

The lack of replies from the first three organizations can be seen as metaphor for bureaucratic indifference and the inefficiencies within the system meant to provide aid. This shows how the proletariat (working class) often faces obstacles in gaining resources and support, increasing their struggles.

Resilience is demonstrated by Tara's determined efforts to contact each organization in spite of the early problems. Resilience according to Marxist thought, such that the subjugated people must carry on despite system failures. Her resilience represents the working class's steady struggle for assistance and justice in the face of a defective system.

From a Marxist perspective, the dependence on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) instead of state institutions to tackle crucial social concerns can be criticized as an insufficiency of capitalist structures to fairly allocate resources and assistance. NGOs often all the time fill in the gaps left by the state, highlighting structural injustices where people who are less wealthy and powerful face greater problems.

A cold wet breeze hit me as I walked outside onto a noisy street A six years old girl in tattered clothes scurried toward me, unmindful of her soiled and bleeding feet, spread out her arm and looked at me pleadingly. I looked into her hopeful eyes for a second. She held my gaze. A team of child beggars watched me curiously from a distance. I searched my purse to find some rupee notes and handed them to her. Within seconds all the beggars enveloped me, begging for money. I distributed some notes between them. The children whopped and screamed in joy as they darted away (Trasi, 2017, p. 12).

The scene highlights the sharp difference between the poor children who must beg for food and Tara, who is able to provide money. This difference highlights the class gap, with Tara standing in for the wealthy class and the kids for the proletariat, or working class, who are dependent on the kindness of strangers to survive.

The children's torn clothing and the girl's dirty, bleeding feet shows their terrible situation, which is a reflection of societal exploitation and neglect. This could be interpreted as a criticism of the system that permits such great poverty. The fact that Tara is being watched by a group of young panhandlers raises the possibility of a larger problem by drawing attention to the confined poverty that these kids are living in.

The way the kids behave, especially the way they come up to Tara as soon as she starts giving out money, shows how difficult their survival is. Their socioeconomic circumstances

directly lead to this. Despite their terrible situation, their happiness and pleasure at receiving the money highlights their fortitude and the little things that keep them going in a difficult life.

Giving the kids money is something Tara did to temporarily meet their needs, but it doesn't address the structural issues the kids confront. According to Marxist theory, these kinds of things only temporarily mask the symptoms of a broken system rather than addressing the underlying causes of exploitation and inequality.

I left the police station and stood on the porch watching the police jeeps parked outside, constables carrying files, people waiting impatiently and suddenly it seemed futile to have to come to this place, to have to asked for their help. They hadn't even asked the right questions: Did I remember the day when it happened? What were the sounds I heard before I knew what was happening? The exact time on the bedroom clock? Why did the kidnapper not kidnap me instead? Why did I not scream? Why did I not wake up Papa who was sleeping in the next room? If they had asked me those questions, I was afraid the truth would come spilling out of me (Trasi, 2017, p. 12).

The location of the police station, as well as Tara's sense of pointlessness, reflects a criticism of institutional power. The police, who represent authority, are perceived as incompetent or disinterested in assisting Tara. This shows a broader Marxist critique of how state institutions frequently fail to protect and serve the working class and needy populations.

Tara's belief that the police hadn't even asked the right questions indicates a lack of trust in authority. This sentiment reflects the divide between the ruling class (represented by the police) and the working class or oppressed people (Tara).

The people waiting nervously outside the police station represent the working class, which must deal with inefficiency and indifference from state institutions. This is a manifestation of the broader Marxist thesis that the working class is left with no choice but to depend on itself in a world which is constitutively designed to serve the interests of the powerful.

The police station is institutionalized, bureaucratic, and impersonal, exemplifying the institutional desert which has often characterized the lot of the under classes in capitalist states.

Tara's inner thinking and fear of letting the truth "out" reveal an instinct to survive, one colored by her knowledge of the repercussions for full disclosure. This is a desire to work through the complexities of power dynamics and self-preservation within an oppressive system.

I've never met my father. Whatever little I knew of him I learned from Sakubai. Amma never spoke of him much. Whenever she did, there was a distant dreamy look on her face, the glow of love. I never asked her where my father was or who he was although I yearned to ask. I was always afraid I might say something that would remind her of my father, and at times when I did ask, her eyes would melt into forlorn, heartbroken looks. So, I let her continue with her stories, never stopping her to ask if my father wanted to meet me (Trasi, 2017, p. 17).

The father's absence puts the mother (Amma) and Mukta in an unprotected financial and emotional situation. This vulnerability might be attributed to the economic system, which drives people to make difficult decisions, sometimes putting economic survival ahead of family togetherness. Mukta's refusal to inquire about her father, though highly interested to do so can be regarded as an emotional sacrifice. Such sacrifice is made owing to the necessity to keep the emotions steady in a household.

Amma's dreamy, faraway look and forlorn, heartbroken looks when speaking of her father suggest deep emotional pain, which would be best intensified by the economic hardships of being

a single parent. Mukta is intentionally shy about asking questions, not wanting to heighten emotional discomfort, which could well destabilize their already volatile condition.

Mukta's self-control demonstrates an internalized compliance with the philosophy which places safety of the family and suppression of feelings over individual needs. The internalization is effective at sustaining the status quo, since Mukta's sacrifice does not enable her to challenge their situation. The family goes on within the framework of their socioeconomic circumstances, and they do not even want to change or even worry about their situation.

Sakubai glared at her. If we are dedicating Mukta, we will do it properly, spending all money we can. What do you care about how much money we borrow anyway? She will earn it back for you, won't she? (Trasi, 2017, p. 56).

From a Marxist point of view this passage uncovers issues like exploitation, commercialization, and how economic forces affect interpersonal and family connections. Sakubai suggests exploitation when she says that they are committing, Mukta and spending as much money as they can. Mukta is seen as a potential source of income rather than as a person. The idea that Mukta would earn it back implies that she is being viewed as a resource whose worth is derived from her capacity to produce income. Individuals are valued more for their economic usefulness than for their humanity.

Sakubai's readiness to take out a loan is symbol of the constant financial strain that people in capitalist societies experience. The readiness of the class of laborers to borrow money demonstrates an idea of desperation and lack of alternatives with the class of laborers to borrow money demonstrates that a kind of desperation and lack of alternatives have driven them to bear the economic burden in the hope of earning more money at some later stage. Mukta is being reified, that is, treated as a thing, or an instrument to guarantee returns on investment. This dehumanization focuses on how Marxist critique takes shape when the capitalist depletes the interpersonal relations and moral ethics into exchange.

Interaction between Sakubai and the other character manifests how hard it becomes for interpersonal ties to survive in the current economic condition. From this, it emerges that tension and conflict arise from various views of how much money should be spent and how Mukta would benefit the economy in the future, thereby displaying how capitalism corrupts and distorts human relationships. The anxiety that Mukta would "earn it back" is a perfect example of the continuous exploitation cycle whereby her future labor is what pays for debts settled by paying for her education. Marxists often speak of such future-oriented exploitation, where the burden of future labor responsibilities is placed on the proletariat to service present financial responsibilities.

5. Findings

Trasi's novel, *The Colour of Our Sky*, is a magnificent narration showing the lives of two girls, named Tara and Mukta. They faced tremendous challenges on account of social marginalization. This research study, by applying the Marxian view, will outline various survival strategies and sacrifices they encountered.

Tara belonged to a family who led the life of pamper and had not breathed the cruelties of the world. Tara's world came crashing down when her best friend Mukta was kidnapped. Overwhelmed by the fear and hesitation, she did not give up but turned her pain into fuel for resolve. Tara joined the hunt, continued in her efforts, and emerged as a ray of hope for her community. Tara leaves the abduction experience of the mighty, strong-willed power and realizes the inner strength she never knew she had. Right after Mukta gets kidnapped, Tara's life takes a

complete turn upside down, becoming a fearless mouthpiece for equality and unity in her community. Tara starts noticing how people from different backgrounds are being treated unequally as she looks for Mukta.

Since Mukta hails from a poorer class, she thus faces disgrace and prejudice, which Tara was never aware of. As such, she becomes conscious of the social class inequalities in society. Her expanding awareness is similar to what Marxists refer to as social awareness, which refers to the consciousness of the inequalities between various social classes and injustice that transcends with them. Tara is motivated to find a voice to raise for an equal society where each one of them enjoys equal rights and opportunities without any discrimination based on background. Tara comes across different personalities in her pursuit of Mukta.

The survival strategies employed by Tara and Mukta indicated their responses to patriarchal and capitalist systems that were oppressive to them. The exploitative conditions forced upon the people decided their behavior and choices, thus demonstrating how such systems affected and dominated their lives. Consequently, stories like theirs unravel influence patriarchal social standards and capitalist economic exploitation among people, thus emphasizing that people must negotiate with and fight back such forces in order to survive and enjoy freedom.

1.5 Conclusion

The story of Tara and Mukta, two characters in Trasi's *The Colour of Our Sky*, encompasses a world full of social and economic challenges that underscore the novel's larger themes, thus involving marginalization and survival. The authors have probed these experiences through a Marxist perspective within this paper, focusing on how they do it, how they survive, and the myriad kinds of sacrifices they make.

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