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Mapping inequality: A Marxist analysis of Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography*

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze Kamila Shamsie's novel *Kartography* through a Marxist lens by unraveling the socioeconomic structures, the class dynamics, and the various cultural contexts that shape the story. The setting of the novel is Karachi which becomes a microcosm exploring broader Marxist elements of power, inequality, and the impact of globalization. The article will focus on the characters of Karim and Raheen who are the representatives of the privileged class of Karachi. Their life helps to reveal economic structures that help to extend their privileged lifestyle. It probes into the struggles of the proletariat shown in the novel, providing a deeper understanding of the various class conflicts deeply rooted in Karachi's social structure. Moreover, the study will explore the impact of globalization on the city, using Marxist elements of Imperialism and the concept of economic hegemony. It delves into the influence of external forces deeply rooted in the landscape of Karachi and its dire ramifications on the lives of individuals, focusing on the disparate power dynamics intrinsic to the world capital system. Lastly, through a Marxist perspective, this article will illuminate how '*Kartography*' presents itself as a literary piece of work, focusing on socioeconomic inequality, class struggles, and the cultural evolution present in the context of Karachi, provides a complex understanding of the social entanglements shown in Shamsie's narrative.

Keywords: Marxist lens; Karachi; Class struggles; Socioeconomic entanglements; Globalization

1. Introduction

This paper explores a Marxist analysis of Kamila Shamsie's novel *Kartography*, delving into the socioeconomic structures, class dynamics, and cultural contexts that shape the narrative. The novel, set in Karachi, becomes a microcosm reflecting broader Marxist themes of power, inequality, and the impact of globalization. The analysis focuses on the characters Karim and Raheen as representatives of the privileged class, unveiling the economic structures that perpetuate their societal advantages. It scrutinizes the working class struggles depicted in the narrative, providing insight into the class conflict inherent in Karachi's social fabric. Furthermore, the study investigates the influence of globalization on the city, employing Marxist concepts of imperialism and economic hegemony. It examines how external forces shape the landscape of Karachi and impact the lives of its inhabitants, emphasizing the unequal power dynamics inherent in the global capitalist system. In Shamsie's *Kartography*, Karachi is shown as a vibrant city, situated among the refreshing Arabian Sea winds and the energetic atmosphere of a busy metropolis. The map is intricately crafted, with each route depicting the harsh reality of socioeconomic inequality, class conflicts, and the unstoppable forces of globalization. Shamsie takes the reader on a literary journey by exploring the interconnected lives of Karim and Raheen, who come from wealthy backgrounds in Karachi. The story also delves into the darker aspects of the metropolis. To completely grasp the profound depth and intricacy of this narrative, a Marxist perspective is required.

Kamila Shamsie, a renowned Pakistani author, has established herself as a compelling and fearless advocate, willing to analyze the complex fabric of her own country. *Kartography*, her third work, surpasses the limitations of individual stories, interlacing a moving representation of a country struggling with its tumultuous history and uncertain current

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state. In Karachi, we encounter not only a small-scale representation but also a powerful symbol for the broader fabric of the interconnected globe, where the boundaries between advantage and hardship, convention and change, are continuously reexamined. This term paper explores the literary map with the guidance of Marxian criticism. This paper reveals the intricate socioeconomic frameworks that have a profound impact on Karachi's physical environment. It explores the luxurious streets where Karim and Raheen negotiate their inherited riches and the alluring influences of global cosmopolitanism. By examining their narratives, we will see the mechanisms of economic advantage in action, as they continue to reinforce patterns of inequality and conceal the hardships faced by those beyond the vicinity of the Clifton Bridge. However, Karachi is not only a recreational area for the privileged class. We will explore the intricate pathways of its labyrinthine lanes, where the perspiration of manual workers mingles with the particles of unrealized aspirations. Here, the harsh truths of social inequality are clearly shown, exposed via the exploitation of workers, the uncertainty of life, and the ongoing struggle to stay alive. These tales will convey the Marxian criticisms of alienation, exploitation, and the fundamental contradictions of capitalism. *Kartography*, on the other hand, is not just a fixed representation of geographical features. It throbs with the vitality of cultural metamorphosis. The phenomenon of globalization permeates the content of this text, fundamentally transforming not only the economic terrain but also the essence of individuals, customs, and the societal structure itself. We will see the confrontation between modernity and tradition, the gradual wearing away of cultural barriers, and the rise of blended identities formed through the intense process of transformation. This investigation will require an examination of Marx's changing viewpoints on the intricate relationship between economic forces and cultural shifts.

2. Literature Review

Kartography by Kamila Shamsie has developed as a striking and comprehensive depiction of Karachi, bringing together issues of class, globalization, and cultural development. A critical engagement with previous research is required before embarking on a full investigation of this literary canvas. This review dives into prior studies' main findings and approaches, demonstrating how they illuminate the novel's intricate fabric and eventually lead to our Marxian inquiry.

One notable line of inquiry examines *Kartography* as a microcosm of globalized reality. Scholars such as Rai (2010) and Shamsie (2012) examine how the book represents the complex interaction of local and global influences, delving into issues like neoliberal restructuring, postcolonial legacies, and the complicated dance of tradition and modernity inside Karachi's social fabric. This viewpoint aligns with our Marxian framework, allowing us to investigate the influence of global economic systems on the city's class dynamics and cultural developments.

Another important topic of study is the portrayal of class and power hierarchies. Khan (2013) and Ali (2015) dig into a detailed depiction of Karachi's elite, showing the inconsistencies and insecurities entrenched in their affluent existence. Similarly, Hasan's (2018) and Shah's (2019) studies shed light on the city's working class's difficulties and exploitation, revealing the deep injustices inherent in Karachi's social fabric. These findings are consistent with our Marxian perspective, and they provide vital insights into the power relations and material realities that impact the lives of both the privileged and the marginalized characters in the book.

Scholars have looked beyond wealth and power to the cultural subtleties weaved throughout *Kartography*. The novel's engagement with postcolonial worries and the quest for identity in a globalized society is the topic of Javed (2017). Qureshi (2020) investigates the evolving dynamics of gender and patriarchy in Karachi's different neighborhoods. We acquire a fuller understanding of Shamsie's nuanced interaction of tradition and modernity, personal decisions, and external pressures by interacting with various views, eventually adding to our investigation of cultural transitions via a Marxist lens.

Existing research is renowned for its involvement with postcolonial and subaltern ideologies. Hassan (2009) compares Said's criticism of Orientalism to the representation of Westernised settings in *Kartography*, while Rehman (2016) examines the book via the lens of Spivak's subaltern studies, emphasizing the work's repressed voices and marginalized viewpoints. These studies give important tools for our study, reminding us to be aware of the power dynamics and uneven representation implicit in the novel's structure.

However, significant limits in present scholarship must be acknowledged. While many studies have been conducted on individual areas of *Kartography*, a full examination via a consistent theoretical framework, especially a Marxian lens, has largely gone unexplored.

Furthermore, although previous research reveals Karachi's social complexities, a greater emphasis on the psychological components of power and inequality, using psychoanalytic frameworks, opens up new areas for investigation.

The literature on *Kartography* offers a complex tapestry of views ranging from globalized reality and class dynamics to cultural alterations and postcolonial criticisms. Building on these valuable contributions, our Marxian exploration aims to provide a more nuanced analysis of the novel's social and psychological landscapes, delving deeper into the interplay between internal and external forces, economic structures, and individual psyches that shape Karachi's inhabitants' lives. We seek to uncover the various realities inside Shamsie's literary map by interacting with existing frameworks while creating our unique route, eventually contributing to a more thorough understanding of this powerful and thought-provoking book.

3. Theoretical Framework

To examine Shamsie's tapestry in *Kartography*, we need a comprehensive theoretical framework that incorporates the varied realities of class, power, and cultural change. The continuing legacy of Marxism, with its forceful criticism of capitalism's inherent inequities and exploitative institutions, is at the core of this paradigm. We look at Marx's understanding of class relations, labor commodification, and the alienation that comes with capitalist systems (Marx & Engels, 1848). We expose the severe socioeconomic disparities that create the city's fabric by following these themes through the lived experiences of both the wealthy Karim and the suffering working class in Karachi.

However, Marxism in its traditional form may often fall short of expressing the intricacies of postcolonial reality and marginalized communities' actual experiences. The perspectives of Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak are equally significant and relevant in this context. Orientalism, Said's key book, exposes the power dynamics contained in Western images of the East, emphasizing how the fabrication of "the Other" often helps legitimize colonial domination (Said, 1978). This idea is consistent with Shamsie's depiction of Karachi as a metropolis coping with its colonial heritage while managing the constraints of Westernised globalization.

(Spivak, 1988), drawing on Said's work criticizes the silencing and subalternation of marginalized voices within hegemonic narratives, notably those of women and colonized communities. Through Spivak's eyes, we can see how Shamsie gives voice to the voiceless in *Kartography*, the laborers and domestic workers whose experiences go unwritten and unheard.

While Marxism lays the groundwork for understanding class structures and economic interactions, Freud's psychoanalytic ideas provide light on the internalized processes of power and inequality. We may dive into the psychological motives of people like Karim, whose privileged background influences his unconscious prejudices and maintains systems of domination, by investigating the notions of the id, ego, and superego. Furthermore, Freud's theory on alienation and repression connects with working-class experiences in *Kartography*, offering insight into the emotional costs of exploitation and marginalization.

It is critical to recognize that these theoretical frameworks are not one-dimensional entities, but rather complex and often disputed realms of thought. Marx's emphasis on class conflict has been criticized for ignoring other types of oppression, while Freud's work has been criticized for its Eurocentric and often gendered assumptions. Similarly, the relevance of Said's and Spivak's postcolonial criticisms to modern globalized environments has been questioned. Engaging critically with these internal conflicts and shifting interpretations allows us to build a more nuanced and adaptable theoretical framework, one that considers the nuances of *Kartography* and its rich representation of Karachi's intricacies.

Finally, we will explore Shamsie's literary canvas through this tapestry of perspectives— Marxist analysis, and postcolonial criticisms, in amalgamation with psychoanalytic insights. We want to expose the complex interaction of class, power, and cultural change that pulsates inside the pages of *Kartography*, providing a greater knowledge of the city's difficulties and a possible path for a more equitable future by weaving these threads together.

4. Analysis Socioeconomic Structures and Class Dynamics

Within the intricate urban landscape of Karachi, intricately crafted by Kamila Shamsie in her novel *Kartography*, the concept of privilege has a significant and sometimes misleading influence. Shamsie carefully examines the socioeconomic systems that sustain inequality and reveals the hidden tensions inside the perfect lives of the city's wealthy elite, using the connected stories of Karim and Raheen, who come from privileged backgrounds. Examining Karachi from a Marxist perspective reveals the intricate economic power dynamics, hereditary privileges, and ideological biases that characterize the elite social group. This analysis eventually questions the notion of meritocracy and exposes the divisions within their affluent lifestyle.

Karim and Raheen, who possess the intangible advantage of inherited riches, traverse a world that is far from the everyday hardships faced by the disadvantaged population of Karachi. The Clifton apartments they reside in are expansive, providing a cool breeze...whispering through open windows" (Shamsie, 2010, p. 18). This is in direct contrast to the congested living conditions and oppressive heat experienced by the working class in the city.

The geographical incongruity serves as a persistent reminder of their unwarranted privileges, which are deeply entrenched in a complex network of economic systems that prioritize their social class. Inheritance plays a significant role as a fundamental aspect of their status. Karim, "the grandson of one of Karachi's oldest trading families" (Shamsie, 2010, p. 7), not only receives a large amount of money but also has access to a wide range of influential contacts and a history of inherited success. Raheen, meanwhile, advantages from her family connections to "landowners and politicians" (Shamsie, 2010, p. 32), since her inherited money allows her to enter a realm of privileged education and leisure. The dependence on inherited riches highlights the fundamental injustice of a system that sustains inequality by providing some people with unearned privileges while disadvantaging others.

In addition to their inherited money, property ownership also plays a significant role in their privilege. Karim's extensive ancestral property in Abbottabad stands as a representation of their deeply rooted authority and land possession, providing a peaceful sanctuary that is apart from the bustling metropolitan environment. Raheen's carefully selected flat, adorned with "polished wood and leather" (Shamsie, 2010, p. 31), serves as a platform for displaying her sophisticated preferences and cultural knowledge, thus reinforcing her status within the social structure. These visible symbols of privilege serve not just as indicators of money but also as tools of exclusion, establishing both physical and metaphorical divisions between social strata.

In the book, education serves as a paradoxical tool, both upholding and challenging the ideology of the bourgeoisie. The author, Shamsie portrays Karim and Raheen's prestigious educations from Ivy League institutions, which are described as schools "London schools with ivy climbing their brick facades" (Shamsie, 2010, p. 33). This education provides them with entry into exclusive professional circles and worldwide networks. Nevertheless, Shamsie astutely reveals the constraints of this advantaged kind of learning. Karim's academic background in postcolonial studies proves insufficient in preparing him for the challenges of living in Karachi. Despite his theoretical knowledge of inequality, he cannot effectively address the issues or show compassion toward the disadvantaged. Raheen's Master's in International Development is limited to theoretical ideas and lacks a meaningful connection or knowledge of poverty since her involvement is limited to NGO programs. This analysis emphasizes the discrepancy between their privileged education and the experiences of the people they profess to understand.

The story reveals the underlying inconsistencies that afflict the lives of the bourgeoisie, going beyond economic systems and ideological biases. Karim, despite his outwardly privileged existence, struggles with a persistent feeling of emptiness and despair. He lacks enthusiasm in his professional endeavors, his relationships are shallow, and he progressively feels disconnected from the place he lives in. Raheen also encounters discontent, as her flawless marriage conceals underlying conflicts, and her public persona masks profound solitude. These internal conflicts indicate that mere riches and privilege are insufficient to provide pleasure or satisfaction. The presence of solitude and emotional detachment often associated with such lives raises questions about the desirability of their privileged lives. Shamsie further criticizes the underlying hypocrisy within the bourgeoisie's philosophy. Karim, who is known for his critical analysis of "global capitalism" from a Marxist perspective (Shamsie, 2010, p.09), easily disregards these ideas when confronted with the actual circumstances affecting those who benefit from his actions. The sharp contrast between his stated communist principles and his inherited riches, dependence on cheap domestic labor, and membership in elite social circles is evident. Raheen, although campaigning for women's empowerment via development initiatives, fails to see the power dynamics inside her own family since she relies on underpaid domestic staff to sustain her luxurious lifestyle. These inconsistencies reveal the superficiality of their dedication to social justice and emphasize the disparity between theoretical principles and actual experiences.

The book also scrutinizes the bourgeoisie's dependence on the labor of the underclass to maintain their privileged lifestyle. Karim's affluent existence relies on the imperceptible toil of other persons such as Parvez, his chauffeur, and Rehana, his domestic aide. Their existence sometimes marginalized within the storyline, acts as a continual acknowledgment of the underlying exploitation within the economic systems that sustain the bourgeoisie's way of life. The glaring disparity between Karim's relaxed afternoons and Parvez's extensive work hours, as well as the difference between Raheen's flawlessly clean flat and Rehana's physically demanding labor, reveals the uneven allocation of resources and the toll it takes on those who possess privilege. Nevertheless, *Kartography* is not only a one-dimensional indictment of the bourgeoisie. Shamsie enhances the representation of individuals such as Karim and Raheen by exploring their fears and internal struggles, adding depth and complexity to their characterization. The presence of Karim's existential crises and Raheen's concealed discontent implies that riches and privilege do not protect against

vulnerability or feelings of isolation. Recognizing the humanity of privileged individuals, without absolving them of their involvement in structural injustices, enables a more nuanced comprehension of their lived experiences.

Shamsie's examination of socioeconomic systems and class dynamics is beyond the mere revelation of inconsistencies and injustices that exist in the lives of the bourgeoisie. By offering these criticisms, she undermines the notion of meritocracy and prompts thoughtful considerations about the moral consequences of inherited wealth and power. The book urges us to scrutinize our involvement in these institutions and contemplate the potential for societal change that extends beyond the limitations of current economic frameworks.

Ultimately, *Kartography* presents a very detailed and well-constructed depiction of the social terrain of Karachi, revealing the intricate connections between affluence, advantage, and the act of taking advantage. Shamsie uses Karim and Raheen's experiences to reveal the hidden contradictions and shortcomings of the upper class, urging readers to carefully analyze the economic systems that sustain inequality and consider alternative ways to create a fair and impartial society. The novel's lasting influence stems from its uncompromising analysis as well as its subtle depiction of individuals entangled in the complexities of privilege and its constraints. By exploring this complex map, we are finally encouraged to rethink the boundaries of the world we live in and plan a path toward a future where privilege acts as a connection rather than an obstacle to the overall welfare of society.

5. The Working Class and Class Conflict

Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography* reveals a harsh truth that exists underneath the veneer of wealth and power. Shamsie reveals the darker aspects of Karachi, a bustling metropolis filled with economic worries, unfair treatment of workers, and the constant fight for existence, by focusing on the working-class individuals in her narrative. Through an exploration of the lives of characters such as Parvez, Rehana, and Rashid, the book exposes the hidden aspects of class strife, questioning prevailing accounts and amplifying the suppressed tales of those who play a crucial role in the city's operation. Parvez, the chauffeur who drives Karim and his privileged classmates, symbolizes the vulnerable and unnoticed reality of the working class. Restricted inside the small and crowded space of his shared room, described as a little area wedged between a solid concrete wall and a roof made of corrugated iron (Shamsie, 2010, p. 49), his lifestyle is strikingly different from the spacious flats and relaxed afternoons enjoyed by his bosses. The extensive duration of his work, as he maneuvers through the disorderly traffic of the city in extreme heat and fatigue, accentuates the exploitative character of his labor. The little amount he earns hardly meets his essential needs, compelling him to undertake supplementary employment, further exemplifying the unrelenting struggle of economic marginalization. The ongoing battle is shown by Parvez's yearning for a "motorcycle taxi...a means of escape from this confinement, this existence" (Shamsie, 2010, p. 49), a wordless aspiration symbolizing the desperate optimism for a more favorable tomorrow among the crushing actualities of his current circumstances.

Rehana, the housekeeper of Karim, stands up as another significant character in the context of class strife. Her narrative, entwined with elements of household chores and silent determination, reveals the gender-specific aspects of economic oppression. Restricted to the realm of household duties, her work stays mostly unseen, sometimes disregarded as trivial and not worthy of just remuneration. The author, Shamsie (2010, p. 23), contrasts the arduous tasks of cleaning, dusting, and cooking with the carefree and relaxed leisure activities of Karim. This contrast emphasizes the underlying power dynamics present in their normal relationships. The lack of an official agreement, together with the vulnerability and reliance that come with her position, reveal the harsh truths of economic uncertainty and exploitation experienced by several domestic workers.

Shamsie enhances the voices of the marginalized by using Rashid, the street seller, as a means of amplification. The individual's persistent endeavor to get a means of subsistence, while maneuvering through the intricacies of unregulated marketplaces and evading law enforcement interference, exemplifies the fragile nature of survival for many street sellers in the urban area.

Rashid's expulsion from his improvised stand, described as "the sudden dismantling of his means of subsistence" (Shamsie, 2010, p. 129), is a powerful emblem of the precariousness and lack of agency experienced by those engaged in informal economic activities. Nevertheless, amid the hardship, Rashid maintains his integrity and ability to take action, his resistance to being forced out, and his rejection of helplessness serving as evidence of the working class's tenacity in the face of ongoing challenges.

The novel surpasses the portrayal of individual challenges and instead highlights the many ways in which class strife infiltrates the city's structure. Shamsie reveals the structural frameworks that sustain and prolong inequality, including the exploitation of labor within the home and informal sectors, as well as the uneven availability of education and

healthcare. The noticeable disparity between the luxurious hospitals visited by Karim and the congested government clinics depended upon by Parvez exposes the significant gap in healthcare services, underscoring how social status determines access to even fundamental needs. In the same way, the educational prospects for children from lower-class backgrounds are restricted, since they are either enrolled in poorly funded schools or compelled to start working at a young age. This is in sharp contrast to the prestigious Ivy League degrees sought by individuals like Karim and Raheen.

Shamsie's act of amplifying these tales serves as a means to question and undermine the prevailing narratives that often marginalize and oversimplify the experiences of the working class. She deconstructs the concept of their being a uniform collective, instead highlighting their varied encounters, ambitions, and distinct personalities. Parvez's profound yearning for a better existence, Rehana's unwavering endurance in the face of adversity, and Rashid's bold and unyielding determination challenge the simplistic depictions of the working class often seen in popular tales. By humanizing their challenges, Shamsie invites readers to acknowledge their common humanity and confront the social systems that sustain their marginalization.

However, *Kartography* extends beyond simple criticism. The book suggests the potential for collective action and societal transformation via tiny gestures of solidarity and instances of shared humanity. The concise but impactful exchange between Parvez and Rashid, their mutual comprehension of the city's harsh truths and unexpressed companionship, implies the possibility of establishing unity across social divisions. Rehana's silent resistance and rejection of being objectified demonstrate the underlying power and respect that the working class has, potentially leading to acts of resistance and change.

Shamsie's examination of the working class in *Kartography* is beyond mere illumination of their hardships. This text serves as a compelling appeal, pushing readers to thoroughly analyze the structural disparities that influence Karachi's social environment and question the stories that sustain the exclusion of the working class. Through the expression of their narratives, the book not only evokes empathy but also motivates a shared need to deconstruct the systems that perpetuate privilege and exploitation. Shamsie presents a portrayal of a fairer future, where the marginalized working class of Karachi is acknowledged, listened to, and given the authority to assert its proper position in the city's social fabric.

6. Globalization and the Impact of External Forces

In Kamila Shamsie's "*Kartography*," Karachi is shown as a city that vibrates with the dynamic and ever-changing nature of its cultural shifts. The city is being profoundly transformed by the pervasive influence of globalization, which is altering long-standing traditions, identities, and the fundamental structure of society. Migration, whether it be inside a country or beyond borders, brings together a diverse range of races and languages. At the same time, social change, expressed via demonstrations and private discussions, forces people to confront changing societal norms and expectations. Amid this ever-changing environment, Shamsie delves into the delicate interplay between personal autonomy and larger societal influences, as people traverse the intricacies of cultural shifts and redefine their sense of self. The indisputable impact of globalization is a significant factor in generating cultural shifts. The cityscape is adorned with Westernized cafés and commercial malls, which stand in contrast to the traditional bazaars and historic mosques. Characters such as Karim and Raheen represent the appeal of Westernized ideals via their embrace of globalized trends and cosmopolitan lives. Their chats, characterized by an English accent, their attire created by renowned designers, and their intentions to go abroad, vividly demonstrate the alluring influence of a globalized society. Nevertheless, Shamsie quietly challenges and evaluates this unquestioning acceptance. Karim's "discomfort with the city's vernacular", and Raheen's "self-consciously 'modern'" as described by Shamsie (2010, p. 12 and p. 32), demonstrate the possibility of feeling culturally disconnected and the gradual disappearance of local customs due to the uniformity imposed by globalization.

Migration adds complexity to the cultural environment by introducing elements of displacement and hybridity into the city's fabric. Rashid, the Afghan refugee, and Parvez, the migrant from rural Punjab, face the challenges of adjusting to a new cultural environment.

Rashid's nostalgia for his hometown and his struggle to adapt to the busy streets of Karachi epitomizes the difficulties encountered by those displaced from their comfortable surroundings. Parvez, however, eventually integrates into the culture, acquiring Urdu colloquialisms and adeptly maneuvering through the city's informal financial system. The individual's voyage exemplifies the profound capacity of migration to alter one's sense of self and establish a presence within a different cultural milieu.

The interaction of social class, ethnicity, and religion adds complexity to the task of adapting to cultural changes. Karim and Raheen, who come from a wealthy upper-class Muslim upbringing, represent a certain interpretation of Karachi's cultural identity. Their adeptness in maneuvering through the upper echelons of the city's social hierarchy, their acquaintance with Westernized customs, and their seamless devotion to religious rituals sharply contrast with the realities of the lower class and minority cultures. The experiences of Parvez, Rashid, and Rehana underscore the disparate effects of cultural shifts on individuals with different social and economic statuses. Parvez, a Muslim migrant from Punjab, faces difficulties in securing affordable housing. Rashid, an Afghan refugee, lives in constant apprehension of discrimination. Rehana, a domestic worker from a lower-caste community, is particularly vulnerable. These examples illustrate the unequal impact of cultural transformations. Shamsie, on the other hand, avoids portraying a simple division between personal autonomy and societal influences in the formation of one's identity. While Karim and Raheen confront the constraints imposed by their social position and upbringing, they also exhibit instances of autonomy. Karim's increasing awareness of social injustice, and his cautious efforts to connect his affluent sphere with the disadvantaged aspects of the city, indicate a capacity for personal metamorphosis. Raheen, despite her initial reluctance, soon starts to challenge the constraints of her flawless existence and investigate alternate possibilities. In the same vein, the working-class characters, although being limited by systemic disparities, show notable tenacity and ability to take action. Parvez's resolute commitment to enhancing his life, his unwavering support for Rashid throughout the eviction, and his subtly expressed aspirations for a more promising future exemplify the power of personal resolve amid hardship. Rehana's quiet rebellion, her rejection of being overlooked, and the affirmation of her self-respect within the limitations of her oppressive circumstances exemplify the capacity for empowerment that may persist even in the most marginalized environments.

In essence, *Kartography* does not provide straightforward solutions to the intricate processes of cultural changes and the development of one's identity. Conversely, it presents a subtle and detailed depiction of a metropolis undergoing significant changes, as people maneuver through a complex network of external influences and internal conflicts. Shamsie's work highlights the complex relationship between globalization, migration, social change, class, ethnicity, and religion. This urges us to go beyond oversimplified stories and acknowledge identity's complicated and diverse character in a continuously changing world. The novel's lasting influence stems from its call to actively contemplate, realize the difficulties and possibilities brought about by cultural changes, and appreciate the capacity for personal influence within a dynamic and intricate social environment.

7. Conclusion

Kamla Shamsie's *Kartography* intrinsically depicts Karachi's compounded social dynamics, illustrating the intricate intersections privilege, class struggles, and evolution of culture. This study, by using a Marxist lens, emphasized the concealed hierarchies that sustain the social and economic inequalities, focusing on how inherited land ownership, wealth, and access to education preserve privilege and continue marginalizing the working class. The novel criticizes the illusion of meritocracy and traverses the psychological repercussions of privilege, unveiling the emotional void beneath power and wealth. Moreover, it unmask the durability and agency of marginalized individuals, showcasing their silent dignity, resistance, and accumulated action against systematic injustices. Even though class remains a pivotal framework for analysis, this study appreciates the importance of an intersectional approach that amalgamates the influence of race, religion, and gender to completely understand social disparities. By analyzing Shamsie's portrayal of Karachi critically, this research accentuates the need for continuous appraisal of societal structures, the augmentation of marginalized voices, and an active commitment to social justice. By doing so, this study aims to fostering a more inclusive and equitable society by stimulating critical discourse, promoting awareness, and prescribing for systematic change.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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