



THIRD –WORLD VOICES IN THE FIRST-WORLD METROPOLIS: CLASS, IDEOLOGY AND THE IMPERIAL GAZE IN H.M. NAQVI’S “HOME BOY”: A MARXIST STUDY

Muhammad Usman Ansari

PhD (Scholar)

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Khalid Mehmood Sajid

NCBA&E SUB-CAMPUS, MULTAN

Abstract

The study explores “Home Boy” (2009) by H. M. Naqvi using the overlapping lenses of Marxist theory and the Postcolonial theory, and concludes that the novel provides an incisive examination of the way global capitalism and the ideology of imperialism define the lived experience of Pakistani Muslim immigrants in post-9/11 New York City. The analysis places the narrative in the context of wider frameworks of economic disparity and cultural domination, showing how identity is framed and bound in imperial spaces. Based on the concept of Fredric Jameson referring to the first-world/third-world dichotomy in metropolitan centers and the theory offered by Louis Althusser to dependent relationships as ideological interpellation, the article proves how the ambitions of the main characters concerning the rise in social ranks become methodically disrupted. Their efforts to become part of the American society is interrupted by racialized and religiously coded imperial gaze that reinvents them as preputial outsiders, despite their ambitions to gain a higher class or fitting into the American culture. The research also resonates with the recent literature on precarity as a structural effect of capitalism, the neoliberalization of surveillance, and the necropolis of the carceral. It shows how the environment created after 9/11 exacerbates these processes, turning the aspiration of assimilation into an alienate state, in which belonging becomes more and more impossible. Finally, this study places “Home Boy” as a critical text in the contemporary South Asian literature that has shown how it reveals the imbalanced nature of global capitalism and the calcification of colonial structures of power in the societies that proclaim itself to be democratic.

Keywords: Class, First-World Metropolis, Ideology, Ideological State Apparatuses, Imperial Gaze, Marxism, (ISAs), Third-World Voices,

Introduction

“Home Boy” by H. M. Naqvi is a narration of three young Pakistani immigrants, Shehzad (Chuck), Ali Chaudhary (AC), and Jamshed Khan (Jimbo), on the eve of September 11 attacks in the glitzy, ambitious New York City. The novel follows their path through the hedonistic ideals of the American Dream to their savage indignation of decline in the wake of the collapse of the Twin Towers, and, framed against the backdrop of the War on Terror. The book is a narrative of a handful of learned, secular, and monetarily ambitious young men to be targeted because of the whims of the government, bloodshed, and mental torture.

The title, Third-World Voices in the First-World Metropolis, encapsulates the core friction that drives Naqvi through his narrative, with the word metropolis used in Marxist theory and Postcolonial theory discourse to depict not just a large city but the imperial center of global capitalism; the seat of economic, political and though not cultural power that exploits and subjugates the gangs of the Global South In the novel, New York City behaves effectively as an example of such a metropolis, that place where a promise of opportunity and upward mobility awaits immigrant workers but where the power to expel, imprison, or otherwise disappear those very subjects when they become inconvenient ideologically.

Recent criticism of Pakistani English fiction has opened up an important need for focusing on the way that the texts explore the dynamics of class, neoliberal capitalism and the formation of identity today, and it is notable that “Home Boy” is not the first text that had a sustained interest in how this needs to be done nowadays. Expanding on this critical



framework, the current study presents an extended intersectional reading of the novel that prefigures the dialectical relation between a state exploitation of the proletariat and a racialized state violence, showing how global capitalism and imperial ideology come together to form and restrict the immigrant subject.

Statement of the Problem

Although there is a growing academic interest in “Home Boy” by H. M. Naqvi as one of the prime illustrations of the post-9/11 immigrant experience, the available critical response is conceptually disjointed. The Marxist interpretation of economic precarity and exploitation of classes is typically distinguished in contrast to the Postcolonial approaches to racialized state violence, ideological interpellation, and the imperial gaze. This gap restricts an in-depth comprehension of the tension of the novel. In the essence of the novel is a fundamental contradiction. The main characters are educated, have professional qualifications, and goals constructed by first-world capitalism. But even these privileges cannot secure them against carceral violence. Their postcolonial identity still characterizes them as vulnerable that can be redefined by the state not as model minorities but as potential threats. Consequently, three main problems remain unsolved. Firstly, the protagonists lie in an indistinct status within the old archetypes of Marxism. They are rather in a transitional zone where race, religion and citizenship define their relationship with capital. Second, the functioning of the neoliberal prison regime as an extension of economic precarity instead of an exception to it is not thoroughly examined. Third, criticism has no structural explanation of how ideological interpellation, the state calling people threats, dominates the class identity and strengthens colonial hierarchies. This study fills these gaps by presenting a combined Marxist-Postcolonial approach. It claims that the novel introduces the notion of class exploitation and colonial othering not as distinct phenomena, but a combination of forces that are at work in the post 9/11 imperial metropolis.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze how H.M. Naqvi’s “Home Boy” represents the dialectical relationship between class aspiration and postcolonial identity, demonstrating why the protagonists’ economic integration into the first-world metropolis fails to protect them from racialized state violence.
2. To examine how the novel integrates the concepts of economic precarity and carceral state violence to produce a unified critique of post-9/11 imperial capitalism.

Research Questions

1. How does the ideological interpellation of the protagonists as terrorists rather than as professionals systematically negate their class position and re-inscribe colonial hierarchies within the first-world metropolis?
2. In what ways does the novel demonstrate that the neoliberal prison regime of detention, torture, and psychological breaking operates not as an exception to neoliberal capitalism but as its logical extension for third-world subjects?

Literature Review

Since its publication, “Home Boy” (2009) has received a much wider critical reception. The novel has been analyzed by scholars using a variety of theoretical viewpoints, including Marxism, Postcolonialism, the theory of ideology by Louis Althusser, the literature on neoliberalism, and the carceral state theory (Karim, 2018; Al Zayed, 2023; Khan, 2019; Shah & Sheeraz, 2022; Fakhruddin, 2025). This literature review integrates the latest and the most impactful works in this scholarly field. It systematizes these researches in themes and



underlines the major gaps that render a combined Marxist-Postcolonial analysis warranted and timely.

Marxist and Postcolonial Intersections in Pakistani English Fiction

An important addition to the theoretical insight into “Home Boy” lies in the work of Asim Karim (2018), who examines the convergence of Marxist and Postcolonial perspectives in chosen fictions by Pakistani writers, writing in the English language. Through discussions in the classical Marx and post-Marxism, especially the concepts of Louis Althusser and Fredric Jameson, Karim examines themes of class, class consciousness, and ideology systems in novels “Home Boy”, “In Other Rooms, Other Wonders”, “Invisible People”, and “Maps for Lost Lovers” (Karim, 2018).

Karim states that Pakistani English fiction has not always been able to fully address issues of class relations and the changing face of global capitalism. “Home Boy” is, in these respects, an important exception because of its consistent attention to these issues. Notably, Karim uses the theory of imperialism formulated by Jameson to analyze the first world/third world divide and the rise of the third world subjectivities in imperial metropolitan spaces. This point of view is particularly important in the context of how “Home Boy” signifies the experience of Pakistani immigrants in the world-capital of New York City.

He also demonstrates that Pakistani English fiction is beginning to be more and more indicative of the demands of global capitalism whilst exposing the inner reality of Pakistan, such as the endurance of a feudal-capitalist order, inequality between classes, the countryside-city divide, and unequal development. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that Karim manages to provide a theoretical framework of uniting between Marxist and Postcolonial approaches, his work is rather abstract. He lacks a deeper close reading of “Home Boy” to show how the issues of class and postcolonial identity intersect with possible narration. This current work critically expands upon the original concepts presented by Karim into a step further to provide an extensive textual analysis of how these forces interact throughout the framework of the novel itself.

Neoliberalism, Precarity, and the Reserve Army of Capital

Allegories of Neoliberalism: Contemporary South Asian Fictions, Capital, and Utopia by Sarker Hasan Al Zayed (2023) has, so far, one of the most thorough readings of “Home Boy” through the Marxist lens. He contextualizes the novel as a part of a larger debate about the portrayal of capitalism in contemporary South Asian fiction, alongside novels by Aravind Adiga, Mohsin Hamid, Amitav Ghosh and Arundhati Roy. His personal approach relies on historical materialism, considering precarity not as a momentary event, a case, but as structural consequence of capitalist systems that constantly create vulnerable populations.

In a dedicated chapter, Al Zayed explores the theme of precariousness in both “Home Boy” and “The Reluctant Fundamentalist”. He also criticizes prevailing accounts where they argue that precarity is systematically made by advancing the idea that has been proposed by Karl Marx of the reserve army of labor. He provides close textual analysis and demonstrates that the novel reveals the unsteadiness of global capitalism, where people continually move in and out of the workforce, resulting in the constant sense of insecurity. He also points out how global finance and empire create this state of affairs, where he talks of a system, which creates the overabundance of labor force that is always fighting over scarce opportunities. As noted by Al Zayed, these dynamics cloud the prospect of a more just social order, and this deprives characters such as Shehzad of the right to a non-capitalist future.



In spite of the power of this Marxist interpretation, the analysis of Al Zayed is mostly limited by political economy. It gives little attention to the particularly postcolonial aspects of the vulnerability of the protagonists, especially how their identity as Pakistani Muslims in the United States compounds their precarious situation. His work is the starting point of the current research, which combines this class-based approach with postcolonial theory like othering and the imperial gaze.

In a similar direction of inquiry, their research was based on the work of Louis Althusser, particularly, his theory of the ideological state apparatuses and interpellation. In his work on ideological hailing, Nadeem Khan (2019) applies this framework of Althusser to both “Home Boy” and “Drinking from a Bitter Cup”. He claims that ideology has found its way into the life of society so much that people see it as normal and inevitable. Using the argument of Althusser, Khan describes an ideology as an imaginary relation that determines the way people perceive their actual state of existence.

This is the point of view when applied to “Home Boy” in which the protagonists seem to experience freedom when they are, in effect, under the influence of ideological forces. Their preferences are molded and frequently constrained by prevailing systems of thought which provide the ways of being and seeing that are acceptable. Khan demonstrates that there is an insidious control over the actions of the characters by ideological state apparatuses which creates a sort of false consciousness inhibiting any real agency.

Although this reading is worthy as it draws attention to the structuring of subjectivity by ideology, it is deficient in many aspects. Khan does not address quite critically the concrete nature of the ideology at work, i.e., how, in the post-9/11 context, state institutions no longer merely proclaim people as abstract subjects, but rather as racialized and religious otherness. This work expands on the insights of Khan to investigate how imperial gaze can also be seen as an independent ideological agent, the identity and experience of third-world subjects in the first-world metropolis.

The Neoliberal Prison Regime and Carceral Critique

Ayaz Muhammad Shah and Muhammad Sheeraz (2022) contribute significantly with their discussion on the neoliberal prison regime in “Home Boy”. They refer to the idea of the shock therapy developed by Naomi Klein, in which the detention system introduced in the US in the aftermath of 9/11 resorts to severe interrogation methods to confuse prisoners, deprive them of their old identities, and, hopefully, rebrand them into law-abiding citizens. Through this framework, they analyze how the character of Chuck is placed in physical and psychological violence to destroy his sense of self and construct his identity.

Nevertheless, Shah and Sheeraz underline that such coercive methods eventually do not bring desired results. Instead of effectively recreating the detainees, the practices create resistance. In their analysis, the novel depicts the reduction of Pakistani Muslim immigrants to a position of psychological and physical vulnerability, even though they are not completely restored as meek subjects. Rather, the system reveals itself as violent and creates the modes of defiance.

Such carceral reading is especially useful when it comes to emphasizing the role of state violence in the second half of the novel. Simultaneously, its scale is more or less narrow, because it considers the prison system in relative isolation. It fails to entirely relate this violence to bigger systems of neoliberal capitalism in which the narrative is framed. The current contribution to their insights suggests that the neoliberal prison regime is not an exception, but rather a kind of logical extension neoliberal capitalism, an argument that both concurs with,



though moves beyond, the analysis of Shah and Sheeraz, in addition to all further Marxist understandings.

Postcolonial Identity, Systematic Violence, and Resistance

Current scholarship has persisted with postcolonial and critical race interpretations of “Home Boy”, broadening its critical scope. Fakhruddin S. R (2025) In American Systematic Violence as an Impetus of Muslim Oppression in “Home Boy” the theory of violence by Iris Marion Young is used. Based his analysis on the concept developed by Young that violence is a mechanism employed by stronger peoples to suppress those that are marginal. Fakhruddin explores how the novel is being systematically oppressed against by Muslim characters in the post-9/11 United States. His analysis elucidates the involvement of the state and the society in the modalities of physical and structural violence that affirm the marginalization of Muslim minorities.

In the same way, Fikret Guven (2019) interprets “Home Boy” as the counter-narrative to the Orientalist discourse of the Western world. He posits that the novel undermines hegemonic representations of Muslims by revealing and disrupting the patterns of stereotyping and othering. Guven argues that Naqvi complains about the American imperialism, interventions abroad and how it creates world inequalities. According to him, the story starts off as a familiar immigrant tale about aspiration and assimilation. The 9/11 event however derails this course, further aggravating a fragile stand of discrimination and exclusion.

A newer and more experimental way of hearing divides up as in a study of the novel in 2025 (Brown), which looks at it through the prism of the American road trip novel. This discussion examines the Shaman Run, a taxi ride between New York City and Connecticut, as a kind of updating of the ancient road narrative. The study argues that this transition between the space of freedom to that of surveillance and racialized control is achievable by juxtaposing the ideas of the open road and the traffic stop by Nancy Leong against the concept of the Brown Space by Sarah Sharma. This shift shows how, following 9/11, Muslim people are not included in communal mourning, but instead are viewed as the subject of suspicion.

Collectively, these works enrich the meaning of “Home Boy” by prefiguring the themes of violence, racialization, and narrative structure. Nevertheless, they continue to depend on different theoretical frameworks, which have to be approached more systematically to combine questions of class, race, and imperial power.

Critical Gaps and the Rationale for the Present Study

Even though the existing body of scholarship on “Home Boy” is thorough and diverse, yet a critical gap is present. Marxist approaches (Karim, 2018; Al Zayed, 2023) tend to focus on the economic precarity and the exploitation of classes, in comparison to postcolonial and critical race approaches (Khan, 2019; Fakhruddin, 2025; Guven, 2019), which focus on the identity, othering, and imperial gaze. Likewise, carceral studies (Shah & Sheeraz, 2022) provide valuable information about the state violence but frequently look at it independently of general economic frameworks. Consequently, an extended narrative of the cooperation of these dimensions remains absent. The issue of how the class ambitions of the protagonists are subverted by their postcolonial identity, or how the neoliberal prison regime is at once a carceral practice, has received insufficient attention.

Furthermore, the key change of the novel, the shift between assimilation and alienation, is not completely explained by the existing literature (Rasheed et al., 2023). The protagonists are initially so committed to American Dream promise. At the culmination point, they become



broken subjects, either displaced or alienated in the imperial metropolis. The issue of what influences this change is not properly tackled.

This study holds that the transformation of this nature can be explained solely via an embodied Marxist-Postcolonial approach. It combines class analysis with the postcolonial theory to show that the imperial gaze interpellates the subjects of the third world in manners that erode their class position systematically and exposes them to the full power of the neoliberal state (Shah & Sheeraz, 2022; Al Zayed, 2023).

Research Methodology

The research design used in this study is qualitative and interpretivist research design where close reading is the most basic method of literary analysis. It is a library-based literary investigation based purely on published secondary and first-order sources. “Home Boy” (HarperCollins, 2009) is the primary text used as the source of textual evidence. Peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and scholarly monographs published since 2018 and 2025 are considered secondary materials and will guarantee that the recent critical discourse is engaged with. Purposive sampling method is used to pick those sources that actively engage with either Marxist or Postcolonial theory (or both) in the context of “Home Boy” or the Pakistani English fiction in a wider context. Important theorists including Fredric Jameson, Louis Althusser, and Karl Marx informed its analytical framework, specifically in the context of terms like imperialism, ideological interpellation, and the reserve army of labor, as theorized by Sarker Hasan Al Zayed (2023).

The analysis procedure occurs in three phases. Originally, pertinent texts of “Home Boy” are traced, especially the ones concerning the representation of aspiration to classes, economic instability, state violence, or races of otherness. Second, there is the coding of these passages based on their clear theoretical direction: Marxist, Postcolonial, carceral. Third, the synthesized coded content is used to track patterns of intersection, by emphasizing the inventory of class and identity acting in a dialectical relation to each other.

In order to validate it, the study uses theoretical triangulation, combining various frameworks: Marxist, Postcolonial, Althusserian, and carceral, and comparing the findings with the existing literature (Karim, 2018; Al Zayed, 2023; Shah & Sheeraz, 2022; Rasheed, Kashif & Kazmi, 2023). Reliability is ensured by transparent audit trail of textual selections and analysis decision, as well as well-articulated and repeatable text coding criteria. Nevertheless, there are some drawbacks. The emphasis on one text limits the applicability of the results to other Pakistani English fiction works. Moreover, the dependence on the English-language scholarship can rule out the possible criticism on India in Urdu or other local languages. The interpretive aspect of close reading, too, provides the possibility of variability in interpretation, because various scholars might focus on different aspects of the text. The current work discusses the issues by ensuring that all interpretations are based upon evident textual data and proven theoretical considerations. Although these constraints exist, neither the integrated Marxist-Postcolonial approach is as comprehensive a lens as either is alone. It allows giving a better insight into the interaction of class aspiration and postcolonial identity, which eventually leads to the specific vulnerability of third-world subjects in the first-world metropolis (Karim, 2018; Al Zayed, 2023).

Theoretical Framework: Marxism, Postcolonialism, and the Imperial Metropolis

This analysis has three complementary theoretical foundations: the first-world/third-world dichotomy of global capitalism, as conceived by Fredric Jameson, the theory of



ideological state apparatuses and ideological interpellation developed by Louis Althusser, and recent Marxist-feminist scholarship on precarity as a structural characteristic of neoliberal capitalism (Karim 2018; Al Zayed, 2023).

Jameson and the First-World/Third-World Dichotomy

The most widely discussed and debated argument in Fredric Jameson (1983) is that third-world literature is a national allegory, which offers a place to begin to understand how “Home Boy” stages the encounter between the imperial center and its postcolonial others. Although Jameson was criticized on the homogenization of various literary traditions, it is worth noting his revelation on the structure relationship between the metropolis and the periphery (Karim, 2018). According to Karim, the thoughts of imperialism as promulgated by Jameson aid in the analysis of the first world/third world dichotomy and the rise of third world voices that in the imperial metropolises (Karim, 2018). This dichotomy in the novel by Naqvi is not only geographical but also psychological: the protagonists live not only in the physical territory of the First World but also are subject to constant hailing as subjects of the Third World by the institutions of the state apparatus they enter (Shah & Sheeraz 2022, 997).

Althusser and Ideological Interpellation

The interpretation of the post-9/11 state as it recalculates the identities of the protagonists can be viewed through the prism of the ideas of Louis Althusser, who described the process of interpellation the way ideology hails people as subjects (Karim, 2018). According to Althusser, ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) like the media, the legal system and the prison system serve to reproduce the conditions of capitalist production through the manner in which people perceive themselves and their social positions. In “Home Boy” the security apparatus of post-9/11 is displayed as an ideological machine that forcefully interpolates Shehzad and his friends not as young professionals or model minorities but as a potential terrorist (Rasheed, Kashif & Kazmi, 2023). The basis of this misperception, the discontinuity between the way the protagonists throughout imagine themselves and the way they are categorized by the state, is what generates the core conflict, which is the driving power behind the novel.

Precarity and the Reserve Army of Capital

Recent critical theory has fruitfully interpreted “Home Boy” through the prism of the concept of the reserve army of capital, developed by Marx, as the mass of workers who are non-employed or paid little wages but whose presence enables the capital to boost wage suppression and remind labor of its disciplinary force (Al Zayed, 2023). The chapter on Naqvi by Sarker Hasan Al Zayed, published in the book *Allegories of Neoliberalism* (2023), provides an extended scrutiny of the way the novel. Though, Naqvi, invites viewers to perceive the economic crises and allows the readers of Azzam a glimpse into the mechanisms of how workers become and remain employed by capitalism through a forced state of vulnerability (Al Zayed, 2023). This reading situates precarity, not as an incidental aspect of modern capitalism, but as a structuring production of vulnerable populations, an army of unemployed workers in the scale of the masses, waiting to spring on any job (Al Zayed, 2023). These processes, according to Al Zayed, are fetishistically concealing the possibility of forming an equal society and nullifying young heroes of the form of Shehzad, the party of a non-capitalist future (Al Zayed, 2023).

Class Aspirations and Their Limits: The False Promise of the Metropolis

Home Boy began with its characters fully committed to the ideology of the American Dream (Naqvi, 2009). Shehzad, later calling himself Chuck, is involved in financial services,



the core of the capitalist city of New York. His friends Ali as AC are seeking success in the creative and entertainment worlds, and it resembles the neoliberal ideal of the flexible, self-enterprising subject. The opening chapters of the book with the jalap prose and the hip-hop influences in the language reflect a feeling of delight sail along with the immigrant ambition: the feeling that in the metropolis everyone can reinvent themselves (Naqvi, 2009).

But the traces of this early hope are methodically traced out by the way the novel attends to the structural determinants that define immigrant life. The protagonists have a precarious role in the metropolitan hierarchy of the city even prior to 9/11 (Al Zayed, 2023). The novel exposes the way capitalism flings workers in and out of labor, which is demonstrated when Chuck loses his banking job and takes up the job of a cab driver, as Al Zayed argues. The upward mobility promise turns out to be a kind of false consciousness, a deceptive ideological promise that hides the true reality of exploitation (Karim 2018).

The Imperial Gaze and Ideological Interpellation

The events of September 11 present a radical break in “Home Boy”, and in its wake the imperial gaze is manifest and explicitly violent (Naqvi, 2009). Based on Edward Said and his notion of Orientalism, the following gaze can be interpreted as a gaze with the ability to construct the Muslim other as something dangerous, irrational, and incapable of assimilation. This gaze in the novel remains not abstract but it is institutionalized in the form of diverse state apparatuses. The media spreads stereotypical notions of Muslim men being terrorists, the police view the protagonists as being spied on and harassing them in open spaces, and federal agencies detain and question Chuck without a proper trial (Rasheed, Kashif & Kazmi, 2023).

Most recent critical discourse analysis by Rasheed Kashif Kazmi, 2023 also demonstrates that the novel presents Muslims as victims of systemic violence in the context of post-9/11. These are hate crimes, bad media portrayals, forced disappearance, physical abuse and daily racial discrimination. Another major change identified as central to the story is the change in assimilation to alienation. The characters are, first, trying to integrate themselves in the American society, but they are distanced by it slowly increasing suspicion and hostility.

A better explanation of this change can be linked to the ideological interpellation concept proposed by Louis Althusser (Karim, 2018). The protagonists internalize the beliefs of the American Dream before 9/11. They identify themselves as individuals, ambitious subjects, as members of the New York urban environment. Since 9/11, though, state agencies start praising them in a different way. They are no longer seen as individuals but are rather known as Muslims, Pakistanis (Rasheed et al., 2023). This reclassification is not symbolic only; this classification is strengthened with the help of coercive power. The experience of Chuck illustrates this change the most. He finds himself under a regime of neoliberal prison as defined by Ayaz Muhammad Shah and Muhammad Sheeraz, 2022 as a regiment of detention, interrogation, and psychological pressure to discipline and control racialized subjects. In this way the novel reveals how imperial gaze not only works at the perception level but by visible processes of state violence.

From Assimilation to Alienation: The Failure of Hybridity

The argument that “Home Boy” makes about the boundaries of postcolonial hybridity as a way of defending against an imperial authority is one of its most interesting observations (Karim, 2018). The concept of hybridity, which was developed by Homi K. Bhabha, a strong idea in which the identities are positioned in a fluid, in-between space that does not settle in



old categories, seems to be, at a first look, the one which can be applied to Chuck and his friends. They alternate between Pakistani and American cultural worlds with ease, and this implies that they possess this liminal identity (Naqvi, 2009). Nevertheless, the novel finally proves that this hybridity is not really protective (Rasheed et al., 2023). This multiplied identity is dissected by the gaze of the state, which diminishes the protagonists to one characteristic: that they are Muslims.

In this way, the novel questions more optimistic lines of work on postcolonial theory, which sees hybridity as repatriating or freedom-giving (Karim, 2018). In the post 9/11 context, hybridity is a location of exposure and not empowerment. The protagonists are stuck in the middle of the world, neither entirely Pakistani, where they can easily go home, nor entirely American, where they feel like they belong and are safe (Naqvi, 2009). This intermediate state becomes a vulnerability as they are placed in an ambiguous position that the state can manipulate and control (Shah & Sheeraz, 2022).

An analogous viewpoint is expressed in the comparative reading of “Home Boy” by the author Mariam John with the work of Ismat Chughtai. John stresses the alterations of depictions of self, nation, and culture to influence the Pakistani identity at various historical points. To her, the novel by Naqvi reveals the operating of a global, imperial gaze, which creates the image of a Pakistani Muslim male. This is more than just a mirror of the reality; it creates it. The identity of the terrorist is not a natural identity, but an imperial anxiety-construction, in which the protagonists are obliged to perform, regardless of who they are to themselves (Rasheed et al., 2023).

Data Collection and Analysis

The research design of this study is a qualitative and library-based documentary research that uses published textual material as the only source of data. There is no fieldwork, interviews, surveys, and experimentation. The process of data collection is structured into three primary types: primary, secondary and theoretical sources. “Home Boy” (Harper Collins, 2009) is the key text and the main data. Based on this text, the researchers systematically selected passages that refer to class aspiration, economic precarity, state violence, racialized othering, and immigrant experience to be analyzed.

The secondary sources include recent peer-reviewed scholarly publications (2018-25) to keep up with recent critical discussions. Sarker Hasan Al Zayed, 2023 & Asim Karim, 2018 present their Marxist views regarding precarity, neoliberalism, and the exploitation of classes. Fikret Guven (2019), Fakhrulddin S. R. is informed by postcolonial approaches. (2025), and Mariam John, concerning Orientalism, imperial gaze and identity. The use of Althusserian analysis is justified through Nadeem Khan, (2019) & Karim, 2018 with a focus on interpellation and ideological state apparatuses. Ayaz Muhammad Shah and Muhammad Sheeraz, 2022 consider the neoliberal prison regime, torture, and resistance through the perspectives of carceral.

The theoretical base is based on the principal thinkers and their ideas inform the analysis. It relies on Karl Marx (through Al Zayed, 2023) to analyze the relationships between classes and the concept of a reserve army of labor. Louis Althusser (Khan, 2019; Karim, 2018) educates the debate on the ideological interpellation and the involvement of state apparatuses. The first-world/third-world divide can be viewed through the prism of the work by Fredric Jameson (Karim, 2018). Besides, the concepts of Orientalism and the imperial gaze are analyzed by Edward Said (Guyen, 2019), and the concepts of shock therapy and neoliberal governance are understood by Naomi Klein (through Shah & Sheeraz, 2022).



There is a four-step systematic approach to data collection. The whole novel (around 300 pages) is read and then the pertinent passages are identified under purposive sampling in regard to the following themes: class, ideology, imperial gaze, state violence, and postcolonial identity. Second, the primary theoretical ideas and the appropriate referrals are represented based on the chosen secondary sources. Third, every data is systemized into systematic research log. Lastly, every entry is classified by the source, author, year, page number, thematic focus (e.g., class, ideology, violence), and text excerpts.

The qualitative textual analysis of the study is conducted following an integrated Marxist-Postcolonial framework, and the analysis takes place in three systematic stages. The initial step is thematic coding, based on which the entire set of passages chosen by *Home Boy* is divided into five major themes. Code CL (Class Aspiration) recognizes manifestations of economic aspiration, career, and achievement-seeking, like in the case of Chuck as a banker and his investment in the American dream (Naqvi, 2009). Code EC (Economic Precarity) encompasses those instances of instability, such as unemployment, monetary instability, as witnessed when Chuck loses his banking job and becomes a taxi driver (Naqvi, 2009; Al Zayed, 2023). Code IG (Imperial Gaze) is dedicated to the case of racial profiling, observation, and othering, such as the experience of law enforcement and general suspicion (Naqvi, 2009; Rasheed et al., 2023). Code SV (State Violence) documents include the descriptions of arrest, interrogation, and institutional cruelty, especially in connection with Chuck in the context of the prison system (Naqvi, 2009; Shah & Sheeraz, 2022). Lastly, Code RE (Resistance) emphasizes resistance through actions of refusal, survival, and critique, including Chuck returning to Pakistan (Naqvi, 2009; Shah & Sheeraz, 2022). Every passage is thoroughly examined, and corresponding codes are assigned, which are recorded in a coding sheet together with page numbers and page notes.

The results are then reported in a variety of complementary ways. Key arguments are supported by direct quotations of “*Home Boy*” and paraphrased narrative summaries are used to provide a contextual understanding. Citations to the secondary scholarship allow to place the analysis in the context of the current academic discourse. Lastly, in the discussion sections, thematic synthesis is used in connecting trends across varying categories. This methodology makes the analysis systematic, transparent, and repeatable and ensures good proximity to the primary text and correspondence to the modern scholarship (Karim, 2018; Al Zayed, 2023; Shah & Sheeraz, 2022; Rasheed et al., 2023).

Conclusion

“*Home Boy*” ends with the character of Chuck going back to Pakistan, a resolution which can be read in two different ways as both defeat and liberation (Naqvi, 2009). On the one hand, the imperial metropolis is successful in restricting its third-world subject, depriving him of the opportunity to belong. On the contrary, this walk away also indicates a refusal. Chuck refuses to be a part of a system that has revealed its implicit rudeness and marginalization.

By providing such an ending, the novel is therefore a fierce critique of worldly capitalism. The metropolis of the first world offers itself as an opportunity, mobility, and inclusion space. Nonetheless, these guarantees are conditional and may be canceled any time. The third-world subject is tolerated only to the extent that they are useful and non-threatening. The facade falls during times of crisis and it opens up to reveal that there is a system that fails to integrate but rather classifies and regulates- sorting people by their perceived threat to imperial order.



Recent scholarship has thus determined “Home Boy” as one of the essential texts to study the intersection of neoliberalism, empire, and postcolonial identity. Following Sarker Hasan Al Zayed, 2023, the novel reveals the way global finance and imperial structures collude to create popular precarity. This observation is very applicable in the modern times where legacies of the War on Terror are still present and anti-immigrant sentiment continues to grow strong in the Global North.

Notably, the novel by Naqvi does not present clear-cut solutions and perfect alternatives. Rather, it offers a bleak and uncompromising explanation of the dynamics of power. It exposes the way ideology constructs subjectivity, the way people are interpellated by the dominant systems, and the way imperial gaze simplifies the convoluted identities into simplistic and threatening stereotypes. The act of foregrounding the experiences of third-world subjects in the first-world metropolis results in both an act of resistance and an act of witnessing, calling to light forms of violence that are usually concealed or disregarded (Shah and Sheeraz, 2022).

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