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**Power Struggle liberating Class Consciousness: A Marxist Analysis of the Novel "The Verdict" by Osman Hanif**

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### Abstract

*The study is an exploration of Osman Hameed's novel "The Verdict" through a Marxist lens. The study aims to investigate the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeois class, as well as the power struggle between them, which results in class consciousness. The research follows a transformative paradigm. The research is qualitative in nature. We analyze the textual lines using a Marxist lens. The findings reveal contrasting differences between classes, with the bourgeoisie class maintaining hegemony and marginalizing the proletariat class through legal, physical, psychological, and economic oppression. Furthermore, this class struggle contributes to the development of class consciousness in the proletariat. The study is significant as it contributes to understanding the power structures and the class struggle in society.*

**Keywords:** Class Struggle, Class Consciousness, Marxism, Power Politics, The Verdict

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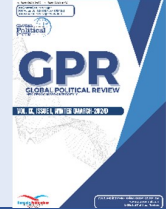
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Cite Us



## Title

## Power Struggle Liberating Class Consciousness: A Marxist Analysis of the Novel "The Verdict"

## Abstract

The study is an exploration of Osman Haneef's novel "The Verdict" through a Marxist lens. The study aims to investigate the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeois class, as well as the power struggle between them, which results in class consciousness. The research follows a transformative paradigm. The research is qualitative in nature. We analyze the textual lines using a Marxist lens. The findings reveal contrasting differences between classes, with the bourgeoisie class maintaining hegemony and marginalizing the proletariat class through legal, physical, psychological, and economic oppression. Furthermore, this class struggle contributes to the development of class consciousness in the proletariat. The study is significant as it contributes to understanding the power structures and the class struggle in society.

Keywords: [Class](#)

[Struggle](#), [Class Consciousness](#), [Marxism](#), [Power Politics](#), [The Verdict](#)

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## Introduction

After "Blasphemy: The Trial of Danesh Masih" (2020), Osman Haneef's second novel, "The Verdict," was published in 2021. It is regarded as its subsequent work. In the same way that innocent individuals are frequently wrongly condemned in biased societies, this story brings to mind Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird" (1960), a masterpiece of American literature (Haneef, 2021). The plot centers on the trial of a young Christian kid named Danesh, who is twelve years old. He stands accused of blasphemy after his sister rejected a marriage proposal from a wealthy merchant named Yusif. The

story starts with the arrival of a foreign law graduate in Pakistan, who is met by his mother at the airport upon his return. She encourages her son to tie the knot as quickly as possible, despite her outward appearance of being a conventional, homely woman. Because he loves his buddy Sanah and has gone back to Pakistan to find her, he is shocked when she tells him about her reception card. He meets Sana, a feminist, independent human rights lawyer when he goes to the listed address to see her. She gives him an emotional embrace during their meeting and then begs him to stop bothering her. As a woman, she is sensitive and emotional, even though this is socially constructed differently. Sikander reminisces



about a female character named Ahbey, whom we meet later in the novel. Sikander used to be upset that he wouldn't be able to see the woman who raised him before she passed away. At this point in time, he wants to do something special for her. Next, we encounter two other female characters whom Ahbey calls Sikandar's family. Christian female figures Alice and Mena are related to each other as mother and daughter. Danesh is actually the son of Mena, who was raped by Ismail, the eldest son of Ahbey, despite popular belief that he is Alice's child. As housemaids to Sikandar, Mena and Alice enjoy a comfortable lifestyle. Whenever Mena visited the market, a famous merchant named Yusif would annoy her. After learning this, Danesh eventually meets Yusif face-to-face. Afterwards, Yusif plots his downfall and accuses him of defiling the mosque, with Pir Piya's assistance. The trial against the kid starts after his arrest, and Sanah and Sikander are there to defend him. On one occasion, he tries to flee but is shot down while under the effect of Pir Piya's threats. Danesh is in danger of dying because his sister disagrees with Yusif's plan. Bhatti et al. (2023) analyzed this novel using the feminist lens and analyzed contrasting gender roles, stereotypical which are traditional in nature, and modern roles, which are totally contrasting to the traditional gender roles. However, there is a significant gap in existing research on this novel. That is why, this study examines the novel using the Marxist lens.

Marxism is, broadly speaking, interested in the problem of ideology in literature. According to (Zelnick & Eagleton, 1977) ideology refers to concepts, beliefs, and conventions that are established socio-culturally. It includes all the ideas, associations, and customs that we have picked up from a variety of sources, such as politics, culture, or religious environs. As such, ideology is a social creation rather than a divinely mandated one. It is mostly unconscious; we follow it mindlessly and hardly challenge it, which keeps us from changing. Marxists thus contend that ideology makes our vision blind. Workers in a capitalist society are cut off from the things they toil so hard to produce (p. 34). Marxism is an ideology, but all ideologies are not oppressive and bad; they are also not all productive and good. Ideologies that are undesirable are obstacles to human development. Usually, they support authoritarian political goals and act as instruments of group exploitation. Such views are presented as natural; for example, it is sexist to

believe that men are biologically superior to women. Many cultural constructs, such as religion, ethnicity, gender, nationality, etc., are internalized as natural to appear in society.

Marxism is an ideology that seeks to bring people's attention to the fact that they are both products of their material and historical circumstances and objects of oppressive ideologies that attempt to keep them from seeing this truth in order to maintain their subordination to the ruling power structure. According to Berry (2002), it provides "a fully worked-out theoretical basis for the struggle of the working class to attain a higher form of human society, Socialism" (p.157). Material conditions or economic elements are highly valued by Marxists when discussing the historical context of class conflict. Typically, the state of ideologies, cultural phenomena, or ideas constitutes the material circumstances. Marxism has never been a spectatorial or passive philosophy; rather, it has always been an active and interventionist philosophy, which is why it is sometimes called anti-essentialist philosophy (Paul and Hawthorn, 2001) (Page 185). Its founders, (Marx, 2010) and Friedrich Engels, primarily sought to portray the class struggle between the capitalist and working classes. "When people's jobs are divided up, it can lead to a society where different classes have different needs and wants, which can cause major conflicts" (Booker, 1995). Marxism argues that economic inequality is far more consequential than racial, religious, gender, or ethnic inequalities among individuals. The primary focus of "class" is on meeting fundamental human needs, which is why this is the case. In reality, all the connections to gender, race, creed, and so on develop later in life and are conditional on one's experiences. As Tyson puts it, "The real battle lines are drawn between the bourgeoisie - those who control the world's natural, economic and human resources - and the proletariat - the majority of the global population who live in substandard conditions and have always performed the manual labor that fills the coffers of the rich" (2006).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In specific circumstances, elitist power structures can use repressive ideas such as race, culture, religion, nationalism, and similar concepts. On the one hand, the exploitative powers controlling the economy use them to keep the general public in the

dark, and on the other, they use them to unskilled in that regard. An essential and fundamental component of these ideologies is classism, which serves to differentiate between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Despite the novel's apparent depiction of religious marginalization, this research seeks to delve further into the complex dynamics between the haves and have-nots and the use of power to exploit the proletariat class. Given the text's amenability to Marxist analysis, this study has the potential to fill a significant knowledge vacuum by shedding light on the foundation of all forms of discrimination and moving beyond repressive beliefs.

### Research Methodology

The study stands on the transformative paradigm as defined by (Cohen et al., [2007](#)) in the words "Transformative approaches may appeal to critical theory with its political and ideological agenda of empowerment, emancipation, equality and social justice" (p.34). The research is qualitative in nature. Textual lines of the novel "The Verdict" by Osman Haneef are subjected to analysis using the Marxist lens.

### Theoretical Framework

Three fundamental Marxist presumptions are chosen as a framework for carrying out the investigation in accordance with the goal of the study. These presumptions include hegemony, class, and ideology, all of which are described in the lines that follow. The beliefs of the ruling class that aim to maintain both their own privileged status and the current capitalist system are known as ideology. Marx defined ideology as a false consciousness—a system of ideas that hid the reality of society's economic foundation and the inevitable violence that comes with capitalism (Ikram, 2010, p. 1). According to Louis Althusser (Murfin & Ray, [2009](#)), it is "a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence." According to (Goldstein, [1990b](#)), Louis distinguished between two types of state apparatuses: those that propagate ideology and those that are repressive. The former group includes organizations like political parties, the media, families, churches, and the law, while the latter group includes organizations like courts, jails, the police, the army, and so forth, and "ideological state apparatuses work

as agents ensuring the unity of the ruling class." A label or affiliation that persuades others to view the world a certain way is called ideology. It involves a relationship that enables individuals to make sense of the people and environment around them. This examination of how ideologies work helps us to comprehend how people's conscious desires and beliefs are shaped by ideologies, which in turn execute these functions, hence reproducing social relations. According to Tallack ([1987](#), p. 184), this is the object world, which constructs its reality in a particular way.

A class is thought of as a sizable collection of individuals who share a common area, means of subsistence, customs, and holidays. Karl Marx describes two classes in his more general division: the proletariat and the capitalists. The latter, on the other hand, owns nothing except their own work; the former, on the other hand, controls resources and capital and owns the means of production. Marx repeatedly brought up the depressing truth that there has always been a class battle in human history—a struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed, the exploiter and the exploited, and the ruling class and the ruled. This struggle recurs repeatedly as a thesis and antithesis up until workers destroy capitalism and a socialist state is established, which is synthesis and ensures that there will never be another antithesis (Day, [2001](#), p. 112). Furthermore, a person's class is defined by their position, not by their line of work. For example, two employees of a company, one of them works as a manager and the other as a clerk, come from two separate social classes. Marx emphasizes that exploitation and oppression are also factors in the relationship between the two classes, in addition to domination and subordination. The ruling class takes advantage of the labor of the proletariat. The wages of the working class are significantly less than their productivity. Consequently, the capitalists who possess the means of production can turn their excess money into profit. The ruling class uses these gains, which are the product of the labor and perseverance of the working class, for luxury and relaxation. Marx's idea of a classless society is idealistic since it is free from all forms of conflict and exploitation, hence it is merely hypothetical. Such a civilization has never existed in the past and is not present in the present. Then, why and how does Marx envision this idealized future? He aspired to a classless society after witnessing the miserable lot of

the working class during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution (Nazakat et al., 2018). The lower classes are mostly denied access to basic amenities almost everywhere and at all ages. They also experience economic oppression and have few options for bettering their lot in life. In contrast, the upper classes enjoy strong economic standing, social privileges, and political clout. They manipulate certain ideals in an attempt to maintain their opulent status, which frequently results in the development of what Marx called "false consciousness".

Hegemony can be compared to an internalized kind of societal control that makes some points of view appear normal or unseen, almost as though they are simply the way things are (Barry, 2002, p.165). Hegemonic ideology prevents people from seeing social phenomena objectively. It makes societal constructions seem normal, enabling people to adopt an "everything is OK" mindset. It upholds the view that rather than being firmly rooted in socioeconomic or material circumstances, the gap between the rich and the poor is more naturally occurring and frequently divinely intended. In actuality, hegemony is a tactic used by people in positions of authority and power to subjugate their populace and instill in them the idea that their social standing is correct. Nor do they recognize that they are in fact under the authority of their government. "Classism" is a hegemonic ideology because it is believed that "individuals at the top of the social hierarchy are by nature superior to those below them: those at the elite are more bright, more responsible, reputable, more ethical, and so on" (Tyson, 2006, p.59). On the flip side, those at the bottom are thought of as being naive, reckless, and unmotivated. Therefore, it is reasonable to offer favor to people who are intelligent. It is common for those in lower socioeconomic brackets to be indoctrinated to believe that going against God's will is morally wrong and that class divisions are a result of divine intervention. In addition, there are several verses in the Bible that promise the poor that they will be compensated for their earthly suffering. "As a tranquilizer might do," Marx aptly puts it, religion "helps to keep the faithful poor satisfied with their lot in life, or at least tolerant of it" (ibid).

## Data Analysis

The narrative commences with Sikander's arrival

back in America after his time in the United States. Sanah, who has an unrequited romantic interest, took on the burden of handling the issue of Danesh, a Christian youth who worked at Sanah's house and was accused of committing blasphemy by vandalizing the mosque. Concerning the storyline we have discovered that Pir Piya and Yousif were the individuals accountable for the events, which occurred following Danesh's sister Mena rejecting Yousif's marriage proposal. The trial began, although it did not have a positive start. Despite initially demonstrating strength, the defending party ultimately proved to be tough. Nevertheless, the circumstances worsened throughout the second trial and ultimately led to a state of despair. Danesh made an effort to escape but was later killed by an unknown attacker who was carrying a gun. The story ends with Sikandar ensuring the security of Mena and Alice by facilitating their resettlement in Canada. Later on, he resolved his romantic sentiments for Sanah and conveyed his want for her to have a happy and satisfying life.

## Class Division

The theory of social class is utilized to examine the social groupings to which the characters are affiliated. During Gary Day's class, Marx used the term "bourgeoisie" to describe the social group that had the means of production, and referred to the social group that traded their labor for wages as the "proletariat." Marx posited that the bourgeoisie and the proletariat held divergent interests. The bourgeoisie sought to optimize their profits by remunerating the workers with the most minimal wage possible, while anticipating them to attain the utmost level of production (2001: 7). According to Alan Swingewood's book "Marx and Modern Social Theory," Marx and Engels contend that our present era, referred to as the bourgeois epoch, possesses a distinct feature: it has simplified and made more clear the class conflict. In modern society, there is a growing polarization between two distinct groups, namely the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat, who are engaged in direct confrontation with each other (1975: 115). Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels argue in their Communist Manifesto that the term bourgeois can be used interchangeably with capitalist, as both describe individuals who own the means of social production and hire wage laborers (1967: 79).

## The Members constituting the proletariat

The proletariat refers to the working class who sell their labor in exchange for a wage and lack the means of production. This includes a diverse group of workers, such as those employed in factories, construction sites, the service sector, agriculture, and other jobs where their income relies on their physical exertion. The term "proletariat" originated in the context of Marxist theory, which saw the class struggle between the proletariat and the capitalist class as the driving force of historical change. However, the concept of the working class is not limited to Marxist theory and can be used more broadly to describe those who rely on their labor to make a living. By using the theory of Carl Marx, the following characters can be classified as proletariat. They were Sikandar, Sanah, Nazeen, Ahbey, Danesh, Alice, Mena, Zer Shah and Zeeshan. All of them were from different families and somehow connected with one another. They did not have their own means of production and this thing links them with one another.

### Character of Sikander

Sikander Ghaznavi was the son of a lawyer Yahya Ghanawi, who at his time had been a successful lawyer. He prospered his family and had relationships with other politicians and ministers, whose evidences were the pictures hanging on the walls of their house. ....his father's days as a leading lawyer in Pakistan. Two stood with the former Attorney General, Politicians, foreign ambassadors, and key military officers (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.146). Being an influential lawyer Yaha Gaznawi held a strong economic as well as social status. His meetings with politicians, foreign ambassadors, and key military officers determined his class and he was part of the capitalist class. But his disease and death led his family to very dilapidated conditions. They had to sell their house and take debts for their survival. 'You should have told me,' Sikander said, 'I would've sent you more money.' 'How? What about paying back the loans?' The class status is variable depending on the authority one holds, the capital one keeps, and how much control one has over economic assets. Ghaznavi's followed the same rule. Their class rank from capitalists as earlier mentioned changed to proletariat. He went abroad to study law having the wish to just become like his father. And they are to spend their life in an old

home and dented Suzuki. *Nazneen led Sikander through the car park to a dilapidated, grey Suzuki scared with dents and scratches along its front and passenger side* (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.10). This depicts their economic condition when they were not left with an influential man like Yaha Gaznawi. They got into debt, lived a dilapidated life, and used worn things for their household. And this thing also was according to their changed economic and social class. Sikander mother, Nazneen struggled hard for survival during her husband's illness as well as after his death. After losing the sole supporter of the family, who died after a long illness, she managed to send her son abroad for studies and started living in an old house and spent most of the money received from her son in paying debt and even she could not buy a new car.

### Character of Ahbay

Ahbay was Sikander's housemaid. She was from the lower middle class. She worked at Ghaznavi's to get economic support for her family. *Her tanned, youthful face, delicate mouth, and small nose made her extremely young. However, her rough, sunburnt, and calloused hands, obviously accustomed to manual labor, suggested she was actually in her thirties* (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.16). Ahbay as a member of the struggling class was supposed to be a woman with a poor body stature, laborious, and a beast of burden. She had been depicted the same as she was supposed to be depicted. She served in many bad conditions to earn her livelihood. She was abused by his Sikander and even once he slapped her just because she touched his apparatus. Being a member of the lower class, she was to suffer many challenges, abuses, and harassment. Even a child from the upper class had the right to abuse and even slap her without any hesitation or feelings of guilt. *Then it happened\_\_ his right hand came down and slapped Ahbay across the face* (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.88).

### Character of Alice

Alice, a small plump woman, barely four feet, with her two children, Danesh and Mena, worked for Zer Shah's family and then she was sent to Ghaznavi's. They were from a poor Christian family. Being poor and belonging to Christianity brought a lot of challenges in their life. Their religion became the agent of their discrimination. They even used just a piece of tissue paper. When others required them,

they were hired. And when they were not in their need, they were just put aside. Even she was suspected of doing something that she even did not think of. *'I worked at her family's house. I was doing odd jobs\_ work they needed a woman to do. But I eventually left because they didn't need me'* (*The Verdict, 2021, p.124*). They were seduced, and sexually abused, and later on, they were blackmailed. Danesh who was later on proclaimed as Mena's son had been a great follower of Pir Piya a member of capitalism. Mena's proclaimed mother because of her low status is sexually abused. She had to sacrifice her honor for her brother's life.

### **Character of Zer Shah**

Zer Shah also belonged to the working class of the society. He had resources, power, and enough strength to change his class but being a part of the lower class he could not think of it. He tried to bring a change in his economic status, he went abroad and earned a lot of money but it could not help him so much that he could be a part of the capitalist class. *He was a rich man's soul born into a poor man's body* (*The Verdict, 2021, p.67*). He had a chance to go abroad where he earned some money that helped her family to grow a little but it was not enough to change their class yet he still aimed at changing his social status. At this house, *Sikander noticed a refrigerator he had missed on the wayside. It was the symbol of the family's newfound wealth* (*The Verdict, 2021, p. 65*). Zer Shah believed that *'A man grows restless without some form of work'* (*The Verdict, 2021, p. 66*). Only this was the spirit which kept him alive and active and he was able to support his family and they were not compelled to live from hand to mouth, as the work was their sole way to earn something.

### **Character of Zeeshan**

Zeeshan, Zer Shah's son, was an unemployed man. He sometimes helped Nazneen Bibi with her housework and she paid him a little. He was a graduate and was wondering for a

job. *'He is educated. He's is B.A-pass. But can't get a job. Candidates only get jobs if some*

*has done sifarish on their behalf'* (*The Verdict, 2021, p.66*). As everyone was struggling to change their economic status, the same kind of efforts were put in by Zeeshan, an educated man. But like others, his wishes remained just wishes till the very end.

Instead of being an educated man and struggling for a better both socially and economically, Zeeshan was under the influence of the bourgeois. He still praised, favoured, and defended them. He was also a follower of Pir Piya but later on, as he was conscious of his class he went against him and started helping the members of his own class. His marriage proposal was rejected just because he was jobless. *Farwa rejected his marriage proposal because he didn't have a good job* (*The Verdict, 2021, p. 195*). This rejection from Farwa, a member of his own class, built a sense of class struggle in him. He realized his worth and thought to change. He did not succeed in it but to some extent, it led towards his liberation from the capitalists.

### **Members of the Bourgeois**

The members of the bourgeois stand opposite to the proletariat. They fully control the workers and the members of the proletariat class. There were two characters in the novel who represented this class.

### **Character of Pir Piya**

Pir Piya who was a religious influence had great control over the mob. His portrait was just like *the portrait of Quaid-e-Azam* (*The Verdict, 2021, p.210*). He played different cards like, religious, social, psychological, legal, and political cards to keep his hold over the mob. His luxurious lifestyle, following the ship, and relationships with the lawyers, doctors, and politicians were obvious examples of it. *'He's is a great holy man. He's amazing. He can cure the sick. He knows everything about everyone. He's very gentle and kind. He cares about people.'* *The boy blushed. 'But the most special ability is that he can really see the future'* (*The Verdict, 2021, p.49*). He was not only portrayed as an ideal political and influential personality with whom the desires of the people were associated but also he had the authority of a renowned religious authority holding his influence on others. The use of power by him to suppress others can be clearly seen in the novel. This thing brought imbalance in society. He even forced the judge to go against the defendants of the trial. Under his influence, the judge decided as he said. The police officer who arrested Danesh was also a follower of Pir Piya. Even the jail officer did not go to Pir Piya.

## Character of Yusuf

The other character from *The Capitalist* is Yousif, who is a successful businessman. He himself says, 'Yousif Ali Khan. I'm ... a hardworking businessman (*The Verdict*, 2021, p. 176) Yousif is a good Muslim and very influential in our city' (*The Verdict*, 2021, p. 117). Again in the portrait of Yousif, the powerful influence of religion combined with economic superiority can be observed clearly since he was introduced in the novel till the very end of it. He on the basis of his economic power seduced Mena, a girl from the proletariat class. When she refused to marry him. He threatened her and her brother was just accused of blasphemy because she did not marry him. He forced Pir Piya by blackmailing Pir Piya to be with him against Danish. They did this just for their hold and to maintain their power.

## Power Politics and Class Struggle

The term "power politics" is commonly employed. There is unanimous consensus that this phrase is universally acknowledged. It is evident that not all members of society have equal access to legal, economic, religious, social, physical, political, or psychological rights enjoyed by other members of society. The exercise of power politics in society results in several forms of oppression, including religious, political, and economic oppression. Marx argued that modern bourgeois society sprung from the ruins. Both capitalists and the state might potentially be involved in it for their own advantages.

The concepts of power politics and class struggle have long been fundamental to political and social philosophies. Power politics is fundamentally characterized by the utilization of power and influence to accomplish personal goals, frequently to the detriment of others. Class struggle pertains to the ongoing confrontation between distinct social classes regarding the domination of resources, wealth, and political authority. Power politics and class conflict often intersect.

## Legal Oppression in the Power Struggle

The state exists in order to support the capitalists to establish their status. According to Marx, "the state's objectives are transformed into the objectives of the department, and the department's objectives into the objectives of the state". (Marx, 1878: 24). Department refers to the part of the state which belongs to the

capitalists. The state exists because the capitalists pay the tax. And in return, the state gives them the certain authority to control their subordinates. This is called legal oppression as the legal institutes participate in the oppression. The state helps the bourgeois to oppress the proletariat. The state is supposed to help the bourgeois. The same kind of legal oppression we examine in *The Verdict*. The court of justice and the police both played in the hands of the bourgeois. They made use of their own interest and values. In *Quetta, police officers feared the civilian population* (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.12) This use of legal power for one's own interest can be noticed when Danesh was arrested by the police for dishonoring the Holy Prophet's name. Her sister Mena went to the police station, but there she was constantly ignored and they even did not bother to reply to her. 'I went to the police station but they didn't

let me see Danesh. When I asked them why they had taken them, they just ignored me. Oh God. It's awful....' (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.90). The influence of power, use of economic status just for one's lust, holding on most powerful departments of a state, and use of legal oppression against lower and opposite members of a class solely to satisfy ego had been the most popular activity of bourgeois. They always oppressed their opponent just because of their high economic status.

Even the court of justice was in their hands. Even the judge was influenced by them. He allowed the prosecution to argue or present them what they wanted even false statements or affidavit after affidavit. *He kept presenting form after form, affidavit after affidavit to the judge* (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.130) But when the lawyer from the defendants came to argue, due to objection from the prosecutor, his arguments were suspended just because the bourgeois didn't want to. They falsely accused Danesh and they feared to be exposed. So they even did not want to be asked any questions. 'Please refrain from creating conspiracy theories....,' the judge said (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.180). At other points, the judge said, 'Sustained. Sanah bibi, I've already warned your co-counsel' (*The Verdict*, 2021, p. 181) The law seemed to be in the hands of the capitalists. The judge even warned them to hold him against the court. 'The speech is lovely, Sikander sahib. Are you quite done? I'm very close to holding you in contempt of court,' the judge said, deflating Sikander (*The*

*Verdict, 2021, p.240*). All the arguments of the defenders were put aside because they were the evidence of their innocence and they were challenging the superior authorities as the court of justice was just acting as a puppet in the hands of capitalists. This legal enforcement continued till the end of the novel. During the last trial, the judge was not certain what to do. He worked on the notion of Pir Piya. *The judge paused and glanced at Pir Piya. He took a few seconds but then he nodded, indicating that the judge should allow Sikander to proceed\_ Pir Piya clearly saw no threat in another whiteboard demonstration from this awkward lawyer (The Verdict, 2021, p.237)*. The obvious misuse of higher status in society, misleading and controlling the court in the form of legal oppression became the advocate of the capitalists and a threat to the existence of the proletariat.

### **Power Struggle in the Form of Physical Oppression**

Power politics is often maintained through physical oppression when those in power use force or violence to control and suppress those who oppose them or threaten their authority. Physical oppression can take many forms, such as police brutality, military intervention, or the use of surveillance and intimidation tactics. In the novel, the oppressed were to suffer the same kind of physical oppression. They were physically tortured assaulted and sexually seduced. When a member of the proletariat class Mena refused to marry a capitalist, she had to suffer the consequences. Her brother was arrested and physically charged at the police station. His physical appearance was evident. He was suffering just because of the bourgeois' attempt to them themselves up in the society. When Mena saw no source to save her brother, she went to Yousif and offered herself to him but she got tortured instead of her brother's life. *Mena removed the dupatta around her neck, revealing a large bruise. She raised her Kameez to show her stomach.... Her stomach represented a rainbow of purple, black, blue, and sky-yellow bruises surrounding a brown burn (The Verdict, 2021, p.207)*.

### **Power Struggle through Psychological Oppression**

Psychological oppression is also a tool used by the

capitalists to control the mind and the actions of the proletariat. They use different hectic to gain control of the psychology of the oppressed. In this way, the capitalists used their minds according to their own will and molded them as they wanted them. In the present novel, the bourgeois by using their power, wealth, and status try to keep under the changing mind of the proletariat. They thought different psychological logistics dominated their psychology. They include threats, physical torture, and mental attacks. During Danesh's trial, when Sikander went to Danesh's friends, Bilal and Hassan, to ask about the incident, they even refused to accept him as their friend. Because they were forbidden by Pir Piya who was under Yoosif's influence. *i've never heard of that name,' the Bear said (The Verdict, 2021, p.95) And he refused to help anymore by saying, 'What you've done to piss Pir Piya but I'm not getting in the middle of it' (The Verdict, 2021, p.96)*. This kind of confusion arose in Sikander's mind and when he asked Danesh about it, he even refused to accept that Pir Piya could do anything like that. He was also psychologically under the control of Pir Piya Knowing that the same person was behind his arrest and torture. *'We've been asking around and it seems that Pir Piya has scared a lot of people into not talking to us'. 'He wouldn't do that, Danesh said. I am afraid. It's true. Sikander said. 'He is helping his friend, Yousif, who is angry that Mena rejected him. You remember Yousif, Don't you? Danesh nodded. And the same kind of remarks of negation he said to Sanah. 'Sanah bibi, Pir Piya is a great man. He is very wise and caring. He was always ready to help me when I needed it....' His eyes welled with tears. 'We are friends.' (The Verdict, 2021, p.143)*

The same kind of threats were given to Sikander the defender. He received a call from an unknown number. He was threatened in clear words. *'You are playing a dangerous game' the voice said. 'You will suffer a very ultimate death if you carry on down this path' (The Verdict, 2021, p. 205)* The psychological disorder of the bourgeois is carried clearly throughout the novel. The fruit seller refused to sell him the fruits by saying, *'They are not for sale'*. He was also given death threats in the form of bullets in front of his house. *...the tiny, metallic, cone-shaped object. It was a bullet; a death threat (The Verdict, 2021, p.205)*. To some extent, they were able to oppress the proletariat to achieve this goal. All the members of the proletariat were in their hands. They

even gathered the mob to kill Danesh as well as to attack Sikander's house.

### Power Struggle Through Economy

The need for money is closely associated with the capitalists. Through this money, they maintain their power in society. To gain money they can do everything that they need or demand. There could also be their hidden agenda. Besides this, they use this to earn money for their due or undue benefits. Wealth serves as their source of influence. The possession of economic power is not limited solely to the capitalists. Even the financially robust states also subjugate the financially vulnerable states. The bourgeoisie, driven by their economic prosperity, act according to their own desires. A similar situation can be witnessed in the novel. Yousif seemed to be doing what he wanted. He seduced Mena and became the cause behind the arrest and torture of Danesh and during the trial, even the judge seemed under his influence. He acquired what he desired by using money. Even Pir Piya could not overcome him and he did what Yousif demanded to do.

*Yousif had come to the Pir with a plan to punish Mena through Danesh, Pir Piya had objected. Then Yousif told him about the rumors. He said that he didn't want to believe it but that if the pir wouldn't come to his friend's aid for a Christian, then what should Yousif believe? It had been a valid threat. Pir Piya had laughed through gritted teeth and agreed to assist Yousif... Pir had no choice (The Verdict, 2021, p.233).*

Under the ascendancy of money and wealth, Yousif wanted Mena to marry her. He thought because of much wealth he possessed no one could refuse to marry her. But Mena turned down his offer, upon which he lost his control. He even could not imagine how could she decline her offer. 'Why would you refuse me? You will live like a queen.' When she refused his tune totally changed, 'How can someone like you, refuse someone like me!' Yousif said. During the trial, the situation became even worse. 'Yes, I was angry...' Yousif yelled. 'Is that what you want to hear? How dare she refuse me... What kind of future does that Christian bitch have on her own?' (The Verdict, 2021, p.183).

### Class Struggle Liberates Class Consciousness

Class struggle can serve as a catalyst for the development of class consciousness, as individuals and groups confront the realities of their social and economic positions and begin to see themselves as part of a larger class struggle for justice and equality. According to Marx class consciousness is, Class consciousness refers to an individual's collection of beliefs pertaining to their social class or economic status within society, including the organization of their class and their class-related interests (2006: 62).

According to Karl Marx, the crucial factor in initiating a revolution is consciousness, which would lead to the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, thereby converting them from a property-less, wage-earning majority into the ruling class (Woods & Grant, 2012). To elaborate on the concept of class consciousness Marx uses the phrase, "class in itself", which is defined as a category of people having a common relationship to the means of production, and "a class for itself" which is defined as a stratum organized in active pursuit of its own interests (2017).

The important phase of the class struggle is to liberate class consciousness. This consciousness is used as a tool to unite the workers into a distinct group to enhance the power of class struggle. The same phenomenon can be grasped in The Verdict. The bourgeois was practicing power politics in different ways. They used each and each hectic they could and oppressed the workers. The proletariat was even deprived of basic needs. The thing led them to the class struggle and they were forced to stand against the cruel system that was sucking their rights. This class struggle was shown by each member of the society. They welded up, struggled, and brought a conscious change in them. They wanted to change their status but it was much far away. 'Well, I went for a job interview to see if I could get work as a clerk in an office there' (The Verdict, 2021, p.53). The same kind of change in mindset to change the status also emerged in his father's mind. '...there he was able to make enough money there for us to build a proper family home...of course, it would've been better if I would've gone to Saudia and earned some money.' Zeeshan said (The Verdict, 2021, p.54). Sikander also changed his mindset when he was not doing what he was supposed to do. 'He had

been running away from his responsibilities. In the end, he had to come back' (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.42).

The concept of class consciousness became more obvious when the trial against Danesh started. They all stood side by side and went for his defense. They all combined their interests and struggled to save his life and his family including his sister and mother. They had to change the mind they had for Pir Piya. Sikander realized it and said, 'You are all fraud, Pir Piya'. They all, Sikander, Sanah, Zeeshan and even in the end Hassan and Bilal also came forward for Danesh. 'I am like you, 'Zeeshan said, 'I pray with you and fast with you and give zakat, even when I don't have enough like you' (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.217)

As Marx said the class struggle between the bourgeois and the proletariat ends in the favour of the proletariat. The same we seen in *The Verdict*. In the very end the same kind of hatred against the bourgeois. "You can't think that. What you did... What we did ...it was very important. We fought a dangerous extremist and fraud. People will question Pir Piya. I've calls from legislators, parliamentarians, and political advocates. This case moved people, Sikander. It was for something" said Sanah (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.243). Danesh had been murdered. He had offered his sacrifice not only for her sister but also for the whole society, clutched by the extremists and the bourgeois. It was an eye-opening incident for everyone. His sister and mother were promised safety not in Quetta but by sending them to Canada. Everyone's mindset was changed even Zeeshan who had been Pir Piya's great follower. 'I hope you're not going to Pir Piya's mosque'. 'of course not.' Said Zeeshan (*The Verdict*, 2021, p.257). As Marx said, class struggle can never end until there exist opposite classes securing and promoting their own interest. As all this struggle takes place as the result of class consciousness, there must be created the idea of

class consciousness. And it would be towards class struggle and liberation. The same sense of class consciousness had been created in Zeeshan's mind. And his struggle had been accelerated by this consciousness.

## **Conclusion**

The study of the characters in class division clearly depicts the hierarchical division in capitalist society. We see two groups, the bourgeois and the proletariat, serving in different positions and struggling with each other. The bourgeois class exercises its power through various forms of oppression, a phenomenon known as power politics. Powerful members of society corrupt society and its institutions, resulting in legal oppression. Exploiting the lower class and instilling fear in them is an example of physical and psychological oppression. Moreover, economic oppression is done as usual in the capitalist class to degrade the proletariat through different acts, as evident in Yusif's act of proposing Mena and putting them in difficult circumstances because of her rejection. Lastly, all these power struggles led to a rise in class consciousness, as the people abandoned the leadership of Pir Piya, the main member of the bourgeois class. According to the research, many forms of identity, including race, religion, caste, and creed, are mostly used as instruments of capitalist exploitation. In addition to isolating the average person from popular culture, these instruments serve to keep them divided, uneducated, and used as pawns. Researchers, readers, and critics can see modern-day Karachi as a tangle of ideological tensions and socioeconomic gaps thanks to this study. Despite outward beliefs, the study urges and invites readers to confront the harsh realities of material and historical reality.

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