GLOBALISATION, NEO-COLONIALISM, AND CRIME: HOW DOES '*THE PRISONER*' DEPICT THE NEXUS BETWEEN GLOBALISATION AND CRIME IN SOUTH ASIA?

Pusselle Wineetha[*]

Abstract

This essay examines how Omar Shahid Hamid's "The Prisoner" depicts the intricate nexus between globalisation, neocolonialism, and crime in South Asia, with a particular focus on Karachi as a postcolonial metropolis. Drawing on globalisation theory and postcolonial urban studies, the paper argues that the novel presents crime not as an aberration but as a systemic outcome of global capital flows, colonial legacies, and compromised postcolonial governance. Hamid illustrates how transnational networks of drugs, weapons, and finance intersect with corrupt political elites, intelligence agencies, and policing institutions, blurring the boundaries between legality and illegality. The novel further exposes how American influence and global security agendas undermine local sovereignty, reinforcing dependency and elite complicity. By mapping urban inequality, institutional decay, and moral collapse, *The Prisoner* critiques neoliberal development and neocolonial power structures, revealing how globalisation intensifies violence and marginalisation in South Asian cities.

[*] MA (UoK, Sri Lanka), MA (Reading), Department of English, Faculty of Social Sciences and Arts, University of Malaya. Email: revvineethapusselle@gmail.com

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Introduction

Globalisation, neocolonialism, and crime constitute interconnected dynamics or forces that outline the socio-political landscape of many postcolonial societies. Although globalisation is often linked to economic liberalism, technological innovations, and cultural exchange, it simultaneously facilitates the rapid movement of capital, illicit commodities, and criminal networks across borders. In numerous contexts, this has exacerbated inequality and undermined local governance. Neocolonialism reinforces such dynamics by allowing powerful nations and multinational corporations to exert control over weaker states through economic pressure, debt dependency, and political influence, without restoring the formal colonial occupation. This informal domination often authorises local elites who stand as intermediaries for foreign interests, ignoring public welfare and allowing organised crime to flourish under the protection of corrupt institutions. Crime, in this context, becomes both a symptom of systemic exploitation and a tool of political and economic control, where the lines between legality and illegality are blurred by the interests of global capital and elite complicity. Omar Shahid Hamid, through his novel *The Prisoner* critically unveils the intricate nexus between globalisation, neo-colonisation and crime in South Asian cities showcasing how local institutions become entangled in global power dynamics. Globalisation, while promoting economic and technological interconnectedness, also facilitates the transnational flow of drugs, weapons, and illicit capital, turning cities like Karachi into strategic nodes

for criminal enterprise. This is not a transparent system, but corrupt officers and elites who govern this within a neocolonial framework which serves the foreign interests exploiting the people, intelligent agencies connecting with Western authorities, by passing the law in the name of security, blurring the lines between justice and local authorities, and marginalising individuals. This essay would show how the author has depicted the nexus between globalisation, neocolonialism and crime in the city of Karachi, critiquing such a governing system.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Research Methodology

This scholarly inquiry adopts a qualitative literary approach grounded in close textual reading and thematic interpretations. The primary text, Omar Shahid Hamid's *The Prisoner* (2015), is examined as a socio-political narrative representing the complexities of postcolonial urban life in South Asia. Relevant secondary sources from literary criticism, globalisation studies, and postcolonial theory are used to contextualise and aid textual interpretation. Key thematic concerns such as globalisation, neocolonial governance, institutional corruption, urban inequality, policing, and foreign intervention are identified and systematically analysed through selected textual evidence. Rather than banking on empirical measurement, the scholarly inquiry underlines interpretative analysis in order to scrutinise how narrative strategies construct meanings related to power, crime, and marginalization.

Globalisation Theory

In the context of globalisation, the interconnectedness and interdependence of countries worldwide through the exchange of commodities shape shared meanings and

interpretations. From these perspectives, in a metropolitan police city, globalisation manifests vividly based on Arjun Appadurai's five landscapes or five dimensions of global cultural flows, namely, there are ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes. In contemporary societies, metropolitan government structures and their policing agencies progressively encounter ethnoscapes as multilayered, such as migrants, tourists, refugees and others who cross the city borders forming a dynamic diasporic population, reconfiguring the domestic social fabrics and disrupting the old notions of territorial control and identity (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 27-47). Effective policing of such pluralistic communities entails cultural sensitivity and transitional ties. Additionally, mediascapes dominate urban settings with the floods of global images and narratives through television, film, and digital media, impacting how police and citizens distinguish crimes, security and community relations (Appadurai, 1996, pp.27-47). The circulation of media-driven perceptions may influence the public trust, the legitimacy of policing practices, and the framing of minority groups, requiring the necessity of media literacy and strategic communication in metropolitan policing.

Coextensively, technoscapes and financescapes deepen the transformation of policing capacities and obstacles in metropolitan cities. Technological advancement such as surveillance cameras, biometric systems to data analysis rapidly come into police operations assisting the crime detection and control but producing concerns about ethical matters regarding privacy and state secrecy (Appadurai, 1996, pp.27-47). Local economies and international capital flow are linked through the financial globalisation often vibrating inequalities and social tensions within urban environments where order and justice should be

profoundly handled by the metropolitan police (Appadurai, 1996, pp.27-47). Ultimately, ideoscapes is the dissemination of ideas and notion of democracy. Human rights together with sovereignty adjust both the public expectation and policing policies. Metropolitan police are expected to examine ideologies and negotiate the tension between authority and community rights. Especially, ethnic, social, political, movements challenge the policing practices through discourses of justice and rights (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 27-47). In this sense, understanding policing in a globalized metropolis necessities and recognizing disjuncture yet interconnected flows of people, media, technology, capital, and ideas that form city life social order.

The post-colonial city emerges as a nexus of the historical colonial legacies of colonization and the contemporary neoliberal agendas of globalisation giving rise to layered and socially dynamics that unsettle the established hierarchies of the power. Postcolonial cities are theorised as heterogeneous and contested spaces characterised by "grey zones in which the conventional binaries such as legality and illegality, state and anti-state, and centre and periphery intersect and blur. These zones create forms of unauthorised or illegal modernity that deviate from western developmental paradigms (Ridda, 2020). Based on postcolonial theory and urban studies, Ridda argues that criminality in such cities stands not merely because of lawlessness, but as way of exploration of exploitation, subalternity and the persistent "coloniality of power" that endures to generate social economic relations in the Global south (Ridda, 2020). This viewpoint subverts conventional narratives of legality and authority by drawing attention to the multifaceted roles of criminal organization which simultaneously resist and reinforce power of the state and

by illustrating that post-colonial cities perform alternative modernities that compel rethinking of progress beyond colonial legacies and neoliberal paradigms (Ridda, 2020).

As a postcolonial urban setting, Karachi in Omar Hamid's novel gives a concrete form to layered historical evidence of a British port and contemporary grand frontlines. This is a post-partition demographic shifts of ethnic subdivision with emergence of MQM as political trajectory shaped by Muhajir ethnonationalism as a response to the marginalization and exclusion (Anwar, 2013, pp.22-38). Urban entrepreneurialism and divisions according to world-class status were driven by neoliberal globalisation promoting inequalities (Anwar, 2013, pp. 22-38). This city's complex configuration of politics connects domestic struggles with global forces and tropical post-colonial geographies (Anwar, 2013, pp.22-38).

Karachi embodies the entanglement of Appadurai's global cultural flows within a postcolonial urban landscape. The interaction of ethnoscapes, technoscapes, and ideoscapes dislocates fixed notions of identity, security, and governance, while the city's colonial history and neoliberal contemporary time form its disjointed sociopolitical system. As a neocolonial metropolis, Karachi represents disjunctive modernities where informal networks, criminality, and ethnonationalism uncover the coloniality of power. Through Omar Hamid's illustration, the city becomes a lived archive of interconnecting local and global forces, demanding a layered rethinking of policing, justice, and authority beyond Western paradigms of legality and development. Within these theoretical perspectives, his novel, *The Prisoner,* would be analysed through thematic guidelines after reviewing the literature.

Literature Review

Post-colonial cities and crime fiction in South Asia articulate how the enduring imprints of colonisation intersect with the contemporary forces. The literary texts also narrate urban experiences with violence, inequality, resistance and marginalization revealing an insightful and critical background for the socio-economic diversity of post-colonial cities. Ravi Sundaran states Indian postcolonial cities face tensions in handling populations via digital infrastructures like biometric IDs and GIS, targeting transparency and control, yet without citing South Asian fiction or crime-related examples (Sundaran, 2017, pp.4-15). The article titled *Towards a Spatial Practice of the Postcolonial City* reveals that post-colonial cities are heterotopic spaces reformed by different cultural producers through spatial practices, urging interdisciplinary approaches to contest and reconstruct urban modernity (Beswick, 2015, pp.2–7, 13–14). Stephan Legg, in his research, explains how memories of South Asia's partition and colonial history are preserved, contested, and shaped by the gender of those who remember them (Legg, pp.287-333). He highlights oral histories, trauma, political memory, and the challenges of contested and gendered remembrance. Furthermore, he elaborates on issues of women's victimisation and survivor subjectivity, discussing the role of public memory in shaping post-colonial consciousness through acts of remembering (Legg, pp.7-13). Bill Ashcroft has also written about transnation and postcolonial cities illustrating that they are as microcosm of rapid modernization (Ashcroft, p.50), way of circulation and hybridity of culture, identity, and spaces (Ashcroft, p.54), urban spaces as a site of political and social tension (Ashcroft, p.55) and post-colonial cities as strategic and economic hubs taking

Mumbai and Hong Kong as examples. (Ashcroft, p.59). In this research, he has a clear reference to a literary fiction "Zoë Wicomb's Zoo City by Lauren Beukes" (Beuke, p.57) to talk about gender, culture and post-colonial urban settings. Vassilena Parashkevova, in the research paper "Falling Off the Urban Map: Cartographic Divisions and Travel in Salman Rushdie's The Moor's Last Sigh" explores the city as a neoliberal economic growth zone led by Abraham Zogoiby through the capitalist and corrupted interests dominating the visible urban landscapes like skyscrapers and business networks, together with undergrounds of the Hindu nationalist movement. The city is depicted as a place rife with crime and corruption as a part of its illustration (Parashkevova, pp.49-56), but not as a main theme.

 Meanwhile, Lale Eskicioglu also, in his research, uses Abani's Graceland, Saro-Wiwa's Sozaboy, and Banerjee's graphic novels illustrate crime, inequality, marginalisation, cunning politicians and religious corruption in postcolonial cities of Mumbai and Lagos, urging readers toward social change (Eskicioglu, pp. 298, 291, 273). Although she is having an in-depth discussion about the two cities representing both the Asian and African continents, no focus on Karachi or any reference to the Prisoner. Another research "Post Colonial Paradox: A study of Contradictions in Karachi, Pakistan by SM Jamall illustrates the city's history of colonialism depicting enduring Western influences, global forces and socio-political settings (Jamall, pp.132-143) and describes how Karachi Elites cope with Western condescension, colonial legacies, and insecurities arising from their city's global image and local realities (Elites, pp.129-140). This research uses Urdu fiction by Saadat Hasan Manto, but not by Omar Hamid.

Accordingly, existing scholarship insightfully defines postcolonial cities as multilayered spaces shaped by

globalisation, neoliberal infrastructures, and gendered memory, there remain a notable absence of focused analysis on Karachi in contemporary South Asia crime fiction. Regardless of contributions by scholars such as Parashkevova, Beswick, Ashcroft, and Eskicioglu, the city of Karachi, especially as depicted in Omar Shahid Hamid's *The Prisoner* is largely disregarded. Much of the literature either centers on Indian urban contexts or African comparisons, maintaining a critical gap in understanding how neocolonial institutions and global crime circuits operate within Pakistani metropolitan narratives. This underscores the need for further engagement with *The Prisoner* as a text that dramatizes the intersection of global power, local corruption, and systemic violence in a deeply fractured postcolonial city.

Textual Analysis

By following the aforesaid theoretical framework, the research gaps visible from the literature review would be arrested by analysing Omar Hamid's novel *The Prisoner* thematically in terms of "Globalisation, neocolonialism, city and inequalities owing to geographical setting of the city, neocolonial institutes and corruption, police and policing in the city that mirror the criminals, politicians and the influence of America".

Globalisation, Neocolonialism-city and inequalities due to geography

The different geographical locations of the rich and poor in the novel exemplify how globalisation and neocolonialism create and continue urban inequalities among the people. These uneven geographical distributions are not accidental, but historical exploitation, economic disparities and global economic favour that promote wealthy people while marginalising poor people. City's neighbourhoods like

Defence and Clion introduce areas developed by elite classes who enjoy the benefits of the global economic investments. Omar Hamid depicts this in the novel as follows,

> The road was barely more than a half-paved track. Although they had not traveled very far since leaving the prison, the scene around them was a far cry from the metropolitan sprawl of the city. The road was a single track which wound the side of a hill. The hill was barren, pockmarked with stone quarries that had been carved onto its side. Across the road was a line of shanties, where marble cutters were already at work……. The sole concession to modernity was a shack at the corner that had a faded Coca Cola advertisement on it. (Hamid, 2015, pp.254)

This passage depicts a picture of a rural area which has minimal modern infrastructures like a signal truck, a dirty road, barren hills, pockmarks and shanties. Only a trivial indicator that shows western influence, Coca-cola advertisement is given, indicating the less accessibility of the more western amenities in poor areas.

> Orangi was a maze. The road that the four men started walking on led past Banares Chowk into the massive slum. With a million human beings packed like sardines into a very small area, entering it was like entering another world (Hamid, 2015, pp.221)

The depiction of Orangi as a maze, densely populated with over a million inhabitants in limited spaces, starkly reflects the spatial and fragmented nature of social marginalisation. Such an illustration signifies the enduring legacy of colonial planning of cities, which often outlined urban areas into

partitioned zones that allocated preferential treatment to certain dominant and elite classes, simultaneously excluding marginalised communities to resource deficient neighboring urban zones. The intrinsic and overcrowded form of Orangi reflects both the representation of physical overcrowding and symbolising the nature of neglect with systematic inequalities extended for marginalized. People of such zones continue having challenges that are derived from insufficient infrastructure, with limited access to services and economic developments. These conditions function as the byproducts of systematic and historical styles of exclusion and uneven developments implemented by colonial rulers. Even after their departure, neocolonial rules also follow the same.

> The area had the look of a frontier town in the American West, not quite part of the encroaching civilization of the city yet also not ready to be swallowed by the neighboring wilderness. (Hamid, 2015, 254)

The party keeping their vehicles outside the police station before moving into Orangi No.6 symbolises the clear lines of division between the official administration and socially excluded communities, displaying the confined social marginalisation led by urban governance. As given, "The small party walked off the wide main road, past the police station, into Orangi No. 6. The vehicles had been left outside the police station. It was just as well, because they could not have come any further. Past the station, the road disappeared and became a narrow, unpaved track, intersected by even narrower alleyways on either side..." (Hamid, 2015, pp.221). Marginalized areas endure physical and administratively rejection from public service, restraining the opportunities to law enforcement and public utilities and promoting inequalities. The metaphor,

characterising the city's outskirts as the frontier city, is visualised in the illustration of Mangopir as shown in the textual lines "This was Mangopir, one of the last localities of the city before Karachi evaporated into the vast, arid landscape of the Baluch Desert. The area had the look of a frontier town in the American West..." (Hamid, 2015, pp.254). These areas and spaces are geographically united and close, but socially and economically divided. This imagery symbolises the failure of government institutions to reach fully densely populated urban areas, highlighting the persistent categories based on structural neglect and continued marginalisation through history.

Neocolonial Institutions and Corruption

Omar Hamid vividly visualizes the nature of neocolonial institution and corruption. His illustration in the novel introduces how the institutions have reproduced the format of domination and exploitation managed by directly the colonial rulers during colonization, but now by local elites and bureaucracy system. The following extract from chapter 14 of the Prisoner depicts this scenario.

> In a department where corruption flourished like crabgrass, Pakora had broken new records. Constantine had gotten firsthand experience of this when he had gone to pay him through an intermediary to secure his current posting... Hamid, 2015, pp.154-155)

Accordingly, a figure like Pakora who has already broken the records of corruption in a department where bribery "flourished like crabgrass," signifies how local power brokers govern state institutions for personal gain. Pakora is the nickname given to Home Minister considering his bulbous nose and unattractive facial features. The simile used his "corruption flourished like crabgrass" epitomizes

that they are deeply rooted and widespread, conveying its hardships to eradicate. Record breaking indicates the system has competitively been used by each other for their personal gain rather than protecting and depending on the law and ethics. Corruptions are well known, but no one takes legal actions against Pakora. The invisible hand behind him is revealed as mentioned in the lines "Although Pakora's scruples were well known, no one had contemplated his removal from office because he was the chosen favorite of the Don (Hamid, 2015, pp.155)." As seen here, the institutions and bureaucracy connect a network of corruption. Don who is in New York and never been in Karachi for one and half decades handling the appointment of the minister. His word has been the absolute law in the city. The metaphor "holding the city in a vice-like grip (Hamid, 2015, pp. 155)" demonstrates how powerfully he is holding the power. Just as during the colonial rule, the absolute power was exercised by the king of United Kingdom through his representatives in the colonized areas without a physical appearance. The rulers in the city exercise the same in the government office through ministers living in outside of the country. The only difference is that the local elites as the rulers. By absorbing the colonial structure, thus locals involve in exploiting their own people. Such exploitations are echoing in institutional level using the power as shown in the below passage.

> As Constantine arrived in the office of the Home Minister, a dozen minions were at work ... Orders for postings, transfers, promotions. And there was a price for every single one. The minister's secretaries scrutinized the various lists in their hands to put a value on every name, like a group of investment bankers working on an IPO... Scores of former gun-toting United Front ward boys had been

     recruited into the police thanks to the largesse
     of Pakora. (Hamid, 2015, pp.156)

By presenting a corrupted location, this suggests how the system leads aforesaid exploitation. His henchmen were busy working on the orders for posting, transfers and promotion on the basis of political favors, but not because of the qualifications. Colonial norms are employed by the locals even after their leaving in government level. Meanwhile, the text reveals the hierarchical arrogance and bureaucratic disdain from such behaviours. The following passage explores how locals welcomed and actively practice the hierarchical arrogance which was a symbol of colonial rule. "He announced himself to one of the secretaries, who looked him up and down in a contemptuous manner..." (Hamid, 2015, pp. 156)

The minister's arrogant behaviour based on power and superiority happened when the Constantine attempts to introduce himself at the office. This suggests judgement and superiority and shows how lower officials also extend the scorn and disrespect towards others, illustrating even lower figures in the power structure absorb an air of superiority, displaying the toxic culture of positions and dismissal rooted in the system. Omar Shahid Hamid, through his novel "the prisoner" critiques such types of behaviours in the government institutions using the characters in this way. He is using the minster's physical appearance also to support his criticism depicting it as "Behind the table sat Pakora. His face was dominated by a huge nose of almost cartoon-like proportions. Everything about the man seemed to be..." (Hamid, 2015, pp.156-157). The huge nose just as in a cartoon suggests a satirical depiction of authority and power. Focusing on his facial features, the author diminishes his power introducing him as a caricature rather than true leader. Symbolically, it is a

criticism of the system that the minister represents by mocking him and locating behind the desk where they enjoy and practice power through favors, corruptions and briberies, the narrator concerns how post-colonial governing structures have adopted and inherited internalizing the oppressive hierarchies of the colonial rule.

As shown above, all extracts indicate how neocolonial institutions and corruption are going on through the local elites and bureaucracy. The Minister sheltered by Don, misuses the position and exercises power for the collection of bribes offering jobs for a price and money. The ministry, though it is a government office, he runs it like a market selling posts and promotions. This situation exemplifies the misuse of neocolonial institutions for private earnings rather promoting good service and serving the public. The colonial structure also systematically used the foreign lands and their locals for a direct earning for their own countries. The same, with local elites, mixture of state power and criminal networks taking former criminals into the police is practiced in the neocolonial government structure also promoting indistinguishable hands of power and inequality.

Police and Policing in the City as Mirrors of the Criminals

The Police are an official and responsible organization of the members authorized by the government or state in order to enforce and maintain law and order preventing and investigating crimes within an area. Their authority stems from sate (Bell). Policing is defined as the individual's ability to use and force law and order regulating behaviors and controlling public order (Bell). According to Adams, use of policing adopted by the police have two important approaches known as Community approach and Aggressive

approach. Community approach is defined as the policing community and police cooperation in maintaining the order, motivating and making the citizens coproducers of public order to establish the accountability (qtd in Bell[12]). The approach, aggressive policing, occasionally called the "broken windows" approach, attempts to reduce crime such as public drinking, vandalism, and other offences by increasing enforcement in the area of quality of life. The emphasis on increased attention to crime and heightened enforcement may make regimes implementing aggressive policing more likely to use or abuse force (qtd in Bell[12]). Accordingly, police and policing become more important forces in promoting ethics and morality and reducing crimes. With reference to Hamid's novel, police and policing have been corrupted misusing the power. This claim is supported by Constantine's reflection on the nature of the police force, description of the minister's police escort and the use of a windowless room for interrogation and torture.

First, Constantine's reflection on the nature of the police in Karachi is a more important matter to describe the true nature of police force and policing. The following extract provides evidences over the matter.

> The Karachi Police isn't a disciplined force anymore; they're a rabble, with everyone trying to drag everyone else down. There's no professional pride left. I didn't want to become a member of a faction, so I opted out of the rat race. (Hamid, 2015, pp.180)

According to this passage, a deep institutional decay of the Karachi Police is shown displaying it as a disorganized body without a true leadership. Once it was a disciplined force, but now anymore becoming a "rabble," marked by internal conflicts and destructive competition. The phrase "everyone trying to drag everyone else down" highlights a

toxic culture where hatred, jealousy and suspicion lead. With "no professional pride left," the police have lost their moral, ethical and professional purposes and senses regarding public duty. The speaker's decision to "opt out of the rat race" indicates a refusal to join a corrupt system driven by factionalism. This metaphor illustrates that survival within the force now requires moral co-operation. This reflection indeed provides how Karachi police violate the ethical behaviours. This is evident from the lines given below.

> Making money is a captive sport. You just sit back and benefit from the misfortunes of these poor bastards in here. (Hamid, 2015, pp.180)

The speaker is revealing that making money is easy for some individuals, since they utilize other's suffering and pain for their advantages. They don't need to work hard and they just watch others are struggling and they make profit from those struggles. Hence, the people who are "poor bastards" which means poor humans are trapped in a bad situation, while someone enjoys the benefits sitting behind from their problems and suffering. Therefore, this reflection over the police corruption and divisions of police members or factionalism mirror the criminality they are supposed to fight, but never happens.

Secondly, the police escort at the minister's office is another aspect of displaying the corruption and unethical behaviors of police and policing. That is described as below.

> In one corner of the room, the minister's police escort detail lounged around on the sofas that were meant for the use of public visitors. Their appearance was slovenly, with the men sporting unshaved beards, dirty uniforms, and a variety of headgear, with their weapons slung untidily around their shoulders. Indeed, they

> looked less like policemen and more like street
> thugs, which is probably what some of them
> were anyway. (Hamid, 2015, pp.156)

The extract explores the corrupt, unethical, immoral and unprofessional conducts of both the police and the pattern of policing. The officers are labelled as lazy and disrespectful, lounging on sofas given for the public visitors, raising a clear disregard and disrespect for citizens.

The dirty uniforms, unshaved faces, and untidy weapons symbolize a complete deficiency of discipline taking an unnecessary pride in their role. Depicted as "slovenly," they behave more like street criminals than guardians of the law and order. This blurred line between police and thugs introduces that some of them may have even criminal backgrounds or histories. Such illustrations visualize a deeply rooted corrupt system where power and connections, rather than values, merit, and qualifications decide who deserve the uniform. Instead of implementing and enforcing justice, the police work for the individuals in power and authority and stand as instruments of power rather than the bridge of public service. Accordingly, these textual lines condemn not just the individuals, but the entire policing structure that tolerates such improper conducts to exist depicting how violence, laziness, and disrespect are normalized within the police. Eventually, this illustration exposes a police system that mirrors the very lawlessness it is expected to go against.

At last, the illustration of a windowless room for interrogation and torture also serves as a pathetic condition in the police and the structure of policing. Using brutal system to torture suspects before deciding them as criminal or wrong doers, the police provide an unethical face to the society. Illustrated as "It had a table and a few

chairs, and two hooks in the wall from which a suspect could be hung upside down... The room was windowless... It was perfect for their purposes (Hamid, 2015, pp.224)", the narrator indicates the "room with a table, a few chairs and two hooks" is prepared not for the justice, but torturing. Windowless symbolizes their secrecy, lack of discipline, and corrupt policing. This misuse of police and policing to torture brings a sense of fear and control rather than expecting the justice and shelter of law and order. Thus, applying brutal and harmful methods mirror the association with crimes and injustices.

The aforementioned textual evidences state how Karachi police force and structure of policing involve in crimes, corruptions, working for politicians, illtreating public, and methods of torturing. All those immoral and unethical actions damage the image of law and order. Police as colonial authority introduced by the colonizers in the name of protection of the law and order have violated the norms and values breaking the rules for their own personal growth even during the colonial period. Even during the neocolonial period, using the same structure local figures misuse. This mirrors the criminal backgrounds of police.

Politicians and Corruption

The United Front (UF) convert goons into powerful politicians who function impunity and criminal intent. For example, Pakora, previously a struggling poet, came forward rapidly within the UF rankings through the patronage of the Don. Don praised him as a "brilliant, incorruptible individual" promising to keep him as Home Minister as long as he led the party (Hamid, 2015, pp.272). The political elevation or raise in power in this context was made possible through the intentional placement of criminal figures into official roles, but not with the merits,

as the text depicts "Scores of former gun-toting United Front ward boys had been recruited into the police thanks to the largesse of Pakora" (Hamid, 2015, pp.156). The minister's office is housing for the crimes and corruptions directly where secretaries recognized a list in their hand and involved in pricing appointments," like a group of investment bankers working on an IPO" (Hamid, 2015, pp.156). Such conducts collapsed the distinction between political legitimacy and criminal enterprise enabling UF politicians to control, dominate and handle everything through bribery, force and their loyalties rather than through any legal, ethical, righteous or lawful claim to power.

Such political rise of the United Front stays inseparable from the expansion of violence, unlawfulness and institutionalised evils. Having secured an agreement with the president to gain "complete control over the police and the province itself, the politicians functioned that as a "blank cheque to do whatever they want (Hamid, 2015, pp.215) to dominate politics and expand criminals unpacking the power. The unchecked violence and corruptions are further shown through torturing facilities like a room in the police "with two hooks in the wall from which a suspect could be hung upside down..." (Hamid, 2015, pp.224). The government's silent and blind tolerance allowed United Front politicians to "rape and pillage this city to their heart's content" (Hamid, 2015, pp.194), institutionalising impunity as a mode of governing. The essence of these details mentions that UF politicians were able to unite criminals and political authority together by establishing a system based on intimidation, injustice, violence and unchecked power and authority.

Influence of America

The abduction of American journalist Jon Friedland in Karachi provides an example of enduring and vivid neocolonial influences in which American agendas of politics and security form internal politics in Pakistan. The involvement of the United States in the case exceeds the boundaries of diplomatic engagement, giving direct and open pressure on Pakistani political authorities to confirm the journalist's recovery. As Constantine shows, "Everyone—the UF, the Agencies, the bosses—are all counting on my ability to recover this Friedland fellow" (Hamid, 2015, pp.262), indicating how both Pakistani state and non-state actors are bound to keep the American expectations at the top. This statement highlights the extent to which the United States power structures define and dictate domestic operational agendas. In this scenario, the act of kidnapping operates as a symbolic and focal point where Pakistani sovereignty and decision-making authority are dominated by external pressures, subordinating the domestic interests according to the imperatives of American political authority.

Besides, this dynamic is reinforced by the manner in which American approval operates as a form of political capital for Pakistani officials. Following a successful recovery, local administration welcomes a reward of "nice, firm pat on the back by Uncle Sam" (Hamid, 2015, pp.272), reflecting a deeper reliance on Western validations to claim credibility intentionally. High-profile officers who contributed to the operation were promoted and rewarded often without accountability for their controversial histories. Deputy Superintendent of Police, Akbar Khan's promotion, regardless of his previous imprisonment and opposition from militant groups, illustrates how cooperation with American interests can change the institutional and

personal growth and success (Hamid, 2015, pp.272). Through this, Hamid critiques an imbalance of power and border dynamics in which the United States functions as an impactful operation in distributing rewards that reinforce its influence over the domestic political trajectories in other countries.

In addition, the threat of losing American assistance maintains the decisions of the government at different levels, manifesting a neocolonial influence over domestic actors. Sheikh, politically powerful and moderate, receives a direct and unambiguous causation. As the text notes, "Sheikh, do you think the Americans will ever forgive us if this journalist does not come back alive? Forget about me, you will be finished..." (Hamid, 2015, pp.262). This contention uncovers that his power is contingent upon saving and respecting the American goodwill and interests, as the loss of American journalist backing would imperil both his political standing and funding extended for these overseas religious activities. The presence of this coercive nature drives local participants to manage dense political entanglements under the constant gaze of U.S interests making more than a crisis. This is a critical moment of receiving American dominance and managing neocolonial control.

Conclusion

Omar Shahid Hamid's *The Prisoner* is considered a compelling critique of the entangled global-local nexus of crime, neocolonialism, and institutional complicity within the city of Karachi. Rather than illustrating crime as an isolated or domestic force, Hamid explores how contemporary criminality is rightly integrated in a systematic inequality shaped by capitalism, globalisation and post-colonial governing bodies. The novel

demonstrates how colonial governance stands in new neocolonial states and systems through the exploration of corrupt policing, police, violence, politics and politicians, American influence, and other foreign intervention. Karachi functions not simply and merely as a post-colonial city, but also as a multifaceted space where power, authority, surveillance and resistance unite together. This narrative reexamines crimes and corruption in urban settings of South Asia as a wider, transnational reality governed by foreign pressures and influences, together with domestic betrayals. This implies that Omar Hamid, through "*The Prisoner*", plays a prominent role in challenging dominant narratives of law, order, and development and positions literature as both a mirror and a critique of the global hierarchies of control that endure violence, corruption, crimes, inequalities, injustices and marginalisation in postcolonial metropolises.

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