

Class, Identity, And Socio-Economic Transformations in Khan's Thinner Than Skin

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the evolving nature of class and identity in Pakistan, particularly in contemporary socio-economic transformations, in Uzma Aslam Khan's novel Thinner Than Skin (2012). This study blends the theoretical contributions of Pierre Bourdieu and Antonio Gramsci to explore how cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic power shape class identities in complex ways. Bourdieu's concept of habitus examines how individuals' social and cultural positions influence their preferences, behaviors, and worldviews. At the same time, Gramsci's concept of hegemony analyzes the role of ideology and cultural practices in maintaining and transforming class hierarchies. By analyzing Thinner Than Skin, this study investigates how class identity is constructed and contested through representations of migration, environmental conflict, and interpersonal relationships. It also considers how these portrayals challenge traditional understandings of class by intertwining the personal with the political. Additionally, the impact of state policies, economic globalization, and grassroots social movements on class formation in Pakistan is explored. Through a critical reading of Khan's novel and an engagement with popular culture and media, this research seeks to deepen the discourse on class identity in Pakistan, offering a more profound perspective that moves beyond traditional Marxist paradigms. By doing so, it aims to explore the back-and-forth of power, inequality, and resistance in shaping contemporary social realities in Pakistan.

Keywords: Class Identity, Habitus, Cultural Capital, Social Capital, Symbolic Power, Hegemony, Popular Culture, Globalization, Social Movements

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INTRODUCTION

The complicated link between class, identity, and socioeconomic transition is an important research field for understanding modern societies' dynamics. In Pakistan, this connection is especially complicated, formed by a unique interaction of historical legacies, political developments, and global forces. While classic Marxist frameworks provide useful insights into the underlying patterns of class relations based on economic ownership, their explanatory capacity is sometimes limited when applied to the complex reality of varied and quickly changing cultures such as Pakistan. This research study investigates the changing nature of class and identity in this setting, utilizing Uzma Aslam Khan's book *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) as a lens to analyze these complicated dynamics. Traditional Marxist studies, which focus largely on ownership of the means of production, sometimes overlook the various ways class is perceived and performed in everyday life. In Pakistan, familial networks, religious connections, ethnic identities, and geographical differences mix with economic variables to provide a diverse view of class. To address these issues, this work employs the theoretical contributions of Pierre Bourdieu and Antonio Gramsci. Bourdieu's notions of cultural capital, social capital, habitus, and symbolic power provide a framework for understanding how social positions impact people's tastes, actions, and worldviews, thus influencing their feelings of belonging and self. Gramsci's theory of hegemony, on the other hand, sheds light on the function of ideology and cultural practices in both supporting and contesting existing power structures and class hierarchies. 2 By combining these theoretical views, this research intends to transcend beyond conventional economic determinism and investigate the cultural and ideological components of class development in Pakistan. *Thinner Than Skin* offers a great narrative canvas for addressing these ideas. The novel's representation of migration, environmental conflict, and human interactions sheds light on how class identity is produced, challenged, and negotiated in the face of socioeconomic change. The story weaves human experiences into larger political and economic dynamics, emphasizing the role of governmental policy, economic globalization, and grassroots social movements in class creation. This research contends that Khan's book challenges conventional understandings of class by illustrating how it is not only influenced by economic considerations but is also profoundly rooted in cultural practices, social networks, and symbolic representations.

As a result, this research study examines *Thinner Than Skin* critically through the theoretical lenses of Bourdieu and Gramsci, drawing on pertinent literature on class, identity, and socioeconomic development in Pakistan. It also explores how popular culture and media shape views and experiences of class. This study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of class identity in Pakistan by moving beyond traditional Marxist paradigms and offering a more nuanced perspective that recognizes the interplay of power, inequality, and resistance in shaping contemporary social realities in the region. The analysis will concentrate on how the novel depicts the interplay of habitus, cultural and social capital, symbolic power, and hegemonic forces in the lives of its characters, ultimately revealing the complex ways in which class is lived, performed, and transformed in modern Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Uzma Aslam Khan's *Thinner than Skin* explores deeply the issues of class, identity, and socioeconomic shifts in contemporary Pakistan. The story depicts a colorful tapestry of individuals whose lives are profoundly influenced by their social level and the shifting

geography of their surroundings. Class and Socioeconomic Disparities Khan's book powerfully depicts the socioeconomic gaps that exist in Pakistani culture. The plot revolves around the socioeconomic realities of underprivileged groups. According to one research, the novel analyzes the influence of globalization and urbanization on these communities, noting that characters such as Ghafoor represent the battle against external pressures that endanger traditional ways of life (Harf-o-Sukhan, 2024). The study demonstrates how Khan handles issues like consumerism and environmental degradation, which worsen existing disparities and contribute to social isolation (Harf-o-Sukhan, 2024). Identity in *Thinner Than Skin* is multifaceted, shaped by personal experiences and broader socio-economic contexts. The protagonist Maryam represents a complex interplay of cultural heritage and modernity as she navigates her identity amidst societal expectations (Staniforth, 2013). Critics note that her relationships reflect a longing for connection in a world marked by change, highlighting how individual identities are influenced by class dynamics and environmental factors (Staniforth, 2013). Moreover, the novel emphasizes the resilience of indigenous communities facing cultural erosion due to modernization. This theme is explored through Maryam's struggles to maintain her nomadic lifestyle while confronting external pressures from authorities (Desi Writing Guide, 2015). The narrative illustrates how place significantly influences identity, particularly in regions experiencing rapid socio-economic transformations.

Thinner than Skin depicts socioeconomic shifts that are strongly linked to environmental issues. Khan highlights governmental apathy and business exploitation that contribute to these developments, which disproportionately harm underprivileged populations (PLHR Journal, 2022). The tale depicts how urbanization generates "spatial others" who seek justice despite ecological imbalance (PLHR Journal, 2022). Characters like Nadir feel the psychological effects of these alterations as they struggle with their identities and navigate between their past and present realities. His return to Pakistan exemplifies tackling the complications of belonging in a constantly changing world (Staniforth, 2013). Uzma Aslam Khan's *Thinner Than Skin* is a thorough investigation of class, identity, and socioeconomic developments in Pakistani culture. Khan's sophisticated character depictions and beautiful locales highlight the interdependence of human storylines with larger sociopolitical situations. This literature survey emphasizes the significance of comprehending these topics in the contemporary debate on Pakistani literature, as they are relevant to global discussions concerning class struggles and environmental crises. Uzma Aslam Khan's novel *Thinner Than Skin* is a thorough investigation of class, identity, and socioeconomic shifts in modern Pakistan. Set against the breathtaking scenery of northern Pakistan, the story unfolds through the lives of its people, who face personal and social struggles molded by their socioeconomic circumstances. This literature study looks into these topics in depth, drawing on a variety of scholarly viewpoints and critiques. Khan's story delicately depicts the class differences that pervade Pakistani culture, particularly in rural areas where traditional lifestyles are in danger from modernity and violence. The story focuses on the challenges of indigenous tribes such as the Gujjars, who confront existential threats from terrorism and environmental destruction. As stated in a review, Khan depicts these communities as resilient but fragile, managing their identities in the face of sociopolitical change (Dawn, 2013).

The character Ghafoor represents this battle. His trading experiences highlight the economic issues that lower socioeconomic groups confront. The narrative focuses on how

globalization and consumerism worsen existing inequities, resulting in the loss of traditional livelihoods (Nadeem et al., 2023). Scholars claim that Khan criticizes governmental indifference and corporate exploitation for contributing to these socioeconomic developments, which disproportionately harm underprivileged populations (Harf-o-Sukhan, 2024). Identity in *Thinner Than Skin* is complicated and multidimensional, influenced by both personal experiences and larger socioeconomic factors. The heroine, Maryam, exemplifies this complexity; her existence is linked to her family's past and social expectations. Critics argue that her partnerships indicate a need for connection during personal and community change (Staniforth, 2013). The search for identity is especially poignant as Maryam balances her duties as a mother, wife, and person seeking satisfaction.

Khan's treatment of female characters is noteworthy; they are shown as powerful yet constrained by societal standards. The story emphasizes how gender interacts with socioeconomic dynamics to determine identity. For example, Maryam's relationship with Ghafoor exemplifies the conflict between personal aspirations and societal duty. Their interactions show the emotional landscape of those stuck between tradition and modernity (Shah, 2014). Additionally, the story highlights the role of geography in forming identity. The breathtaking landscapes of northern Pakistan serve not just as a background, but also as a character in the lives of its people. The relationship between environment and identity is critical to understanding how characters view themselves within their societies (Nadeem et al., 2023). *Thinner Than Skin* depicts socioeconomic shifts that are inextricably linked to environmental and social justice issues. Khan examines globalization's influence on rural populations, demonstrating how urbanization causes displacement and loss of cultural identity. The story portrays a great sense of longing for old ways of life that are fading due to external forces (Desi Writing Guide, 2015). Characters like Nadir reflect people who are struggling to find their identities in the face of shifting economic conditions. His return to Pakistan is a catalyst for addressing the issues of belonging in a rapidly changing nation. The novel depicts the psychological effects of these transitions as people traverse their pasts and face uncertain futures (Staniforth, 2013).

Khan's investigation of environmental deterioration undermines these socioeconomic narratives. The devastation caused by industry and government negligence emphasizes the link between environmental health and social justice. Scholars claim that Khan's art acts as a protest against environmental damage while also addressing questions of class and identity. (Harf-of-Sukhan, 2024) While *Thinner than Skin* is praised for its lyrical writing and evocative depictions of northern Pakistan's landscapes, some reviewers claim that its aesthetic appeal conceals deeper societal issues. According to Nadeem et al. (2023), the novel's visual splendor highlights the severe realities that underprivileged groups suffer. This contrast raises significant considerations about how aesthetic enjoyment may coexist with depictions of misery. The application of Schopenhauer's aesthetic philosophy offers an intriguing prism through which to examine these concerns. It implies that, while beauty might bring pleasure, it must also be interpreted in light of underlying anguish and struggle (Nadeem et al., 2023). This viewpoint invites readers to evaluate how tales may celebrate beauty while addressing unpleasant realities. *Thinner Than Skin*, by Uzma Aslam Khan, is a rich work for studying class, identity, and socioeconomic shifts in modern Pakistani culture. Khan's rich character depictions and evocative locales illuminate the intricacies of human experience in the face of

environmental destruction and societal injustice. The juxtaposition between personal accounts and larger sociopolitical situations prompts readers to consider the fragility of identity in an ever-changing world. This literature study emphasizes the significance of comprehending these topics in the contemporary debate on Pakistani literature because they are relevant to global discourses about class struggles, identity politics, and environmental concerns. Love is a significant theme in *Thinner Than Skin*, affecting people's goals and changing their identities. The relationships featured in the story demonstrate how love can be both strong and vulnerable. Maryam's love for her daughter Kiran shows this dichotomy; she conveys her passion through moving analogies concerning skin fragility (Dawn, 2013). Furthermore, Khan analyzes romantic love through Maryam's relationship with Ghafoor, emphasizing how their history affects their current relationship. Their bond is a reminder of missed possibilities and unfulfilled goals among societal limitations (Shah, 2014). This investigation of love highlights Khan's characters' emotional depth while also mirroring bigger societal challenges.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Thinner Than Skin, by Uzma Aslam Khan, is a riveting investigation of class, identity, and socioeconomic shifts in modern Pakistan. To thoroughly examine these topics, this literature review adopts a theoretical framework that includes Cultural Hegemony, Social Identity Theory, and Cultural Capital Theory. This multifaceted approach provides a comprehensive knowledge of how power relations create individual and community identities in the face of socioeconomic problems. Cultural hegemony, a notion created by Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, refers to one cultural group's control over others within a society by ideological means rather than outright force (Gramsci 1971). Gramsci writes that, "the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as „domination" and as „intellectual and moral leadership". A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise „leadership" before winning governmental power" (Gramsci, 1971, p.57). This concept is critical for understanding how the ruling class uses cultural narratives to preserve power and establish societal standards. According to Gramsci, the ruling class maintains power not only using political or economic means, but also through cultural institutions such as media, education, and religion (Study Smarter, 2023). In *Thinner Than Skin*, Khan demonstrates how cultural hegemony functions in Pakistani culture. The governing class imposes their beliefs and perceptions, presenting them as the cultural standard. This manipulation causes subordinate classes to internalize these standards, which they eventually regard as helpful or natural. For example, the character Ghafoor portrays oppressed populations that resist the prevailing ideals imposed by those in authority. His experiences demonstrate how cultural myths conceal the realities of lower-class persons, perpetuating socioeconomic inequality. Khan's story also criticizes the role of education in perpetuating cultural hegemony. The educational system frequently reflects and propagates the ideals of the ruling class, influencing students' worldviews to accord with dominant ideas (Nadeem et al., 2023). This dynamic is visible in Maryam's ambitions for her daughter Kiran; she wants to provide her with possibilities that are consistent with society's ideals created by the governing class. However, her yearning is compounded by socioeconomic constraints that limit her agency. Henri Tajfel and John Turner's Social Identity Theory offers another analytical perspective through which to examine identity creation in *Thinner Than Skin*. According to this theory, people get a significant portion of their identity from belonging to certain groups, such as those based on nationality, religion, and class (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). In Khan's novel,

characters navigate their identities through these affiliations, which have a profound impact on how they perceive themselves and interact with others. Maryam, the protagonist, is a prime example of this complexity as she struggles with her identity in the face of societal expectations. Her relationships with Ghafoor and her daughter Kiran highlight the conflict between individual desires and culturally shaped identities. For example, Maryam's struggle to balance her aspirations for Kiran with traditional expectations reflects the greater social pressures faced by Pakistani women in general (Staniforth, 2013). Furthermore, Ghafoor's identity is formed by his socioeconomic background and position in his community. His experiences demonstrate how class dynamics shape social relationships and self-perception. The strict borders between in-groups and out-groups frequently result in discrimination and social conflict, highlighting deeper socioeconomic challenges in Pakistan (Bushra Saeed et al., 2023). By using Social Identity Theory in Khan's story, we may examine how characters navigate their identities through classification and social comparison. Cultural Capital Theory, developed by Pierre Bourdieu, provides important insights into how cultural resources impact social mobility and identity development. Bourdieu (1986) defines cultural capital as "non-financial social assets that promote social mobility beyond economic means" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 244). He describes cultural capital as non-financial social assets that facilitate social mobility beyond economic considerations. This encompasses education, intellect, speaking manners, and even physical beauty. In *Thinner Than Skin*, cultural capital plays a significant role in shaping characters' identities and their socio-economic status. The novel illustrates how access to education and cultural resources can influence one's position within society. Characters from privileged backgrounds often possess greater cultural capital that enables them to navigate modernity more effectively than those from lower socio-economic strata (Iqbal et al., 2023).

Maryam's aspirations for Kiran reflect her desire to transcend the limitations imposed by her socio-economic background. She recognizes that access to education and opportunities can alter Kiran's trajectory in life. However, Khan critiques how cultural capital can perpetuate class disparities while simultaneously highlighting individual agency (Desi Writing Guide, 2015). The interplay between cultural capital and identity is particularly evident as characters strive to redefine themselves against societal constraints. The interplay between cultural capital and identity is particularly evident as characters strive to redefine themselves against societal constraints. Characters struggle to remake themselves in the face of societal restrictions, highlighting the relationship between cultural capital and identity. The relationship between Cultural Hegemony and identity development is critical to understanding how the characters in *Thinner Than Skin* negotiate their reality. Gramsci's thesis explains how dominant ideologies affect societal norms, which people accept over time. Internalization can lead to complacency among inferior classes who see these standards as normal or good (Study Smarter, 2023). For example, Maryam's acceptance of certain cultural expectations about parenting exemplifies this issue. She internalizes the assumption that giving her daughter chances consistent with dominant cultural narratives would result in success. This notion is challenged by her understanding of the structural restrictions that limit her agency. (Shah, 2014). Furthermore, Ghafoor's opposition to mainstream beliefs demonstrates the framework's capacity for subversion. His character represents the battle against cultural hegemony, as he attempts to assert his individuality in the face of external forces. By questioning cultural standards enforced by those in authority, Ghafoor demonstrates how

individuals can fight internalized ideas that perpetuate inequity. *Thinner Than Skin* depicts socioeconomic shifts that are inextricably linked to environmental and social justice issues. Khan criticizes globalization's influence on rural populations, demonstrating how urbanization causes relocation and loss of cultural identity (Nadeem et al., 2023). The story displays a deep longing for old ways of life that are in danger from external forces like as industrialization and corporate exploitation. Characters like Nadir face these transitions as they struggle to define themselves in the face of shifting economic environments (Staniforth, 2013). His return to Pakistan catalyzes facing his history while negotiating the modern problems brought by globalization. Khan's investigation of environmental deterioration undermines these socioeconomic narratives. The devastation caused by industrialization emphasizes the link between environmental health and social justice (Harf-o-Sukhan, 2024). This argument is consistent with Gramsci's concept of hegemony; powerful organizations frequently prioritize economic gain over environmental sustainability, maintaining beliefs that mask these facts. Love plays a central role in *Thinner Than Skin*, influencing character motivations and shaping their identities amid socio-economic challenges. The relationships depicted in the novel reveal how love can be both a source of strength and vulnerability. Maryam's love for Kiran exemplifies this duality; she expresses her affection through poignant metaphors about skin's fragility (Dawn, 2013). Furthermore, Khan addresses romantic love through Maryam's relationship with Ghafoor, which serves as a reminder of missed chances among societal restraints (Shah, 2014). This investigation highlights the emotional complexity of Khan's characters while also mirroring bigger cultural challenges around gender roles and expectations. Uzma Aslam Khan's *Thinner Than Skin* is a valuable resource for studying class dynamics, identity formation, and socioeconomic developments in modern Pakistan. Using a theoretical framework that combines Cultural Hegemony, Social Identity Theory, and Cultural Capital Theory, we obtain a better understanding of how characters manage their identities in the face of environmental degradation and social injustice.

ANALYSIS: COMPLEX IDENTICAL HIERARCHIES

Khan's tale emphasizes the intricacies of the human experience while criticizing dominant beliefs that promote inequity. Through complex character depictions and vivid settings, she asks readers to consider the fragility of identity in a constantly changing world governed by power relations. This literature study emphasizes the significance of comprehending these topics in the contemporary debate on Pakistani literature since they are relevant to global discourses about class conflicts and identity politics. Uzma Aslam Khan's *Thinner than Skin* deftly ties together themes of identity, belonging, and socioeconomic shifts against the background of northern Pakistan's stunning scenery. The novel's protagonists face a complicated interplay of personal aspirations, cultural expectations, and sociopolitical realities that form their identities and relationships. We may distinguish the subtle ways in which these themes develop in the characters' lives using the lenses of Cultural Hegemony, Social Identity Theory, and Cultural Capital Theory. Khan's tale revolves around the exploration of Cultural Hegemony and its influence on individual identities. Pakistan's governing class imposes its ideals and views, resulting in a sociocultural framework that marginalizes individuals who do not agree. This dynamic is obvious in Ghafoor's experiences as a marginalized person struggling to affirm his identity in the face of dominant cultural standards. His persona represents opposition to prevailing beliefs that strive to define and limit societal roles based on class

and gender. The metaphor of "growing a second skin" (Khan, 2012, p. 126) is a potent emblem of resistance, demonstrating how women like Maryam adapt to their circumstances while hiding their strength behind conventional expectations. The subject of identity is further complicated by Social Identity Theory, which holds that group affiliations contribute to an individual's self-concept. Maryam's effort to match her goals with society's expectations exemplifies the conflict between personal objectives and group identities established by cultural standards. Her relationship with Ghafoor demonstrates how love can be both a source of comfort and difficulty while negotiating multiple identities. The work sensitively depicts the fragility of identity in a culture that frequently ignores the nuances of personal experiences. Furthermore, Cultural Capital Theory sheds light on how access to education and cultural resources affects social mobility in Khan's story. Characters from rich origins have more cultural capital, which helps them navigate modernity more efficiently than those from lower socioeconomic strata. Maryam's goals for her daughter Kiran demonstrate her desire to overcome these limits, but she is painfully aware of the structural hurdles that impede her autonomy. This interaction of cultural capital and identity highlights Pakistan's greater socioeconomic development. Khan also uses ecofeminism to highlight the fundamental link between women and the natural environment, stressing collective resilience in the face of external challenges.

The metaphor of "*Thinner Than skin*" (Khan, 2012, p. 126) represents both fragility and strength, reflecting women's experiences in a patriarchal culture that frequently ignores their natural resilience. This dichotomy demonstrates the complexities of women's experiences in a society that values perceived flaws above true strength. Furthermore, the story emphasizes how love acts as a transformational force in these socioeconomic situations. The relationship between Nadir and Farhana exemplifies the collision of cultures and identities as they go to Pakistan, challenging their prejudices and traversing complicated emotional terrain. Their experiences highlight the novel's basic message: that identity is a fluid construct molded by personal history, social expectations, and external influences. Finally, *Thinner than Skin* creates a complex tapestry of topics that strike a deep chord in today's conversation on identity politics and socioeconomic upheaval. Khan's varied characters and beautiful landscapes urge readers to consider the intricacies of the human experience in the face of environmental destruction and social injustice. Using theoretical frameworks such as Cultural Hegemony, Social Identity Theory, and Cultural Capital Theory, we acquire a better understanding of how people negotiate their identities in a fast-changing environment defined by power dynamics and cultural narratives. This analysis demonstrates that Khan's work is more than just a story about love and belonging; it is also a profound commentary on Pakistan's sociopolitical landscape, in which individual aspirations collide with collective identities shaped by historical legacies and contemporary challenges. As such, *Thinner than Skin* is a vital resource for understanding the complex interaction of class dynamics, gender roles, and identity creation in postcolonial contexts.

Uzma Aslam Khan's novel *Thinner Than Skin* deftly mixes issues of class, identity, and socioeconomic shifts against the background of modern Pakistan. The story follows the lives of its protagonists, mainly Maryam, Nadir, and Farhana, as they traverse personal and collective crises caused by their socioeconomic circumstances. This research looks at how Khan depicts the junction of class and identity, how socioeconomic developments affect relationships, and the larger consequences for Pakistani society. In *Thinner Than Skin*, identity is presented as diverse and flexible, driven by personal experiences and

socioeconomic circumstances. Maryam, a middle-aged lady with a disabled husband, represents the hardships that women confront in a patriarchal society. Her identity is influenced not just by her household obligations, but also by her encounters with Ghafoor, an old lover who provides a link to a potentially rich past. Khan uses Maryam's observations to demonstrate how social expectations confine individual identities. For example, Maryam's love for her daughter Kiran is intense, but it is compounded by her own experiences of loss and sacrifice: "Her skin was thinner than a goat's" (Khan, 2012), which represents vulnerability in both personal and societal settings. Khan highlights social disparities via the different lifestyles of her characters. Farhana's delicate relationship with her Pakistani ancestors is often difficult for Nadir, who has had a more affluent childhood, to understand. His hesitation to return her to Pakistan indicates not just his anxieties, but also an underlying class consciousness: "How many months was she willing to spend in Pakistan? "How many years?" (Khan, 2012). This question highlights the conflict between his luxurious living and Farhana's desire for a connection to her hometown. The story examines how socioeconomic position affects notions of identity and belonging. The representation of women in Khan's story violates established gender norms. Farhana, for example, is shown as a powerful yet troubled individual balancing her ambitions against society's standards. Farhana and Nadir's relationship is plagued with misconceptions stemming from their different backgrounds: "I feared her love for me was like a Pakistani glacier" (Khan, 2012). This metaphor depicts the complexity of love as it intersects with cultural identity and human development. Khan's female characters are more than just mirrors of their male counterparts; they have agency and complexity, challenging prejudices about Pakistani women. Khan's tale reflects the socioeconomic upheavals taking place in Pakistan as a result of globalization and industrialization. The characters are frequently entangled in a web of modernism that upends conventional ways of existence. For example, Ghafoor's experiences as a trader highlight the tensions between local cultures and global commerce: "The traveler...would tell her what it was like over there" (Khan, 2012). This exploration reveals how economic changes affect not only individual lives but also community dynamics. The subject matter also discusses environmental challenges as a consequence of socioeconomic changes. Khan illustrates the exploitation of natural resources via the characters' relationships with the environment. The wood mafia's degradation of forests represents greater sociopolitical corruption: "The one who filed a case against the timber mafia got murdered" (Khan, 2012).

This tale thread emphasizes how economic greed leads to environmental degradation, which hurts both human life and the ecological. The socioeconomic context of *Thinner Than Skin* marked by class strife, with poor populations exploited by both state and non-state actors. The novel portrays a microcosm of Pakistani society, dealing with issues such as poverty, corruption, and violence. "Every one of them slept in two beds: the mafia with the government" (Khan, 2012, p. 10). This interconnection demonstrates how socioeconomic transitions generate complex power relations that influence individual outcomes. Uzma Aslam Khan's *Thinner Than Skin* is a poignant look at class, identity, and socioeconomic transformations in contemporary Pakistan.

Khan's sophisticated characterizations and comprehensive stories show how increased socioeconomic constraints affect human identity. Uzma Aslam Khan's *Thinner Than Skin* is a moving investigation of class, identity, and socioeconomic shifts in modern Pakistan. Khan's complex characterizations and detailed tales demonstrate how greater socioeconomic pressures impact human identities. The interplay of love, sorrow, and

cultural expectations weaves a tapestry that portrays the difficulties of modern life in Pakistan. Khan criticizes current societal systems while also providing insights into the resilience of individuals overcoming these problems by tackling themes such as globalization, environmental degradation, and class conflict. The narrative finally emphasizes that identity is a dynamic construct shaped by human experiences and social developments. As the characters deal with their pasts and futures, Khan urges readers to consider their own identities in the light of a constantly changing world.

CONCLUSION

Uzma Aslam Khan's *Thinner Than Skin* is a thorough examination of the complex interplay between class, identity, and socioeconomic shifts in modern Pakistani culture. Khan's rich tapestry of people and vivid places reveals the intricacies of human experience in the face of environmental destruction and social injustice. The work not only conveys a moving story about love and belonging, but it also criticizes the sociopolitical context that affects individual identities and communal narratives. Using theoretical frameworks such as Cultural Hegemony, Social Identity Theory, and Cultural Capital Theory, we obtain a better understanding of how characters manage their identities in a fast-changing society dominated by power dynamics and cultural stories. Cultural hegemony explains how prevailing beliefs maintain societal disparities, impacting individuals like Ghafoor and Maryam as they struggle with their responsibilities in a society that frequently ignores their experiences. Social Identity Theory expands our understanding of how group membership influences self-perception and interpersonal interactions. Maryam's struggle to reconcile her objectives with social standards illustrates the conflict between personal wants and communal identities, demonstrating the fragility of identity in an environment fraught with external demands. Meanwhile, Cultural Capital Theory emphasizes the importance of access to education and cultural resources, illustrating how these elements may help or impede social mobility. Furthermore, Khan's investigation of ecofeminism highlights women's resilience in the face of structural oppression, demonstrating how their relationships with the natural world reflect greater themes of vulnerability and strength. The metaphor "thin skin" captures this contradiction, providing a striking reminder of women's natural strength in the face of social restraints. Finally, *Thinner Than Skin* is vital literature for comprehending the intricacies of identity creation in postcolonial situations. It asks readers to address the socioeconomic realities that oppressed populations endure, while also pushing them to consider the larger implications of love, belonging, and resistance to cultural hegemony. Khan's story resonates well with modern discourse on identity politics, providing vital insights into the challenges and ambitions that characterize human life in an ever-changing context. To summarize, Uzma Aslam Khan's work not only enhances Pakistani literature, but also significantly adds to worldwide discussions on class dynamics, gender roles, and the search for identity in a society affected by historical legacies and present problems. *Thinner than Skin*'s nuanced portrayal of humans negotiating their situations is a touching reminder of the lasting human spirit in the face of tragedy, asking readers to see the interconnectivity of individual experiences within a wider social framework.

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