

## Hegemonic Masculinity in Transcultural Society in the Novel in the Kitchen by Monica Ali

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### Abstract

This study examines the male characters in Monica Ali's *'In the Kitchen'*, exploring their diverse cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds within the framework of a transcultural patriarchal society. It investigates how these characters are perceived and treated, highlighting the emergence of exploitative behaviors rooted in hegemonic gender relations. Multiple masculinities coexist within society, shaping interactions and hierarchies that affect not only women but also men marginalized by dominant male figures. Through the lens of hegemonic masculinity, this study reveals that men in patriarchal structures often face oppression similar to women. The novel demonstrates that patriarchal societies perpetuate harsh treatment not only towards immigrants and refugees but also towards white men like Gabriel, who becomes a victim of male-dominated power dynamics. Employing hegemonic masculinity theory as its theoretical framework and textual analysis as its method, this research underscores that individuals who deviate from societal norms of masculinity encounter significant challenges, regardless of their background. The qualitative analysis uncovers that men in society do not universally wield power, as they often fail to meet the standards imposed by the patriarchal system, ultimately being oppressed and marginalized by a smaller subset of men who do meet those criteria. These dynamics can be encompassed within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, incorporating elements such as capitalism, immigrant exploitation, and the subjugation of both women and men.

**Keywords:** Transcultural, Hegemonic masculinities, Male-dominated, Power dynamics

### Introduction

For centuries, society has established certain standards for men to follow, wherein they are not allowed to be emotional and must be aggressive and dominant. In this modern era, these standards have slightly changed due to the role of media, literature, and other mediums, which play a vital role in portraying the idealized image of a man. Different cultures and societies perceive that a man has to be strong in all aspects, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or economically. The majority of men fail to fit into the category of idealized and stereotypical masculinity, and as a result, both men and women suffer in patriarchal societies. Patriarchy is a system of cultural norms and values that dictates the expected behaviors and roles of men and women. It operates on the assumption that men possess a natural authority to lead, while women are expected to adopt roles as nurturing, self-sacrificing caregivers. A clear example of this enduring gender-based power structure is the ongoing proliferation of laws in the United States that curtail women's reproductive rights. This system divides human traits into "masculine" qualities, such as stoicism, independence, and rationality, and "feminine" traits, such as

emotional sensitivity, altruism, and rationality. By placing a higher value on the masculine, patriarchy negatively impacts both genders: it pressures men to deny their need for relationships and women to suppress their sense of individuality. (Snider and Gilligan) For quite a long time, we have witnessed the concept of male dominance and patriarchal society, which has significantly affected women's lives, causing them to suffer. In the 20th century, a new movement emerged called feminism, which aimed to highlight the suffering and exploitation of women under male-controlled society. However, in the late 20th century, a masculinity crisis emerged, revealing that the gender hierarchy led to normative behavior and resulted in the exploitation of men as well. The androcentric perspective represents the societal expectations of how a male should be, and the widespread agreement on this notion leads to dilemmatic situations for individuals striving to meet these standards. The main argument underlying Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity is the question of how certain groups of men actually "inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance" (Carrigan 92). The concept of masculinity presented in society, along with its associated power, is enjoyed only by a minority group of men. On the other hand, *Masculinities* by Raewyn Connell discusses the challenges in defining the elusive and abstract concept of masculinity within society. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the culturally dominant ideal of manhood, which legitimizes male authority and reinforces gender hierarchies. This concept, introduced by Raewyn Connell, highlights how certain traits such as dominance, assertiveness, and emotional detachment are valorized, while others are marginalized. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the dominant form of masculinity that is culturally idealized (e.g., toughness, dominance), while complicit masculinity refers to men who benefit from patriarchal systems without necessarily embodying these traits. There are also subordinated and marginalized masculinities, which are types of masculinity that are less valued or even oppressed in the patriarchal hierarchy (Connell 242). In transcultural settings, hegemonic masculinity plays a pivotal role in shaping gender norms by interacting with diverse cultural expectations. These interactions can either reinforce traditional patriarchal values or create hybrid masculinities influenced by cross-cultural exchanges. The adaptability of hegemonic masculinity in transcultural settings often perpetuates systemic inequalities, shaping the lived experiences of individuals across gender and cultural identities. The novel *In the Kitchen*, not only explores themes of immigrant exploitation and transculturalism but also delves into the issues of gender stereotypes and hierarchy within dominant social framework. The novel is a layered narrative that critiques social inequalities, examines the intersection of culture and commerce, and explores what it means to navigate identity in an increasingly fragmented world. The story revolves around Gabriel, the head chef at the Imperial Hotel in London. The hotel's kitchen serves as a microcosm of cultural diversity, with staff from various countries and backgrounds, many of whom are immigrants. The novel opens with the death of a staff member, Yuri, highlighting the insignificance of an individual's life in the relentless pace of a high-pressure workplace. The novel's turning point occurs when Yuri, a Ukrainian porter at the hotel, is found dead in the basement under mysterious circumstances. As the story unfolds, Gabriel grapples with an identity crisis, compounded by personal and professional struggles. This incident triggers Gabriel's moral and existential crisis, leading him to question the exploitative working conditions in the hospitality industry, the ethics of modern capitalism, and his own complicity in these systems. Gabriel's relationships, particularly with his girlfriend Charlie and an enigmatic worker named Lena, further complicate his internal struggle. As Gabriel tries to uncover the truth behind Yuri's death, he is forced to confront the inequalities and harsh realities faced by immigrant workers in a globalized world. His journey reveals the pervasive effects of power dynamics, both personal and societal, and the ways in which traditional notions of masculinity and success can lead to self-destruction. His dream of owning a business is ultimately shattered following a conflict with his business partner, leaving him to confront the harsh realities of ambition, failure, and self-discovery. Through Gabriel, we gain insight into how other characters are treated and the intricate power dynamics at play. Building on the previous point, it is essential to note that the gender hierarchies affect both women and men who do not conform to the idealized notions of masculinity or femininity.

The novel also highlights how gender inequality affects male characters differently based on their societal standing. Gabriel, for instance, experiences suppression and suffering because he lacks the power and authority that characters like Fair-weather possess. Men like Gabriel face suppression and suffering stem from their inability to align with societal expectations of masculinity, a struggle often faced by those with limited power to assert or practice authority. Ali critiques traditional notions of masculinity and authority, revealing how these constructs affect individuals and communities in a globalized, transcultural society. This further strengthens the notion that the limitations of masculinity values in society can have detrimental effects on individuals, irrespective of their gender. Therefore, in this analysis, the focus will be on Gabriel's character, as well as other male migrant characters, who navigate the challenges of male dominance within the transcultural society depicted in the novel. By examining their experiences, we can gain a deeper understanding of how the gender hierarchy affects different individuals and contributes to the broader themes of exploitation and trans culturalism explored in *In the Kitchen*. In this article, I will analyze that how cultural idealized masculinity leads to the oppression of men-by-men in the novel, *In the Kitchen* by Monica Ali? And within Hegemonic Masculinity, how do men practice their tyrannical and unjust power over marginalized masculinity? Drawing from this theory, my analysis will focus on the oppression of men by other men within the novel's society. This comprises exploring the experiences of illegal immigrants, refugees, and middle-class men who agonize due to their relative lack of power as compared to other men in British society. By employing Connell's hegemonic virility theory, we can uncover the complex dynamics of gender hierarchy, power, and exploitation within *In the Kitchen*, captivatingly exploring the interplay between diverse masculinities and the struggles faced by different male characters in this thought-provoking narrative.

### **Research Objective**

1. To examine the connection of masculinities and power dynamic in a transcultural society within the framework of hegemonic masculinity along with how these elements shape social dynamics and relationships.
2. To examine how cultural ideals of hegemonic masculinity underwrite to the oppression of men by other men in *In the Kitchen* by Monica Ali.

### **Research Question**

1. How cultural idealized masculinity leads to the oppression of men by men in the novel, *In the Kitchen* by Monica Ali?
2. How do men practice their tyrannical and unjust power over marginalized masculinity?

### **Theoretical Framework**

To examine Monica Ali's *In the Kitchen*, we will be using hegemonic masculinity theory by Raewyn Connell. This theory will help to investigate how dominant ideals of masculinity shape social interactions and power dynamic. Specifically, we will emphasis on the portrayal of male characters in the novel, with particular emphasis on the protagonist, Gabriel Lightfoot. Hegemonic masculinity, as described by Connell, refers to the cultural ideal of masculinity that is valorized in society. This ideal includes traits such as physical strength, mental toughness, and economic stability. The theory posits that these cultural ideals lead to hierarchical gender differences, violence, and the subordination of men who do not conform to these ideals. Hegemonic masculinity is not a universal practice among all men, but rather an idealized model that is promoted by institutions such as literature, religion, politics, and media. According to Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, these institutions or influencers are the "weaver of the fabric of hegemony" who portrays masculine ideals, model, or fantasy figures who are, different from the majority men, reinforcing cultural norms and promoting masculine ideals that marginalize men who are different from the stereotypical societal structures. As Mike Donaldson highlights in the article "What is Hegemonic Masculinity?" hegemonic masculinity is often presented in popular media through heroic figures in genres like sagas, westerns, thrillers, and sporting events.

"Hegemonic masculinity is naturalized in the form of the hero and presented through forms that revolve around heroes: sagas, ballads, westerns, thrillers, in books, films, television, and in sporting event." (Donaldson 648). In the context of *In the Kitchen*, the theory of hegemonic masculinity will be used to examine how Gabriel's character embodies and struggles against the cultural ideal of the dominant male figure. Despite being portrayed as skeptical, confident, and determined to solve the case of Yuri, Gabriel still faces oppression within the male-dominated society he inhabits. This is indicative of the internal conflicts and limitations that come with trying to live up to hegemonic masculinity. His struggle reveals how the cultural expectations placed on men lead to the reinforcement of patriarchal structures that perpetuate both male domination and exploitation. In addition to Connell's theory, the analysis will draw upon Marxist theory, particularly in terms of the relationship between the bourgeoisie and working class. Hegemonic masculinity interconnects with the economic system, as the working-class men in *In the Kitchen* are subjected to a system of manipulation, which mirrors the Marxist concept of class struggle. This interplay between gender and class helps to contextualize the broader socio-political forces that influence the characters' lives and their experiences of power, oppression, and masculinity.

### **Significance of the Research**

The relevance of this study extends to contemporary discussions on masculinity and transcultural identity, emphasizing the ways in which gender norms are culturally constructed and contested in a globalized world. It encourages a reassessment of how masculinity is defined and functions within different cultural and societal settings. As societies become increasingly diverse due to migration and global interconnectedness, traditional gender roles, including masculinity, are constantly challenged and redefined. This study offers further assessment into how hegemonic masculinity operates across different cultural settings, revealing the complex interplay between gender, class and race. It also opens up avenues for scrutinizing the intersections of masculinity with power structures, providing a deeper understanding of how gender roles are maintained or subverted in contemporary global society. Such research is vital in addressing gender inequality, promoting more inclusive definitions of masculinity, and understanding its impact on both men and women in diverse social and cultural landscapes.

### **Literature Review**

In the late 20th century, various theorists and literary scholars addressed the issue of exploitation within society, encompassing both men and women. The feminist movement brought attention to the existence of inequality in society, sparking further discussions on the different masculinities present and how certain groups of men exert dominance over less powerful men and subjugate women. In the article titled "Identity through the Themes of Life, Death, and Loneliness in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen*", Storengen examines the identity crisis experienced by two protagonists: Nazneen, an immigrant in the novel *Brick Lane*, and Gabriel, a white man in *In the Kitchen*, both written by Monica Ali. By analyzing similar themes such as death, loneliness, diaspora, racism, and feminism in both novels, Storengen concludes that the identity crisis arises not only in individuals who belong to different cultures and backgrounds, requiring them to adapt to a new country's culture, but also highlights how individuals can experience breakdown due to significant changes in their lives. Moreover, the exploration of the central characters' identities, mental breakdowns, and processes of healing plays a vital role in depicting the realm of post-colonial literature. In another article titled "The Hidden Face of the New Millennium: Migrant Exploitation and Reader Expectations in Monica Ali's *In the Kitchen*", Patricia Bastida-Rodríguez discusses the exploitation of immigrants in the novel on various levels. The dominant European characters' control refugees and immigrant communities by seizing their passports and official documents, subjecting them to low-wage labor and coercing immigrant women into prostitution. Additionally, Bastida-Rodríguez focuses on Gabriel as a "man in crisis," shedding light on the turmoil of British identity depicted in the novel. In summary, the author vividly describes the exploitation of migrants and the psychological factors contributing to the chaotic circumstances in Gabriel's life within the novel. As a sociological phenomenon, the definition of masculinity varies across cultures. In the

article "Cross-Cultural Representations of Hegemonic Masculinity in *Shall We Dance*," Charlebois discusses the concept of hegemonic masculinity in relation to two different cultural contexts. The Japanese version emphasizes conformity to masculine social roles, while the American version focuses on a discourse linking masculinity to heterosexuality. This demonstrates how different cultures and norms influence the perception of masculinity in society, and individuals must adhere to these norms to avoid negative consequences. Previous studies have extensively examined issues such as immigrant exploitation, existential and identity crises, and the presence of masculine hierarchies in society. However, there is a dearth of literature exploring masculine hegemony in transcultural societies. This article aims to provide a fresh perspective by examining the different masculinities present in society and how they contribute to hierarchical systems that can lead to trauma and suffering for men as well. By viewing the style Ramzan and Khan (2024) analyzed pragmatic hedges from politeness principle perspective in prologue of the *Holy Woman* and epilogue of *Unmarriageable* along with linguistics as a cultural insight. Ramzan et al. (2023) studied the style shift as a comparative analysis of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Unmarriageable*. Nawaz et al. (2021) studied modality analysis of the *Bear Aton Chekov*. Ramzan et al. (2023) empowered ESL students by harnessing the potential of social media to enhance academic motivation in higher education.

### **Research Methodology**

This article has employed Raewyn Connell's Hegemonic Masculinity Theory as the theoretical framework for conducting textual analysis. The central idea of the theory is that not all men exert dominance in society. The construction of cultural ideals around masculinity is influenced by literature, religious figures, politicians, and other prominent individuals who shape societal norms. These influential figures act as the "weavers of the fabric of hegemony," creating and promoting masculine ideals that deviate from the experiences of the majority of men. Hegemonic masculinity is often presented through heroic archetypes found in sagas, ballads, westerns, thrillers, and various forms of media. This idealization of masculinity is naturalized and perpetuated through books, films, television, and sporting events. Donaldson highlights the connection between hegemonic masculinity and Marxist views, wherein the working class is suppressed and subjugated by the bourgeoisie, the capitalist class. The methodology for this article is textual analysis and through a close reading of the novel, the researcher has analyzed key passages, character development, and narrative structures to explore how hegemonic masculinity is both enacted and contested within the story. The approach of analysis allows for an in-depth examination of how gender norms are performed and challenged in the novel, particularly through Gabriel's interactions with other characters and his internal struggles. Moreover, the analysis incorporates critical readings of the secondary literature on hegemonic masculinity, including relevant theoretical perspectives from Connell, Donaldson, and Gramsci, to situate the novel within broader social, cultural, and political contexts. By combining textual analysis with these theoretical frameworks, the research will offer insights into the intersections of gender, power, and identity in the novel, shedding light on the complexities of masculinity in a transcultural, patriarchal society.

### **Discussion**

In this society, not only females but males also have to live up to the standards created by society. There are three approaches to understanding masculinities. The biological approach focuses on the innate gender differences, while the anthropological approach highlights the cross-cultural perspective of gender. Sociological studies examine the specific roles assigned to each gender. In the 20th century, the study of masculinity gained attention alongside femininity, shedding light on the exploitation of men who do not conform to the traditional standards of masculinity and fail to exhibit expected masculine traits. Only a minority group of men enjoys true power in a patriarchal society, while others suffer, leading to a crisis of masculinity.

It is perceived that men must be physically and economically powerful, with additional racial factors influencing their roles. Men are expected to hide their emotions and true identities, fearing that showing feminine traits would undermine their masculinity. In the novel, Monica Ali portrays a white man named Gabriel who experiences an identity crisis, along with other male immigrant characters who also face difficulties due to their national and immigrant backgrounds. They are exploited by capitalist figures and dominant males in positions of authority. As Connell suggests in his book *Masculinities*, institutionalized masculinity is culturally elevated above other forms of masculinity within the context of hegemonic practices. This dominant form of masculinity asserts superiority over complicit and subordinated masculinities. (Connell 81). As Connell explains, hegemonic masculinity represents a dominant form of masculinity that exerts power and asserts superiority over complicit and subordinated masculinities. In the novel, Monica Ali portrayed a white man as the central character of the novel named Gabriel whose journey is discussed. The main setting of the novel is in a busy hotel kitchen in London filled with transcultural identities, including illegal immigrants and refugees who were brought in through agencies for work. The kitchen becomes a space where the world comes together, with everyone working alongside one another. As there were different identities belonging to different ethnicity, we can observe the hierarchal power within the context. Yuri, though a man, is oppressed within the framework of labor hierarchies that demand subservience. His death highlights the brutal reality of a societal structure that excessively exploit and punishes those at the bottom, regardless of gender. Gabriel's character is essential in the novel, as his journey invites readers to reflect on the gender and power dynamics through the lens of a white man and head chef of Imperial Hotel in London. His race and British identity does not give him a complete power and assistance to practice power in patriarchal society. Throughout the story, Gabriel is represented as a man in crisis, dealing with multiple challenges moreover he uncovers the truth about his peculiar mother, learns that his father is terminally ill with cancer, and faces the heartbreak of his fiancée abandoning him after discovering his secret affair with Lane. To make matters worse, a fight with his business partner smashes his dream of opening his own restaurant. These collective events aggravate Gabriel's identity crisis, driving him to seek redemption and rediscovery by reaching out to his ex-fiancée, Charlie, in the hope that she can help him reconnect with his true self. In this situation, we can observe the hegemonic power that a male character holds in a patriarchal society. Gabriel's personality traits include avoiding making important decisions and constantly compromising. He never confronts any staff members at the Imperial Hotel, despite having reservations about their work. Instead of declaring himself and addressing the issues, he chooses to compromise and avoid difficult conversations. The act of compromising is typically associated with women who sacrifice and compromise to fulfill their societal duties. On the other hand, men are expected to be dominant and unyielding, regardless of whether they are in the wrong. These societal standards suggest that women, being emotionally weaker, have a weaker position in society, while men must be dominant, tough, and commanding to be seen as strong and powerful.

However, in the novel, Gabriel's inclination towards compromising and his inability to make important decisions ultimately lead to his downfall. His compromising nature and lack of idealized masculine traits make him vulnerable in the patriarchal society. Despite Gabriel's skeptical nature and his involvement in solving the mystery of Yuri's death, as well as discussing British identity and societal changes with his father, he still suffers greatly due to his failure to conform to the expected masculine traits.

The novel highlights the consequences of deviating from societal expectations of masculinity, showing the detrimental effects it can have on male characters like Gabriel in a patriarchal society. "Connell's hegemonic male is to be "white, heterosexual, competitive, individualist and aggressive men in the paid labour force who dominate the moral, cultural and financial landscape" (Şenel). If any of this notion is missing the male has to face consequences. Within hegemonic masculinity the idealized men are the person who has to be strong, powerful, effective, wealthy, proficient, imposing, self-sufficient, self-confident as well as mental and physically tough. The mental breakdown of Gabriel thus proves that he is the victim, and his emotional and insecure personality led to his miserable condition.

When Gabriel indulges himself into a fight with Fair-weather, who is the true example of masculinity is, he is displaying an emotional phase in which his feelings for Lane, who is gone now, made him make impulsive decisions leading to his downfall. After the combat between Fairweather and Gabriel, Gabe is threatened that he should back off and he will not get a job in any other industry as he has messed up with wrong people who have authority, power, wealth, self-confidence, and all the masculine traits, “get yourself a lawyer, if you can afford one, because if you think I’m giving you your money back ...” (Ali 490). This dialogue clearly signifies that if any male has any masculine trait missing which is framed by the society, he will eventually screw-up. The phrase “get yourself a lawyer, if you can afford one” is a taunt, underscoring Gabe’s perceived weakness or lack of resources to challenge the speaker. In the Kitchen explores to a great extent a masculinity in crisis as a consequence of the pressures exerted by twenty-first century Western culture, since Gabriel represents the struggle of contemporary British maleness to adapt to contemporary society and values, a struggle which is conveyed through focalisation despite the challenge this implies of reader expectations. (Rodriguez 1). This statement succinctly frames the central idea while highlighting the key elements—Gabriel as a symbol of contemporary masculinity, the narrative approach, and the broader cultural context. Furthermore, this novel touches upon the issue of immigration exploitation, capitalism, and human trafficking. Western world is the dream land for the poor and underprivileged people. The fact that economical and financial disability not only make women find jobs but also men. This way, male as well as females are given false hope by telling them that the west will help them to be financially stable. As male have the pressure to take care of their family because money and power works side by side, they avail such opportunities and negotiate with their fate. But in this novel, underprivileged class, racial discrimination, poverty, and lack of power becomes the main reason for the agony, anguish, and suffering for the male. Monica Ali’s *In the Kitchen* exposes the brutal realities of exploitation through systemic power imbalances that strip individuals of their identity and autonomy. The treatment of immigrant workers, particularly men, reveals the intersection of race, class, and hegemonic masculinity, portraying a world where economic disenfranchisement and dehumanization thrive. This dominance, rooted in practices akin to modern-day slavery, highlights how men with power exploit vulnerable male characters, perpetuating a cycle of control and subjugation. The confiscation of passports symbolizes control and dehumanization, as employers deliberately strip immigrant workers of their legal identities. Passports, representing autonomy and freedom, are wielded as tools of subjugation. Fairweather, one of the characters, remarks, “A form of slavery for the twenty-first century. Taking away passports, debt bondage, threats of violence, that sort of thing” (Ali 292). These practices ensure compliance and silence, effectively erasing individuality and rendering workers powerless. This systemic silencing serves as a deliberate strategy by the dominant group to maintain control over the vulnerable. In a system where masculinity is often defined by the ability to control and dominate, the immigrant worker is stripped of his humanity and reduced to an object. Tymon’s language emphasizes the economic vulnerability of marginalized men, whose masculinity is undermined not just by their lack of social status but also by their economic dependence on figures like Fairweather. Hegemonic masculinity plays a pivotal role in perpetuating the exploitation of male immigrant workers. The global economy rests on the shoulders of men whose bodies and labor are appropriated by those in power, creating systems of exploitation even among men. (Connell 205). This highlights how the global economy relies on the labor of men, particularly those in lower social positions, who are exploited by those in power, creating a system of inequality and exploitation even among men themselves. The young man who earns only £100 for two weeks of labor demonstrates how economic disenfranchisement reinforces hierarchies. When the man confronts Tymon, his employer, Tymon dismisses him by waving him off “like a stray dog” (Ali 480). This comparison underscores the dehumanization faced by immigrant workers. Although the young man is male, his lack of power and immigrant status relegates him to a position worse than an animal. His frustration reveals how hegemonic masculinity marginalizes men who lack power, regardless of their shared gender identity. The use of dehumanizing language to describe the immigrant worker exposes the intersection of masculinity with economic status. In this context, the worker’s masculinity is undermined by his

inability to meet the traditional masculine ideals of power along with self-sufficiency. The reference to the worker as a “stray dog” points him as a lesser figure, representing how hegemonic masculinity perpetuates the emasculation of those who do not possess the social capital or economic control over their lives. Therefore, Fairweather’s actions reflect the toxic nature of hegemonic masculinity, where vulnerability, subordination and emotional expressions are seen as weaknesses that must be suppressed. His interactions with Gabriel are emblematic of how power in patriarchal systems is often concentrated in the hands of those who adhere most rigidly to traditional masculine ideals. Gabriel’s own internal struggles with these ideals, amplified by Fairweather’s strict behavior, force him to confront the damaging consequences of these patriarchal norms. The hierarchical structure with *in the kitchen* exemplifies masculinity’s role in maintaining oppression. Tymon’s treatment of the young man illustrates how men in power exploit those below them. By asserting dominance over a less powerful man, Tymon reinforces his own authority and complicity in systemic exploitation. Fairweather’s observations about debt bondage and threats of violence further emphasize the oppressive environment, one in which economic pressures are weaponized against those most vulnerable. Ali critiques this exploitation by drawing parallels between modern labor practices and slavery. Fairweather’s description of conditions—“taking away passports, debt bondage, threats of violence”—reveals the dehumanizing mechanisms used to control immigrant workers (Ali 292). The metaphor of the “stray dog” reflects not only the contempt of employers like Tymon but also the broader societal perception of immigrants as disposable commodities rather than human beings (Ali 480). This reduction to subservience reveals how the intersection of class, race, and masculinity perpetuates oppression. Moreover, similar is the case with Gabriel, who is through a white man but still he was treated as a useless, weak person and was threatened to go back from where he came, “Do we have any vacancies, Tymon, for a chef? No? I didn't think so. Right, you get out of here. Run, before I set the dogs on you. Go on, run!” (483). *In* this dialogue, Gabriel is kicked out of the farm by Gleeson who is the brother of Gleeson who works at the Imperial Hotel where Gabriel works. Similarly, Gabriel's experience highlights how certain forms of masculinity, rooted in capitalist and elite power dynamics, exploit other men who lack social privilege or belong to marginalized groups. Although Gabriel is a white man, he is treated as useless and weak due to his subordinate position in society. This is evident when Gleeson, the brother of Gabriel's employer at the Imperial Hotel, humiliates and threatens him, “Do we have any vacancies, Tymon, for a chef? No? I didn't think so. Right, you get out of here. Run, before I set the dogs on you. Go on, run!” (483). In this moment, Gabriel is dismissed not because of his abilities but because he does not fit into the dominant image of masculinity tied to power, status, and control. His lack of authority and lower social position make him disposable, much like women are treated in patriarchal societies. The threat to set dogs on him symbolizes the violence and dehumanization that men outside the dominant social class face. Additionally, Yuri’s death, which is insignificant, also portrays the reality and social factors. When Fairweather was attacked by Gabe, everyone started protecting him. And his life was important for the people around him even if he is immoral. The power and the masculinity he has makes him stronger and more powerful as compared to Yuri. He died at the beginning of the novel and the investigation started to find out what ail had happened. His death made no difference and was not important to anyone. As he was a refugee like others who were employed in the imperial hotel. His life and death made no difference. “The significance of Yuri’s death.” Said Nikolai, “is that it is insignificant” (430) This shows that a refugee with a broken past has no place in a society as he does not fall under the right definition of masculinity. Similarly, the insignificant death of Yuri—a refugee employed at the Imperial Hotel—exposes the societal indifference to those on the fringes of power. When Fairweather, a man of higher social standing, is attacked by Gabriel, the people around rush to protect him, emphasizing his importance despite his immoral character. Fairweather’s power and privileged masculinity shield him, whereas Yuri’s life and death remain inconsequential. Yuri, a refugee with a broken past, is rendered invisible by society, as highlighted by Nikolai’s reflection, “The significance of Yuri’s death,’ said Nikolai, ‘is that it is insignificant” (Barry 430). This statement accentuates how individuals like Yuri, who fall outside the dominant framework of white, elite masculinity, are denied recognition, value, and



justice. His death, while tragic, prompts only a superficial investigation, reflecting the systemic exploitation and neglect of those at the bottom of social hierarchies. In both cases, the narrative demonstrates how patriarchal structures, typically thought to exploit women, also marginalize men who do not conform to the idealized image of power and privilege. Men like Gabriel and Yuri are devalued and exploited in much the same way women are in patriarchal systems—discarded and denied autonomy when they lack access to societal power or capital. To summarize the critique *In the Kitchen* explained the power of imbalances that thrive on the silencing and dehumanization of immigrants worker hence by exploring hierarchical exploitation of women and men within the hospitality industry Ali underscores the damaging nature of hegemonic masculinity. Men like Tymon reinforce a system where masculinity is weaponized through their complicity to perpetuate subjugation and dominance. Through its harrowing portrayal of these dynamics Ali' novel ask for attention to the urgent need for a systemic redefinition and reform of power and masculinity. Hence these situations reveal the inherent contradiction with capitalist and patriarchal system which upholds a hierarchy of masculinities since those at the top elite extremely powerful men not only exploits women but also men from lower social standings or marginalized background which perpetuates systemic inequality where masculinity becomes a dangerous weapon to oppress those who do not align with its privileged form. Yuri and Gabriel's experience explains that within such system, the value of a life dictated by its proximity to power, further reinforcing the cycle of marginalization and exploitation.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this article sheds light on the intricate power dynamics within male-dominated societies, where the character of Gabriel exemplifies skepticism and confidence in his pursuit of solving the case of Yuri and exploring the concept of Britishness. However, even with his determined nature, Gabriel faces his own struggles within the societal framework that favors dominant men. The immigrant characters vividly depict a gender hierarchy, where men from diverse racial backgrounds, varying skin colors, and different economic circumstances suffer and fall victim to exploitation by those who hold the reins of power. Only a handful of characters like Gleeson and Fair-weather enjoy the privileges associated with true power, largely due to their alignment with the idealized cultural notion of masculinity. Conversely, the majority of male characters experience the bitter realities and agonies of oppression and subjugation. This article effectively argues that the dominant group of men in society does not universally wield power, as they often fail to meet the standards imposed by the patriarchal system, ultimately being oppressed and marginalized by a smaller subset of men who do meet those criteria. These dynamics can be encompassed within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, incorporating elements such as capitalism, immigrant exploitation, and the subjugation of both women and men. The article has successfully highlighted the gender power dynamics that exist within society, illustrating that even within the same gender, hierarchical structures prevail due to societal standards dictated by the patriarchal order. Within a British context, this analysis demonstrates that immigrants and refugees suffer in parallel to white men like Gabriel, who grapples with his own challenges amidst a midlife crisis shaped by societal expectations. Even though Gabriel is a skeptical and confident character who tries to solve the case of Yuri and ask questions regarding Britishness, he still suffers in the male dominant society. Moreover, the other immigrant characters explicitly show the gender hierarchy where men belonging to different races, colors or economic situations suffer and are exploited by the dominant men. The further research can explore a broader comparative study of masculinity across different cultural and literary contexts would further illuminate how hegemonic masculinity operates in various global settings, offering a more comprehensive understanding of its implications in contemporary society. Exploring the role of race, class, and immigration in shaping masculine identities could expand the scope of future research in this area. Another promising avenue for future research is the exploration of misandry, or the systemic prejudice against men, and how it interacts with traditional patriarchal structures. By comparing how masculinities are presented, exploited, and critiqued across time and cultures, future studies could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the role masculinity

plays in contemporary society, its intersections with power dynamics, and its implications for both men and women.

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