

Marxist (Capitalist) Approach in Pakistani English short stories Nawabuddin Electrician by DaniyalMueenuddin and God be praised by Ahmed NadeemQasmi

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study to examine the notion of class system in Pakistani English fiction, "The electricians" and "The God be praised" in view of Marxist critique approach. This is comparative study in which qualitative method and textual analysis tools are used. In light of Marxist approach both authors share similar concept such as class division based on the socio-economic status and its subsequent impacts on working class. Underlying causes and nature of class system have been shown similar in both short stories. Although, characters in both short stories belong to different backgrounds and settings, yet they struggle with similar issues. Nawabuddin of "The Electrician" comes from Liberal background while MauliAbul of "God be praised" is conservative, but both are entangled with same problems.

Keywords: Class system, Pakistani English Fiction, The Electrician, God be praised, Comparative Study, Qualitative method, textual analysis.

Introduction

Social class or class system is conflicting notion for Political scientists, social historian, anthropologists and sociologists. Term "class" has a wide range of definitions and sometime contradictory in its multilayers of meanings. Generally, term "social class refers to socio-economic class which involves social groups in economic, cultural, educational, Political and social status. For instance, the working class, elite class

Ogburn and Nimkoft claim class system is group of different people having same level or status by any factor, like wealth, caste or occupation. For example, people with different ages, societies and communities live in lower class or upper class.

While Max Weber shortens the definition of term class and defines that social class could be understood in the context of monetarily position not status, which often depends upon social

prestige rather means of production. (Weber, Max 2015). However, Karl Marx takes a different turn and argues that class system could be determined through the relation of production and goods. His understanding is that class system give immense power to upper class and they oppress the labor class by owning large sum of money. (Weber, Max 2015).

Karl Marx believes the root of poverty and exploitation lies in class system which often dubbed as Capitalism. (Streeter, Calvin L. (2008). While Talking on class system, Rousseau argues, private enterprise is real cause of social problems because it gives birth to inequality through property's value. He further says, by replacing private property to public property, equality can be established in society (Conley, Dalton 2017). Along Rousseau many other enlightenment thinkers admitted that root cause of inequality is private owned property. According to them, private ownership creates stratification between

lower class, middle class and upper class (Conley, Dalton (2017).

Pakistani English literature is also widely engulfed by such themes related to social class, socio-economic issues and its draw backs. Although, many Pakistani English authors including Diaspora writers have illustrated these themes, but DaniyalMueenuddin's depictions regarding social ills, hunger, poverty, feudalism, elites' agency of power and wealth, have a peculiar place in Pakistani Literature. DaniyalMueenuddin was born 1963 in Los Angles US. He is a Pakistani-American author and writes in English. His short story collection *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (2007), has been translated into sixteen languages, and won the story prize, the Commonwealth Writers' prize and other honors and critical acclaim. ("Tales From a Punjab Mango Farm". *The Wall Street Journal*. 2009)

DaniyalMueeddin's short story 'Nawabuddin Electrician' is the representation of Pakistani middle lower classes that are entangled in their domestic and economic crises. The character of the Nawabuddin seems brave, confident and ready to faces challenges of life despite of his poor and underprivileged social situation.

Ahmed NadeemQasmi's selected short story of this comparative study is "God be praised". It embodies the poor socio-economic conditions and social disparity of Pakistani society specially his characters present the under privileged people of Pakistani society. Qasmi's protagonist in "God be praised" is MulviAbul, a fragile and socially broken man who has no courage and dare to handle his deprived and destitute life which is engulfed of scarcity and shortness of food, and other basic provisions of life. Throughout the story MulviAbul struggles for comforts of life for his family that includes four daughters and a wife. He owns little amount of money to feed them.

Therefore, he has to suffer for even basic necessities. He even doesn't have money to buy toys, shoes and clothes for his children, which often brings tears in his eyes. Although, his neighbors provide meals and other gifts, yet his life becomes increasingly difficult. Character of MulviAbul represents darker aspect of society which is based on class-system.

Literature Review

Marxist theory or Marxism is a system of Political, social and economic philosophy based on belief that instead of caste or creed, social change occurs by means of production" (Mirunalini& Devi, 2017, 13). Marxist theory is essentially social, political and economic manifesto of Freidrich Engels and Karl Marx. Marxist class theory refers to position of an individuals within class structure and defines their role in means of production, it also states, that ideological and political consciousness is defined by class position (Parkin, F. Marx 1979). A class asserts a group of people who share same economic interests and engaging in collective activities which enhance those interests. In Marxist class theory, class construction is determined by structure of

production process (Edward Andrew, 1983).

Class system in Pakistan

Pakistan is an agricultural country with more than 220 million population. Of 220 million 63% population resides in villages (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2018). These feudal people own large swaths of land, with the assistance of their accountants and managers. British colonial is said to have sown the seeds of class-oriented feudalism in sub-continent. Natasha Shahid argues that Mansabdari System which previously introduced by Mughal rulers became Mahalwari system. This system give monopoly to few families to control the large area of land (The Friday times, 2015)Two German philosophers and thinkers

Engels and Karl Marx constituted political and economic manifesto which is known as (The Communist Manifesto) which explains the horror of Capitalism and its inevitable abolishment and formation of new and healthy economic system of socialism which lower class would lead in the form of revolution.

Capitalism replaced the Feudalism in early 15th century in Europe. In England peasant communities by 15th century brought to end their economic surplus which they used to take in the form of feudal rents. (Katz, 1993). Despite of transition from Feudalism into Capitalism persisting class struggle between different class compelled the Engels, Marx to write a communist Manifesto. "The new form of bourgeois society which emerged from debris of feudalism has ,too, failed to address the problem of social classes. Hence, it is essential to replace this bourgeois society with new society which reduces tensions and create more equality among social classes. (Marx et al., 1967).

In Pakistan feudal Lords live in large families, sometimes hundreds of family members and millions of acres of fertile lands. Due to ownership such huge lands it provides the political leverage in political and social arena which they use for their vested interests. They become so much powerful that they contribute substantially to agricultural and economy of the country. Whereas tents or peasants who work day and night in their field have to live on hand and mouth. (Shuja, 2000).

Ever since Pakistan came into being these Feudal have been governing the nation. Therefore, they have hegemony on agriculture, economy and other means due to their huge presence in parliament. They are hereditary Capitalist without enterprises, Baron without class, princes without pedigree. With heavy presence in assemblies for long time with political process in their pocket, now they are

statesmen without vision.(Khan et al., 2013). Given the such criticism, Mueenuddin's depiction of class-oriented society is modest and forgiving.

Research Methodology: Qualitative Data Analysis

Characters are coded in the light of Marxist approach of class division. These classes involve upper class, which is also known as Bourgeois and owns means of production. In modern societies these people are called feudal, Capitalists or those who hire employees for their own benefits. (Marx & Engels, 1848 :14).While second class is petty Bourgeoisie which is generally known as Middle class. These people often employees of capitalist and run their companies and corporations. This class particularly is formed in modern develop societies (Marx et al., 1967). Petty Bourgeoisie people are part of lower management and supervision. These people play role of commanders for their capitalist masters. Finally, a lower class or working class which is known as proletariat. Marxist presents these people as working class who in spite of intense struggle own no means of production. Labor of these people only benefits the upper class and their own life is just limited to survival. The applicability of these classes outlined by Marx, on the class system depicted by Mueenuddin is explored here.

Portrayal of Lower class people in selected stories.

Both authors have shown the poor class people as oppressed in their short stories. Mueenuddin's character such as thief in his short story "The electrician" is dilemma of capitalist society, where proletariat class is oppressed in such way, that they are forced to take wrong path for their survival. "I did you wrong," the robber said weakly. "I know that. You do not know my life, just as I do not know yours. Even I do not know what brought me here. Maybe you are a poor man, but I'm much poorer than you"(8). Mueenuddin

sheds light on the miseries of poor people, who are conscious of their wrong path, yet they are compelled to take in order to feed their needs. The thief mentions his disparities and agonies to Nawabuddin by saying that My mother is old and blind, in the slums outside multan. Make them fix me, ask them to and they will do it (8). Having seen deplorable conditions of thief in which he tries to do something he himself considers wrong bring no flexibility in the attitude of Nawabuddin. As Nawab says "Go to hell," Nawab said, turning away. "Men like you are good at confessions (9). Nawab's behavior proves the Marx criticism in which says " Proletariat are exploited by both petty bourgeois capitalists. Nawabuddin as petty Bourgeois is not ready to forgive him in spite of his acknowledgement of truth.

While Mueenuddin has taken liberal character in his story to demonstrate the socio-economic exploitation of lower class, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi in his short Story "God be praised" portrays religious character MulviAbul who struggles with similar problems. , MulviAbul circumstances were stable and he used to live a comfort life, even in Pomp" (1). He gives sermon on day of Eid and earn 150 to 200 rupees. Then he distributes 40 to 50 rupees in the presence of worshipper's to poor and needy people". (1). However, after marriage his life takes dramatic turn, he is entangled with socioeconomic problems in such manner that even he struggles to fulfill basic essentials of his family. When he buys shoes for his daughter Mehrunisa, he complained " (1). If Mueenuddin shows the dependence of Nawab on his master and subsequent elevation of his status due to Motorcycle, Mr: Qasmi illustrates comfortable life MulviAbul being turned into deplorable. Qasmi brings another factor to fore, which might not be prominent one in Marxist approach by showing how daughters are given less importance due to their inability to produce money. In the story, when Chaudhry Fateh reprimands mistakes to MulviAbul in Quran' recitation, he angrily replies

"Had you also have been blessed with daughters then you would understand why repeated the chapter of Quran twice (2). Here desperation of MolviAbul has been shown for daughters and their marriages. Qasmi asserts that socioeconomic issues of parents in the 3rd world countries directly impact their daughters because most of time females are expected as housewife, hence, they earn no money and become burden on family. Moreover, Qasmi highlights the colourless happiness of poor people. Unlike rich people, who spend millions of dollars on their marriages and parties, poor people even cannot celebrate their happy moments as they do not have adequate money. Upon the news of marriage of Mehrunisa, MulviAbul announces " Today my all of children will get special treat, A little raw sugar with bread" (4). At the end of story, Qasmi asserts that "All of these years MualviAbul have two sources of inspiration, one Allah Almighty and second is Chaudhry Fateh" (6). Such significance of Chaudhry Sahib in MaulviAbul life, reflects the poor people dilemmas. Qasmi believes it is not poor people who want to depend on others, but it is societal structure of socioeconomic which forces them to to accept such slavery.

Portrayal of feudal or upper class in selected stories.

Daniyal Mueenuddin and Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi are deemed are two vocal voices against class-oriented society. Most of their works reflect their attitude against capitalists and feudal. However, both seem to be different in their depictions of Capitalists. In Mueenuddin' story "The electricians" Portrayal of landlord K.K.Harouni is part of such effort to get the attention of the readers.

" K. K. Harouni lived mostly in Lahore and rarely visited his farms" (Mueenuddin p.11). Mueenuddin argues that these feudal live away from the village and lead comfortable life with all

facilities available. They celebrate these luxuries from the money, which poor class send to them by working day and night. While poor people put their blood and sweat for them, these so-called Landlords are reluctant to check their miseries.

Whenever the old man did visit, Nawab would place himself night and day at the door leading from the servants' sitting area into the walled grove of ancient banyan trees where the old farmhouse stood" (Mueenuddin p.11). Nawab is expected to provide his services to Harouni whenever he sets his feet in village. Nawab's attitude reflects the exploitation of poor people, who are not paid fairly, but they are forced to render their full services.

Ahmed NadeemQasmi seems to be different in his depiction of feudals and upper-class people. Although, he too, sees the overly dependence of working class on upper class as root cause of problems, yet his portrayal of relationships between his characters MulaviAbul and Chaudhry Fateh suggests his softness towards issue. He unlike his counterpart, believes inclusive and healthy relations between upper class and lower class, could reduce the level of exploitation.

Chaudhary was censure and purely religious, who has been for years sending home baked bread smeared with ghee and earthen bowl of dal. Chaudhry Fateh would carry it by himself to MulaviAbul house and apologize if he delays (p.2).

In contrast to K.K. Harouni, Chaudhry is pure and religious man who supports the MualviAbul without expecting anything. As story tells, he is kind-hearted and generous. Every day, he brings meal and food and other items to MulaviAbul. His generous behavior is not driven by exploitation or manipulation, but he merely does to support the poverty-stricken Mualvi. Here author seems to believe that by establishing trust and harmony, level of exploitation can be reduced.

Conclusion

This study examines the transition of socio-economic condition in two short stories of the electrician and God be praised. Both stories reflect the aspects of Marxist criticism which explains class division and class struggle based on socio-economic status. The aim of this study to highlight the Marxist perspective in Mueenuddin and Ahmed NadeemQasmi' two short stories the electrician and God be praised, where exploitation and manipulation stir alienation in different classes. DaniyalMueenuddin and Ahmed NadeemQasmi are prodigiously talented authors whose short stories provide us complex power structure, which we can find between Slave and master, boss and employee, husband and wife and capitalist and poor. (Nabiha, 2019).

Both DaniyalMueenuddin and Ahmed NadeemQasmi are credited with exposing the feudal and class system of Pakistan by showing the exploitation of poor and working class in both rural and urban areas of Pakistan. In selected stories both authors have opted the village setting to expose feudal people who even do not set their feet in village yet huge amount of money go into their pockets, while worker live hand to mouth. Both stories discuss socio-economic issues of characters by showing their disparities and helplessness. For instance, Mueenuddin's character Nawab's heavy reliance on K.K Harouni and Qasmi'sMualviAbul dependence on Chaudhry Fateh due to miserable financial conditions. Both characters even for smaller things, have to beg from their masters. Both stories also reflect the abject poverty of some characters who are ready to take wrong paths to feed their necessities. Thief in the Mueenuddin's stories, who just for sake of two times food tries to snatch the motorcycles from Nawab, which ultimately fails. While in Qasmi's story needy people are shown whom Maulvi Sahib gives money so they can fulfill their needs.

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