

ON POVERTY AND CLASS SYSTEM: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS A SHORT STORY “GOD BE PRAISED” BY AHMAD NADEEM QASMI

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ABSTRACT:

Ahmad Nadeem's God Be Praised is based on a real story and problems seen in the middle class. The role of Maulvi Abul specifically unearths the main themes of the story including poverty and the class system. The undertaken research highlights the causes and effects of both these societal issues especially regarding middle class people. The goal of this research is to look at the concept of class in Pakistani English fiction, The God be praised, through the lens of Marxist critique. This is a comparative research that employs qualitative methods as well as textual analytic tools. In light of a Marxist perspective, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi shares similar concepts such as class separation based on socioeconomic standing and its implications for the working class. The short narrative depicted the underlying causes and nature of the class system. A qualitative approach is used to analyze the undertaken topic using the theory of 'Social Stratification' and Fairclough's Three Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis. This work elaborates on how poverty, the class system and tension of dowry can ruin one's life. The main focus of the research is to avoid; the faith in deceptive appearances of the worldly things, Dowry System because of status.

Keywords: Poverty, Society, Critical Discourse Analysis, Negative Effects, Social Class.

Introduction

Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi is a well-known Pakistani, bilingual Urdu and English poet, journalist, playwright, and short story writer. He authored many 50 books on various topics such as poetry, magazine criticism and art. Qasmi's writings are an important part of the ideological battle that began shortly after the birth of Pakistanis. Poverty and dowry, which is linked to social exclusion, is the central theme and theme of their short stories. Especially the problems of the rural people of Pakistan. He shows how difficult life is especially for the rural people of Pakistan. They are also deprived of the necessities of life. Qasmi himself belongs to a poor background, so he knows the plight of the poor. The unavoidable and harmful impacts of poverty and class difference on people's lives, as well as how a society with racial prejudice can suffocate love and what can be racist people's limit in ruining people's happiness, are the major aim and development of this study. Humans have been humiliated by their immodesty in idealizing their races to the point that they attain power over other races (Akhtar, Imran, Xiaofei & Chen, 2021). All of his writings emphasize the deep and bitter societal realities of middle class people as well as elite class with sensitivity and humor; so do the undertaken story, which is explained by an omniscient. In our societal culture, only rich people get honor no matter if they are good or bad in person. Being a Historian, Tyson (2014) considers economic power as a basic forum for all social, domestic and political activities whether it is education, philosophy or any other field. The poor ones try their best to be like the rich in order to get honor and dignity. This behavior of society shows the interest of people towards the worldly things and power of objects. Qasmi's story stories turned our minds towards the basic social differences and problems. He focuses on the vanity and deceptive nature of people because of poverty and problems. No one can beat their level in posing problems differently and beautifully. He is interested in finding bitter realities in depth and criticizes the greedy ungrateful nature of people. According to Khan (2014) Poverty is a condition that deprives people of their lives and liabilities to value it. For political scientists, social historians, anthropologists, and sociologists, social class or class system is a controversial concept. The term "class" has a wide range of definitions, some of which are contradictory due to its multilayers of meanings. In general, the phrase "social class" refers to socio-economic status of social groupings in terms of economic, cultural, educational, political, and social standing (Saeed, Imran, Ahmad & Akbar, 2020). For example, the working class and the elite class. According to Ogburn and Nimkoff, a class system is a group of people who share the same level or status due to any factor, such as wealth, caste, or occupation. People of various ages, societies, and groups, for example, live in lower or upper class.

Qasmi's short story "God Be Praised" explores the generalization of the mentality of poor people. Poverty is creating an impatient society and it is also diminishing once-valued personal interaction with others. It's also abducted the minds of people. The present article has tried to answer the three questions; first, how does poverty divert the minds of people? Second, how does the dowry system affects our society? Finally, how does the difference of class cause inferiority complex in people? The significance of this research is to uncover the societal issues such as social class and greedy nature of people because of poverty. These issues need to be solved in society by diminishing the dominance of the class differences. The main theme of this research revolves around the causes and effects of poverty and class system with reference to Qasmi's "God Be Praised" in which he highlights the desires of a poor man Maulvi Abul and his family who represents the problems of the middle class. With this research, people can see how helpless poor people are when it comes to completing their chores. They are continuously in need of superiors. Because of their poverty, they are unable to resolve their problems on their own. Some well-educated wealthy people just use words to assert their courtesy and charity. They are self-centered. They even have time for poor people's pity. Poor individuals have no place in society. They have been socially marginalized (Imran & Hart, 2019). They are constantly shunned by society. Qasmi wishes to depict the plight of underprivileged people in society and how they must battle to address their issues in life. The purpose of the undertaken topic is to discourage the thoughts of low self-esteem in the poor and abandon them to run after money. This research is helpful to change the mentality of people being less than others. Adriano (2015) demonstrates that anything one wants is not always good and being thankful is the key for prosperous life. Thus, the undertaken topic explains that comparison with others causes jealousy which leads people to fulfill their desires and sometimes it becomes a "Curse".

In terms of how we negotiate our relative status through interchange with others, discourse structures produce power relations. Language, according to Fairclough and Fairclough and Wodak, has two types of power: power in discourse and power behind discourse. The former refers to the authority that may be seen in lexical choices and syntactic structures, such as directive speech acts, imperatives, and so on. For example, the hidden power of media discourse to influence/change is an example of power behind discourse, in which the entire social order of discourse is placed and held together as a concealed impact of power. Marxist theory, also referred as Marxism, is a political, social, and economic ideology founded on the notion that social transformation comes through means of production rather than caste or faith.

In literature, the period of Naturalism explores the realistic aspects of society, so do Maupassant's stories. His stories not only highlight the issues of society of his time but also of the current society. He explains how the middle class do survive in society, their fight with poverty and how their mindset pushes them towards class difference and its effects on them. Marx (1979) says Marxist class theory refers to an individual's position within a class structure and determines their role in the means of production; it also claims that class position defines intellectual and political consciousness. A class is a group of people who have similar economic interests and participate in cooperative activities to further those objectives. According to Marxist class theory, the structure of the production process determines class formation (Edward Andrew, 1983) Kuhn (2016) deconstructs two stories "La Parure" (The Necklace) and "Le Gueux". He explores Maupassant's works as realist, pessimist and critic; and highlights the themes of class-difference described in the undertaken story and reveals it as the major issue which causes many problems for the middle class especially. He admits that Maupassant being a realist advocates the rights for middle class people and social justice for them in the society.

In order to identify the main attributes of "God Be Praised" by Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, the story has been read and analyzed thoroughly. The central characters of the story, Maulvi Abul and Chaudhary Fatah have been discussed completely to expose the realities of society including causes and effects of poverty and class system. This research work provides information which highlights many aspects of society. The leading journals and research papers are arranged to highlight the main concept of poverty and class system. The primary source of this research is the actual text of the short story and the methods for analyzation of data are: thorough reading, comprehension of data, understanding main themes and decoding the use of symbols by author. While secondary sources are the journals, story analysis, articles and research papers. The story "God Be Praised" explain with the help of Marxism to show the impact of class-difference on poor families as; the story gives a clear picture of a society which unequally distributes the goods and source to achieve them. Maulvi Abul has no power, skills or money, but only her beautiful voice to earn the money for the survival of his family. The approach of this research is Qualitative because of its literary nature. The analysis is done by using the theory of Max and Weber; "Theory of Social

Stratification” which demonstrates that without any exaggeration people become more class conscious to survive in the society. And it is the leading factor of their destruction. Through analyzing the story this paper comes to a conclusion of how poverty and the class system is described in the original context and how it affects the society. Characters are coded in accordance with the Marxist concept of class division. These classes include the upper class, often known as the Bourgeois, who owns the means of production. These people are known as feudal, capitalists, or those who hire employees for their own advantage in modern nations. (Marx and Engels, 1848, p. 14). The second level is the small Bourgeoisie, which is sometimes referred to as the Middle class. These individuals are frequently employed by capitalists and are in charge of their businesses and firms. In current developed societies, this class is produced in particular (Marx et al., 1967). People from the petty bourgeoisie work in lower management and oversight. For their capitalist overlords, these people serve as commanders. Finally, there is the proletariat, which is a lower or working class. These people are depicted by Marxists as members of the working class who, despite considerable struggle, do not own any means of production. These people’s labour supports solely the upper class, and their own lives are confined to survival. Here, the applicability of Marx’s classes to Qasmi’s class structure is investigated.

Theoretical framework is the building block of any research paper which authenticates the used theories. It convincingly interprets and generalizes the whole data. Language is at the centre of critical discourse analysis. In response to the question of why, Locke (2004) claims that the answer is due to a historical development in twentieth-century thought known as the ‘linguistic turn,’ which has transformed language from a medium for expressing meanings that pre-exist linguistic formulation to a system that defines meaningfulness on its own term. In relation to Ethiopian discourse, the researcher gives his perspective on discourse from the functional perspective. It is defined as ‘language in use’ by Stubbs (1983), Fasold (1990), and Brown and Yule (1983). There is also a huge body of literature arguing that speech has a component that is independent of the language used (Foucault,1972 cited in Mills,1997; Fowler, 1981; Fairclough,1992). Discourse, according to the literature, is language use in relation to social, political, and cultural formations: it is language that reflects social order as well as language that shapes social order and shapes individuals’ interactions with society (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999, p.3).CDA is a linguistically oriented discourse analysis firmly anchored in social reality and with a profound interest in actual problems and manifestations of inequality in societies,’ according to the authors (Blommaert, 2005,p.6). Fairclough (1995) believes that in order to completely comprehend what discourse analysis is and how it works, it is necessary to examine the text’s form and purpose, as well as how it links to how it is created and consumed, and how it ties to the larger society in which it occurs. The study of form and meaning is referred to as textual analysis. Fairclough (1995) argues that it is impossible to fully analyze content without also analyzing form, because contents are constantly realized in forms, and different contents require different forms and vice versa (p. 188). Linguistic analysis focuses on the relationship between form and meaning, where diverse forms result in contrasting meanings and the patterns of choices made are ideologically relevant. Systemic linguistics, for example, Halliday (1985), considers language to be multifunctional and investigates the relationship between linguistic form and meaning. A linguistic and intertextual analysis are also part of a systematic textual analysis.

As a more interpretative/constructionist or constructivist methodology, CDA facilitates the analyst in examining the text in terms of what is present and what could have been present but is not (Richardson,2007,p.38). Every component of textual content, according to CDA analysts, is the consequence of ‘selection’-choosing one way of portraying a person, an action, or a process over another; choosing one way of constructing a phrase over another; choosing one fact, opinion, or argument over another. From the standpoint of CDA, textual analysis considers the function that parts of vocabulary, grammar, and semantics fulfil at the time of their use. As a result, we must investigate traditional techniques of linguistic analysis in terms of their direct or indirect involvement in sustaining or challenging ideological and social power systems. Fairclough’s analytic framework is also shared by Van Dijk (1999). In a similar vein to Fairclough (1995), he recommends that when using textual analysis, discourse should be examined at numerous levels or along multiple dimensions. Language use, discourse, verbal contact and communication. According to Van Dijk (2001), are associated to the macro-level of the social order, whereas power, dominance, and inequality between social groups are terms related to a macro-level of study. Discourse analysis is ideology analysis, according to van Dijk (1995, p.17), since “ideologies are typically, but not entirely, represented and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as photos, photographs, and movies.” He also contends that ideologies “indirectly influence group members’ personal cognition” (1995, p.19) because they are manifested through language.

With the exception of social analysis that concentrates on the “overall societal structures” (the context), discourse analysis is predominantly text-based (syntax, lexicon, local semantics, topics, schematic structures, etc.). In this manner, his analysis is similar to Fairclough’s, but what sets van Dijk’s approach apart from other CDA approaches is his technique: cognitive analysis. As a result, the articles in the newspapers are examined using van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model. There are two levels of analysis: macro and micro-structure: Thematic/topic structure of news stories and their overall schemata are included in the macro-structures, and the analysis of micro-structures includes semantic relations between propositions, syntactic, lexical, rhetorical elements, quotations, and direct or indirect reporting. In short, the current study’s analytical approach is based on Fairclough’s (1989) and Van Dijk’s (2004) CDA frameworks. These models assist us in deciphering the various readings that may be present in the newspaper text/s. To put it another way, critical discourse analysis seeks to uncover hidden meanings. The technique provides interpretations of textual meanings and situates what is written or uttered in its context. It also explains the ideological nature of the discourse in the Western press.

Textual analysis is the complete explanation of the original context with respect to the undertaken topic. It is used to analyze the topic or story thoroughly by explaining the role of the characters. In the undertaken research, textual analysis of “God Be Praised” is as follows in order to explain poverty of Maulvi Abul's family;

“He al ways carried a walking stick, a sort of scepter with decorative bands and gilt.....His unlimited treasure of divine blessings.” (PTB¹, page, 131) Even from the beginning of the undertaken story Qasmi highlights the thankful and glorious behavior of Maulvi Abul Barkat. He seems to be satisfied and considers her lifestyle splendid. Naturally, he is so beautiful and people are obsessed with his personality. He thinks that he has all the good and luxurious things in his life. The given lines denote a certain sort of religious garb. Scepter also has a religious connotation. In addition, the Prophet Moses held a scepter in his hand, which is stated in the Holy Quran. The use of aromatic oil also serves as a reminder of a sacred ritual. The underlying lesson here is that people, particularly religious people, should be content with what they have rather than yearning for material things. Religious teachings are comforting the people, telling them that rather than striving for more, they should be content with what they have and expect a recompense from God. The following sentences from the same lesson add to the concept: This lesson can also be taken as religious people being rigorous and sticking to principles. The incident of Maulvi Abul refusing to allow music at his daughter’s wedding demonstrates this. In some ways, it appears that the Qasmi wishes to deconstruct existing religious rigidity rules, arguing that they should be adjusted as needed rather than being rigid.

“If it were possible to get the necessities of life from the heavens through prayers.....Maulvi Abul burst into tears like a child”. (PTB, page, 131)

These are dialogues of Maulvi Abul and his wife, Zabunnisa. Here the author elaborates the actual reason for misery in the middle class by explaining the role of a poor man, Maulvi Abul . Zabunnisa is arguing with his husband for a pair of shoes for his younger daughter. Because she does not have shoes to wear in the home. All the children of his age have shoes with full pomp and show and that will degrade her. Here she is absolutely right at this point but at the same time she is wrong. She has to accept her reality and be confident for what she really is; then she does not have to hide herself in front of anyone. The author actually criticizes this point satirically. This is the class-difference and luxurious lifestyle of rich children which attracts her more than anything and she denies going out because of low-self-esteem. In modern society this behavior is common because people feel jealous of others instead of being happy for what they have without thinking that some people don’t even have the necessary things. This attraction for worldly things more than anything ruins families and individuals even in this era of modern technology. The other side of this conversation is the positivity of Maulvi Abul He says May Allah fulfill our basic needs from heaven through prayers. This shows that all people of the middle class are not lovers of money but some are thankful in the way they are. In fact, these are the actual realists who accept their poverty and try their best to fulfill the needs without complaining. Findings refer to the information which has been extracted from the original text by using different methods and investigations. This research is done on the poverty and class system of Maulvi Abul in the short story “God Be Praised” by Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi. Qasmi’s “God Be Praised” is a true literary work which has lessons for all types of classes in the society. Nnyagu & Victor (2018) say that in modern society people spoil their relationship with their spouse just to fulfill their desires because they are living in fiction. Thorough reading

¹ Punjab text book for class 11 English

and Qualitative research methodology are done to analyze the text completely. It is found that the central character of the short story; is shown as poor. The cause of greed and thanklessness is actually poverty and class-difference. Abul's family desires for the things to fulfill their needs he does not even afford and believes in the deceptive appearances of the things. This behavior is also present in today's society and it can be overcome by appreciating the things one has and being thankful for everything because time does not always remain the same and forever is just an illusion. It also has been found that the narrator uses "money from heavens" as a symbol to express the actual behavior of people for beautiful things no matter whether they are good or bad for. Qasmi explains the role of leading character Maulvi Abul and one supporting character Chaudhary Fatah. He describes the character by comparing them sociologically, physiologically and psychologically. With the passage of time psychologically Maulvi Abul's family attitude changes and they start to be thankful in every situation.

Table 1: this table shows the plot of the story according to this research paper.

X-Values	Y-Values
exposition	100%
conflict	70%
rising action	90%
climax	50%
falling action	30%
resolution	10%

To conclude, Qasmi, being the best short-story writer, mainly highlights different social evils of his time as well as of modern era. There are many themes of God Be Praised, but in the undertaken topic only poverty and the class system explains the role of central character, Maulvi Abul in the story. The undertaken paper elaborates that it is not the lower class who bring these differences but the elite and leaders who always tries to put others down and insert these differences into their minds causing violence and hatred. Moreover, these differences pass from one generation to others and this is the actual reason of non-top concept of class difference and poverty. Qasmi considers class-difference as the mother of all these societal evils because it demoralizes many middle class people. The paper elaborates that it is poverty which discourages poor from being themselves but the mindset. The aim of this study is to highlight the Marxist perspective in Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi's short story God be praised, where exploitation and manipulation stir alienation in different classes.

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