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## R.K.NARAYAN – A REALISTIC WRITER WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MONEY AND SEX

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**Abstract:** Literature is a process and also a mirror of life. It needs a close analysis to understand the multiple dimensions. At the outset, literature of any language in the form of story, short story, drama, novel, novella and poem depicts the multi facet of human life and society. Suitable methods and theories are needed for the close reading of such literature genres. Indian novelists in English especially the trios , Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan with their subtle craftsmanship depict India and its living from social, economical, cultural backgrounds. Among them , R.K.Narayan , with the creation of an imaginary town ‘Malgudi’ makes the characters live and linger in the minds of his readers. Indirectly ,he uses recurrent theories and ideologies such as Marxism and Feminism to bringout human life and society. As we know Marxism is a different phenomena in the larger social reality. Since we live in a society, whatever we think , feel or believe in, would necessarily be a part of our society. R .K. Narayan , with his intimate knowledge of Indian society in particular, in his novels and short stories depicts society from the perspectives of Marxism and Feminism. It is certain that R.K.Narayan is neither a Marxist , nor a feminist. He simply records day- to-day incidents and characters of his own experiences and encounters.

**Keywords:** Literature, Ideology, Marxism, Feminism, Money, Sex.

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**Introduction:** The main objective of this research paper is to attempt a Marxist literary criticism analysis of the selected works of R.K.Narayan and Indian English Literature. Narayan depicted the Indian society scenario through his works on the land of Malgudi. I

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propose to study the male and female characters from Marxist literary perspective and to examine if these characters are connected with the different contexts in which he wrote. The thesis focuses on how Marxism grafted into Indian English novels milieu by R.K. Narayan. The present article has been carried out with the main objective of exploring how far Marxist perspective influences the fictions and short stories of R.K. Narayan in its full length.

Literature of any society in any language mirrors the native social construct based on history. There is a very close relationship between literature and life. Hence literature is not only an outcome of life, but also is subject to the ideological upheavals which man experiences in society. Marxism is one such ideological force which has a defining impact upon literature. Our encounter with Marxism and its influence on literature begins with an interesting realization. The realization may be based on ideas, values and feelings by which men experience in their societies at various times and certain of those ideas, values and feelings are available to us only in literature. I propose to make this realization true through my work.

As we know Marxist literary criticism is a highly complex subject. In order to undertake Marxist criticism analysis in literature in terms of the historical condition, it needs to be conscious of its own historical conditions which produce it. Basically Marxism was not designed as a method of literary analysis but its principles were applied to literature early on. In Russia literature was sometimes admitted as a means of productive critical dialogue and literature was linked to the philosophical principles set down by Marx and Engels. It was apparent that Marxism provides a new way of reading and understanding literature. Karl Marx and Fredric Engels, the promoters of Marxism also much interested and influenced by the literary works and literary personalities. In the later stages, feminism had asserted the shape of Marxist feminism. It provided an adequate explanation for the subordination and exploitation of women in capitalist societies. Marxist philosophy inspired feminist movement throughout the world.

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It was only a matter of time before the writers beyond the boundaries of western countries came under its influence. Against this backdrop, I propose to carry out a comprehensive study of the influence of Marxism on R.K. Narayan's selected works. The deleterious effects of materialism are highlighted in his 'Swami and Friends', 'The Financial Expert', 'The Guide', 'The English Teacher', 'The Bachelor of Arts' 'Waiting for Mahatma', 'The Dark room' and his short stories would be discussed in this study. This thesis ends with an exploration of the result of modern and the materialistic lifestyles, and sex differences.

The moving force behind human history according to Karl Marx is its economic systems. So it is very necessary to understand the material and historical circumstances to explain any social or political context, any event or product, in which they occur. Literary works are not the author's own creation, they are the outcome of his historical and individual placement in society; responding to a general history from his own standpoint in its own concrete terms. When the influence of Marxism on literature is analyzed, this single thread turns out to be the touchstone upon which the doctrine is appraised for what it is worth. The conclusion of a Marxist analysis often takes the form of an endorsement of classless society. It may become a case study for social reform and touchstone to analyze the support or rejection of pointed out social change.

R.K. Narayan is considered the most idealized and one of the trios of Indian writing in English literature. He is a quick and shrewd observer. He is an enigmatic writer, who observes utmost objectivity. His portrayal of life is realistic in physical detail and at the same time suggestive of depths beneath. The main strength of Narayan lies in delineation of the urban middle class life in an imaginary south – Indian town.

He started to create his fictions during the period of 1935 approximately. This was the period of great upheaval in political and social life in India. It was the turning point in the history of India, as

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the country was passing through a grueling state of affairs. There was a general feeling of frustration in Indian mass. The hopes and aspirations of the nationalists were trampled, as they had been exploited by the British Government since ages.

R.K. Narayan consciously and sensitively depicts the undercurrent of the era. His novels are realistic presentations of contemporary life, as they clearly exhibit novelists' deep awareness of social, political and economic life of the people. His novels present before us a panorama of life. He portrays on the one hand rich money lenders and big business typhoons, on the other he draws nude and starving humanity, who depend on others for their daily meals. In his novels, there are politicians and social workers, idealists and hypocrites, exploiters and the oppressed ones. Most of his characters belong to middle class families, though there are a few from the lower class also. But it is definite that we come across real human beings with their weaknesses and strong points alike. Thus, we can say that he has minutely observed all the sections of society. Like Marxists he analyzes the social relations between men, in the way of materialistic life. He looks at the characters from the economic structure of society and definite forms of social consciousness. Some of his characters react in terms of psychological factors where an individual psychology is also a social product. In this perspective I would like to carry out my research work. In his novels, Narayan depicts Indian life and sensibility in its pristine glory. He is essentially a writer of middle class characters of Malgudi, a place of his imagination in South India. He has given a wide gallery of both male and female characters in his writings. Narayan concentrates his attention on the problems of modern age, money and sex. Humanity, morality and charity are the three remarkable features of human beings in the society, but they have been replaced by money, commerce and sex in the modern times. Materialistic advancement and industrial development have influenced Indian life after independence. In the early novels, the novelist mirrors conflicts between tradition and modernity but money and sex have occupied

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the core place of subject matter in his middle novels. Money and sex are the two strong and strange forces which influence and shape the life of people in the modern Malgudi locale. 'The Guide'(1958), 'The Financial Expert'(1952), 'The Dark room'(1938), 'Mr. Sampath'(1949) and 'Waiting For Mahatma'(1955) chosen in this study.

The paper also aims to take a brief glance at Indian writers in English and Marxist literary critics. The art of fictional narrative attained a high degree of success in ancient India which is evident from the popularity of epics like The Ramayana and The Mahabharata and fictional narratives like Kathasaritsagar, PanchTantra, Hithopdesha, Kadambari and the Jataka Tales in Sanskrit. But the novel in English, as a form, came to the scene rather late in India. It is believed that it was the British who introduced the Indians to the novel as a form of literature. The Indian novel in English emerged in the 1920s and established itself as a popular form in the next thirty years. There were Indo- Anglian, Indo-Anglian and Indo- English writings. In Indo-Anglian writing has been enriched by such internationally recognized figures as Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, R.Tagore, Jawar Lal Nehru,Aurbindo Ghosh, R.K.N rayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao , Anitha Desai, Kamala Das, Jayantha Mahapathra, Kamala Markandaya, Kiran Deasai , Chethan Bhagat, Arvind Adiga and other prolific writers . They depict Indian historical, social, political and cultural panorama in their works. Indo-Anglian literature continues to grow and flourish, and attain higher and higher peaks of excellence.

As we take a short glance at the Marxist critics, the first major Marxist critic was George Lukas, A Hungarian. He was responsible for 'reflectionism'. The theory is based on a kind of close reading and for the purpose of discovering how characters and their relationships typify and reveal class conflict, the socioeconomic system, or politics of the time and place. Another important thing is the French philosopher Louis Althusser asserts that literature and art can affect society, even lead it to revolution. His ideas are built on Antonio Gramsci's ideas and they are referred to as 'production theory'. Marxism established itself

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as a part of the American literary scene with the economic depression of the 1930's. Writers and critics began to use Marxist interpretations and evaluations of society in their work. New journals dedicated to a new kind of social and literary analysis. Currently two best-known Marxist critics are Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton. Fredric uses Freudian ideas in his practice of Marxist criticism. Eagleton examines and sets himself against the dominance of the privileged class. These days, Marxism approaches new dimensions in neo-colonialism and cultural analyses. Marxism is employed in cultural materialism and analyses the literary works in terms of material. It includes Edward Said, Michael Foucault, Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall and others.

Eventually the movement grew strong and made a way to Marxist feminism provided an adequate explanation for the subordination and exploitation of women in capitalist societies. Marxist feminists questioned as to why Marxist philosophy inspired feminist movement throughout the world. Across the globe women started foregrounding issues both in terms of class and gender. Throughout the twentieth century, the socialist critique inspired women novelists, theorists and scholars. Writers with socialist backgrounds reignited women's questions after the 1940s. Simone de Beauvoir in France, Doris Lessing in England and liberal feminist Betty Friedan all had strong roots in Communist or leftist movements. In India many female writers such as, Anitha Desai, Arubdathi Roy, Sunithi Nam Josi, Githa Hariharan, Bharathi Mukkharji, Shobha De and others raise their voice against women oppression in society in terms of economic discrimination, also. I strongly believe that it is very hard to discuss the works of R.K. Narayan from the context of Marxist literary criticism analysis. Because R.K. Narayan records day-to-day incidents and characters of his own experiences and encounters. Moreover, he never seems to have been tagged with any theories.

In his short stories, Narayan has achieved in this short story several purposes. Narayan depicts the characters of middle-class women in various positions and professions. In the middle class society the

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women folk silently bear the burden of the family in respect of economical, social, political, cultural and also gender biased status. According to cultural Marxism they are commodity and socially constructed beings. They cannot act on their own. The ages old hegemonic history has made them to perform the dumb-shows before male –dominated society. Many of the characters are the type, but some are against.

The thesis will also try to examine the following issues:

1. Is literature the product of historical conditions?
2. What is the need to study literary works under Marxist approach?
- 3 Do art, literature and ideologies help to believe that all products of a culture, including literature are the results of socioeconomic and ideological? And how far it is true in the works of R.K. Narayan?
4. Is Marxism after the middle class people? In R.K Narayan's fiction, characters are the representatives of his own experiences from his surroundings of middle class families.
5. How do Marxism and Feminism consider emancipator theoretical traditions? Many of the female characters in R.K. Narayan's novels are exploited by their counterpart, men. I propose to investigate these questions from the perspective of Marxist literary criticism.

In this research paper, my attempt has been to assess the role money and sex in the selected writings of R.K. Narayan , and to see it in the light of Marxist literary criticism, particularly materialism and Marxist feminism. It is important to see that these approaches are a part of determining the identity of an Indian and whatever the nature of change, these principles cannot be eliminated completely from our way of life.

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