

**RESEARCH PAPER****Marxist Literary Critique upon Children Literature with Perspective to Movie “The Scrooge: A Christmas Carol”****¹Imtsal Ahmad, ²Muniza Murtza and ³Dr. Muhammad Arfan Lodhi***

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***Corresponding Author:** samaritan_as@hotmail**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study is to analyze the Marxist elements such as Class struggle, Class differences, Class division, False consciousness, Bourgeoisie and Proletariat in an animated movie “The Scrooge: A Christmas Carol”. This research applies the theory of Karl Marx on an animated movie “Scrooge: A Christmas Carol”. This movie seems suitable for the application of Marxism as its title has a “word Scrooge”. The current study is exploratory in nature. The data has been collected and analyzed qualitatively. The sample was drawn from the narrative, thematic and visual information present in the movie. The dialogues were transcribed and landscapes were categorized to validate the collection, analysis and interpretation phases of the research. Researchers developed framework of analysis based upon Marxism viewpoint. Analysis and findings presented the Marxism elements. There is a clear division among the society members. There is also a class struggle between upper and lower classes. Bourgeoisie are found in the shape of Scrooge and Jacob. Proletariat is also present in the form of Tom and Bob. The study concludes with substantial recommendation for the future researches to be undertaken in the domain of literary theories and kids’ literature in Pakistan.

Keywords: Bourgeoisie, False Consciousness, Marxism, Proletariat, Scrooge**Introduction**

Literature refers to work of art that is used to express ideas through written work. An author gives literary writing a soul. Some writers give an objective point of view and the others give subjective opinions based upon their experiences and observations. Writers choose genre of literature as a road map that is suitable for them to convey their ideas. There have been many genres of literature including poetry, novel, drama, prose, animated movies etc. Every genre has its own characteristics, pattern and importance but poetry is considered to be an oldest form of literature. In English Literature, poetry has been adopted as a genre of literature since 2100 BC. Modern form of literature are animated movies.

Animations are considered as the latest form of literature. In the beginning, puppets were used and their movements were shown in a speed to show that these are real characters. As the technology progressed, animated movies are made through computer generated images. These animated movies are a source of greater interest for all the ages. These animations use supernatural elements and comedy to entertain the children, youth and old age people. Like other genres of literature, animations also provide moral lessons. The main difference between animated movies and other forms of literature is the use of animals. Animals are shown with human like characteristics. They act like humans and produce comic effects.

Every genre of literature has some intended meaning by the author and there are several meanings that are needed to be explored. The tool to explore those hidden meanings

are literary theories. Literary theories are the specific ways in which any piece of literature can be explored. In the 19th and 20th century, several theories emerged to analyze the text in a specific way. These theories are Marxism, Feminism, Modernism, Postmodernism etc. These are basically ways to view a text. For example, A Marxist will analyze the text based on class differences in any piece of literature. He will also analyze that which character is confronting hegemonies through any class.

Marxism came in to prominence in 1848. The main architect behind this philosophy was Karl Marx. He argued that a society has different classes and one class is oppressing the other. This class system should be eliminated and all classes should have equal wealth. This approach is now commonly used to view any piece of literature from the aspect of Karl Marx. It identifies those classes and their differences among them. According to William Raymond (1977), Marxism talks about three hegemonies. First hegemony is of the ruling class to oppress the other classes. Second hegemony is of lower classes to maintain religion and beliefs and last hegemony is shared ideas of the society. According to Karl Marx (1848), there is an economic base which controls all the society. Economic base is in the hands of dominant class and they are controlling the society. Society progresses if all other classes continue to struggle against those dominant classes.

19th and 20th century is considered as a turning point because several theories emerged in this era. These theories started to develop when these theories were applied on the different genres of the literature. However, it seems that such theories were applied mainly on dramas and novels. Some researchers tried to apply these theories on modern genre of literature that is animated movies. Nevertheless, there is a little focus on application of those theories on this genre. It also seems that animations are mostly analyzed through feminism approach. But these movies have also a different aspect which is oppression faced by one class by another class. This is common in mostly animated movies that needs to be explored. In Pakistani context, a number of researches have been carried out upon children literature including poems, nursery rhymes, cartoons, and movies. Studies conducted by Ajmal et al. (2023), Shabbir et al. (2023), and Gull et al. (2023) reflect multi-varietal explorations regarding theoretical applications on children literature. Ajmal et al. (2023) highlights the gender stereotypes in the Pakistani nursery rhyme "Chootti si Munni" by demonstrating the delicate but feeble social status of women in the culture. Similarly, Gull depicts another different aspect of gender analysis with reference to animated movie "Teen Bahadur"; convincingly indicating the positive and inevitable role of female persona in Pakistani culture and society. On the other hand, Shabbir et al. (2023) highlighted the feministic elements present in the movie beauty and the beast. As far as marxist approach upon kids literature is concerned, not many previous studies leave any substantial trace to be discussed with. This study attempted to investigate children literature in the light of Marxism and related themes.

"The Scrooge: A Christmas Carol" (2022) is an animated movie that is not yet analyzed from the Marxist perspective. Scrooge refers to that person who lends money on interest. He remains selfish and oppresses the people who are already facing difficulties. This animated movie has a title related to Marxist approach, which needs to be studied with Marxism theory. This research is intended to focus on this animated movie; so other researchers may also focus on this genre like other genres.

Literature Review

Animated literature refers to a genre of literature in which cartoons and animations are used to tell a story. This literature got prominence in the 20th century. It is used to entertain all with its comic effects and having a lesson. In this study, Marxism is the approach that is applied to an animated movie to identify Marxist elements because such applications are limited before.

Marxism and Basic Concepts

Marxism emerged in a Pamphlet in 1848. Marx established this theory. According to Marxism, there have been different classes in any society and one class oppresses the other in some way. Ruling class always takes the advantage of lower classes and their efforts. Then there is a class struggle between classes and this struggle is the struggle of whole society. There should not be a class-based system in any society and all the possession should be equally distributed among society members. Marx (1848) identified these four stages of capitalist society. 1. Primitive stage (Resources are in the hand of whole society but resources are smaller) 2. The Ancient stage (Resources and people are in hands of master) 3. The Feudal stage (Resources are in the hand of landlords and labor is exploited) 4. The Capitalist stage (Resources are in the hand of capitalists and lower class becomes labor). Another such study conducted by Casey (2021) explained false consciousness as a core part of Marxism. According to him, false consciousness is unawareness of oppressed class that they are being controlled. They remain satisfy at their present condition and do not struggle to come out of their situation.

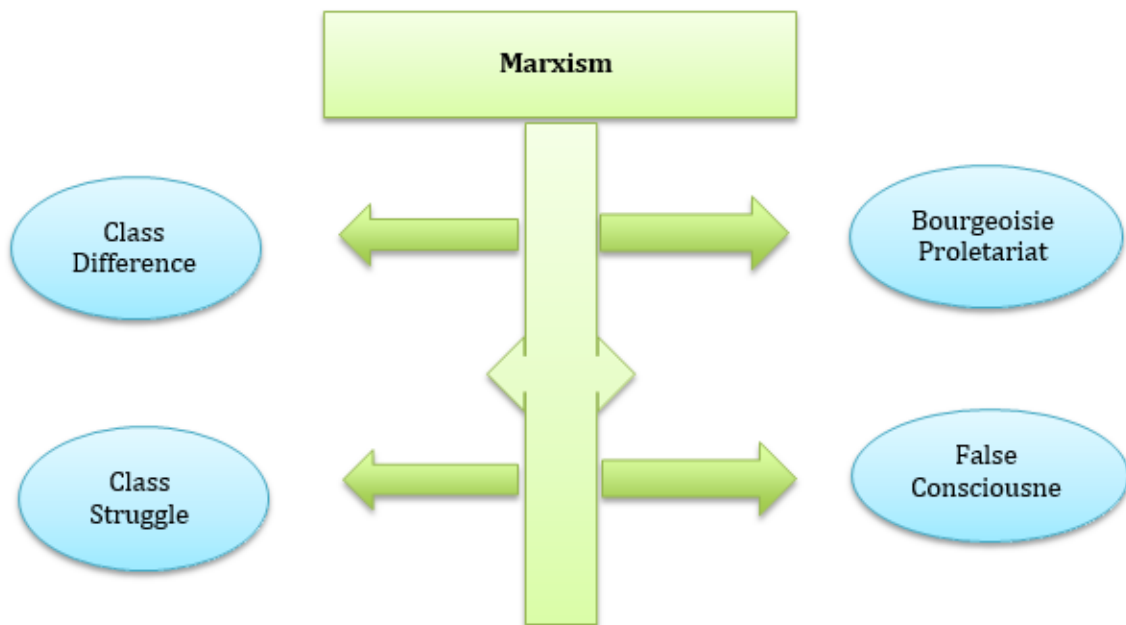


Figure 1. Theoretical concerns of Marxism

Literary theory of Marxism is a developed theory and it is being applied on every genre of literature. It is being used to analyze any text to know about society, its different classes and attitude of different classes against each other. Parveen and Awan (2017) applied Marxist approach on 'Moth Smoke' and 'Murder of Aziz Khan' in order to analyze the characters and made comparison of both of characters. This study resulted in a perfect match of elements of Marxism in both novels. Barua (2007) organized a research on Pakistani society and explained that there is a clear class distinction among the society and corrupt people make them unique from other classes.

John (2017) criticized the gulf existing between poor and rich by applying Marxist theory. He depicted a group of marginalized people living in graveyard painfully but in Jannat this marginalized section makes full of peace and comfort where there is no exploitation of poor at the hands of rich, and everyone is destined for same life. Chaturvedi (2013) argued that class differences are due to wealth, income and property. There are so many forms of property such as buildings, land, animals, machinery, cars, stocks, bonds, businesses and bank accounts. Furthermore, Arif and Zahir (2015) explored a novel of Mohsin Hamid and described that there is Marxism element present in the novel and there

is class distinction and corruption prevails among society. The rich people are doing this corruption.

The Scrooge: A Christmas Carol

In this study, research is conducted on an animated movie “The Scrooge: A Christmas Carol”. The director of this movie is Stephen Donnelly. It is based upon a film with same name Scrooge that was based on a novel “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens. Its setting is the night of Christmas. A man named Ebenezer Scrooge is the protagonist of this story. He has a pet named Prudence and a nephew Harry. Scrooge is a moneylender who lends money on interest. He overcharges if any person does not pay him in time. In a scene of movie, he charges 25 pounds more on the loan of 25 pound because borrower asks for more days. His nephew admires him because he is brother of his mother. Everyone in the society gets afraid of him. He misbehave with street children who are singing or selling something. He became happy after torturing others.

One night, late partner of Scrooge appear before him and warns him to stop doing this. He sends three spirits that reminds him about past, present and future. He gets threatened when he comes to know that if he does not change himself, he will be died and everyone will celebrate his death. They also remind him that you have caused distress to many people in the past and present including your love. Due to all of these, Scrooge changes himself and offers all of the society a dinner on Christmas Evening. He also starts to help his subordinate and other members of the society. It is necessary to conduct a research on this animated movie as there have been classes in it. This study is also necessary to know about false consciousness of society at that time in 1843.

Marxism theory has already been applied on an animated movie Cinderella. Hira (2017) convinced that Cinderella is full of Marxist elements. There is a class struggle between different classes. Her stepmother also oppresses protagonist and she struggles to come out of it. Catherine Mulder (2012) regulated a study on a short film of a bug. This study was conducted to teach how Marxism can be applied in classrooms on short and animated movies. She highlighted that there have been exploitation of one class by the other and there are different classes among the society. Lu (2022) investigated Marxist elements in a movie “Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief”. She identified that this horror movie has social issues among characters and these social issues are present in our society.

Material and Methods

Research Design

This research is exploratory and data is qualitative. The population of this research is completely animated movie “The Scrooge: A Christmas Carol”. It has no numerical data to analyze. Sample of this research is also the animated movie “The Scrooge: A Christmas Carol”. The approach is Marxism, which will highlight the class differences among society along with the struggle of different characters. In this research, three analysis are done. First analysis is of Marxism analysis of each character and circumstances of the society. Second analysis is comparative analysis of different classes. Thematic analysis is also done to give more clarity to Marxist perspective of this movie.

Framework of analysis

As earlier explained, there are three types of analysis in this research. These three analysis are Marxist analysis of characters, comparative analysis of classes and thematic analysis to give more understanding to Marxist perspective.

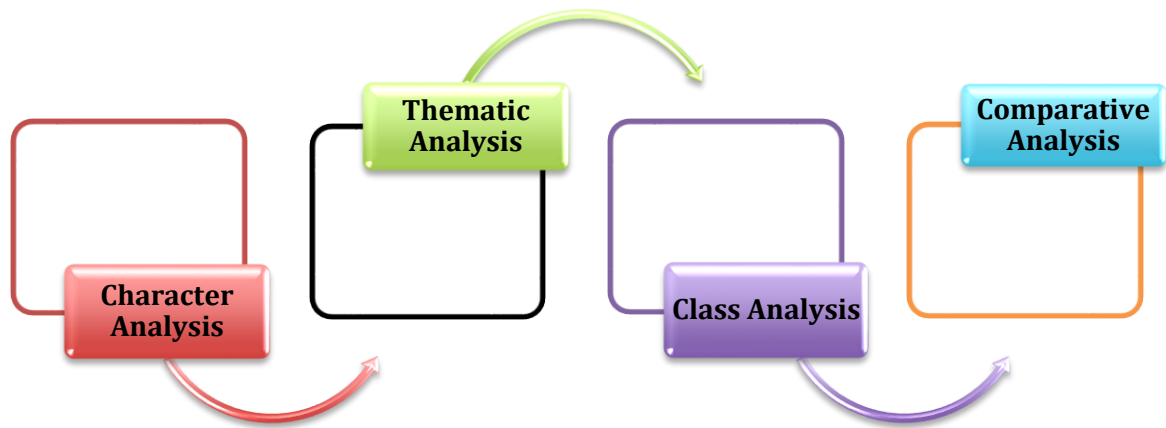


Figure 2. Framework of Analysis

The data has been analyzed by using content analysis technique and developing framework of analysis. Framework of analysis expounds four stages of analysis i.e. character analysis, thematic analysis, class analysis, and comparative analysis techniques. The content analysis of the data transcribed from the movie has been discussed in next section.

Results and Discussion

Marxist Analysis of Characters

Ebenezer Scrooge

Ebenezer Scrooge is the protagonist of the story as the whole story revolves around him. He is a man of strict and rigid rules. He is a moneylender who lends money and overcharges interest. He dislikes Christmas because his sister died on that day. He is an upper class person. All the society members get afraid when he walks on the street. He hates noises of children and even harm others for pleasure. He does not spare his own assistant and cut his small pay. No one is happy from him as he behaves like a dictator. He also did not care about love and that lost the love due to money and career.

Isabel Fezziwig

Isabel is past love of Scrooge. She loved him very much but he cares only for money and career. She leaves Scrooge and marries to another person and now happy with him.

Jacob Marley

Jacob is ex-partner of Scrooge. He was also a moneylender and now he is being locked with chains after death. His spirit talks to Scrooge that he is facing this difficulty due to greed and exploiting others. When he was alive, he also tortured lower classes.

Bob Cratchit

Bob is a clerk in the office of Scrooge. He belongs to lower middle class. He gets only 15 cents after working very hard. Nevertheless, Scrooge cut 5 cents from it for holiday on Christmas and threatens him to fire him if he demands those 5 cents. Bob is having a large family and his 5 years old child is suffering from a disease. He tells Scrooge but Scrooge does not give 5 cents back.

Tom Jenkins

Tom is owner of a toyshop. He has borrowed a loan from Scrooge but could not return in time. Scrooge demands 25 pounds as penalty on small loan and threatens to close his shop. He agrees to pay it after two days. He belongs to middle class.

Bourgeoisie

Bourgeoisie refers to those people who are capturing the resources of the society. They take advantage of hard work of other classes. In this movie, Jacob and Scrooge are Bourgeoisie because they are controlling the society. Most of the members are their borrowers and they impose their rules and overcharge with high interest. If people like Tom, is unable to pay in time then they try to close their business and threaten to fire their employees.

Proletariat

Proletariat are those people who works hard for living. They work daily to get small earning and are oppressed by the Bourgeoisie. These are also called labor classes. In this movie, Bob and Tom are those labor class members, which are oppressed by Scrooge.

Thematic Analysis

This animated movie is full of themes. Some of the major themes which shows the Marxist element are as follows “-

Class Differences

There are three types of classes. These classes are ruling class, middle class and lower middle class. Scrooge and his ex-partner belongs to ruling class, Tom and Isabel are from middle-class and Bob is from lower middle class. Class division is a major theme of this as whole society is divided in to groups.

Hegemony

Ruling class is dominant on the lower and middle classes. They possess their resources, as well as hard work is not paid. People like Scrooge and Jacob are hegemonizing the society according to their greed and will.

Love

This is also an important theme of this movie. Scrooge loved initially her sister and was careful to her. Then, he loved Isabel. In the story, Harry also loves Scrooge because of his uncle. Bob is also a symbol of love as he loves his children and wife. He struggles day and night for them and earn money for his big family.

False Consciousness

False Consciousness prevails in almost all of the characters. All the characters are sickened to their present condition and do not think about any other classes. Scrooge does not think that people dislike him due to his harsh attitude. Bob does not think that Scrooge is doing wrong to him. In fact, he says to his wife that Mr. Scrooge is facing downfall and he is doing nothing wrong.

Comparative analysis of Bourgeoisie and Proletariat

This table highlights the comparison between Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. There is a clear class division, which can be observed from the following table:

Table 1
Characters and the social class

Characters	Bourgeoisie	Proletariat
Ebenezer Scrooge	He is money lender and exploiting society members	
Jessie Buckley	She was a rich lady in the start	After marriage becomes middle class house wife
Jacob Marley	He was also a money lender and had exploited Society Members	
Bob Cratchit	Bob is daily wage labor	
Mr. Fezziwig	He had exploited society members by giving low wages to employees	
Tom Jenkins	Tom is middle class member	

Discussions

This study is conducted by applying the Marxism on animated movie “Scrooge: A Christmas Carol”. The study found that there have been mainly two classes. One is upper class and the second one is labor or working class. Three types of analyses were conducted to give clarity to Marxism aspect.

1. Findings reveal that each character is a part of Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. The main protagonist falls under the category of Bourgeoisie. His two ex-Bosses were also from this category. They were wealthy enough to control the society. There was a clerk Bob, who worked in the office of Scrooge. He falls under the category of Proletariat. He works there, earn a small income, and faces a cut in that income. Other members like Tom also belong to this category. Only one character ex-fiancée of Scrooge belonged to both of the classes. She belonged to upper class when she was not married and later her class changed when she married to a middle class men.
2. It is also explicated that there was an element of class struggle. This struggle according to Karl Marx continues until end and it is the struggle of the society. This struggle was not limited to only lower classes but this struggle was present in upper classes. They wanted to maintain the level of their earning and they wanted to snatch earning of others by any means.
3. Furthermore, findings also highlighted that people were reluctant to change. Especially, lower classes were not even thinking that they are being oppressed by the upper classes. There were two classic examples. One was Bob the clerk, who says that Scrooge might have cut his salary due to his financial downfall. Another was Tom, who agrees to pay huge amount of 25 pounds to Scrooge. This was an element of False Consciousness.

The mood and celebrations also indicates that there was a division between the societies. Lower classes were happy and celebrating the event. They were seen spending the money but on the other hand, Scrooge was not even thinking about celebration. Class distinction is also found from the residences of both classes. Scrooge, who belonged to upper class, was living in a luxurious building while Bob and Tom were living in small cottages. It is further highlighted from the data that two types of ideologies are also found. The upper class ideology was to earn money and oppress the lower classes. The lower class was compromising to earn for bread and butter only.

The data depicts a wide scattered class division among the society. There were two groups of the society. One was upper class and second was lower class. Secondly, there was

a class struggle. It was not even done by the lower class but also from the upper class. Upper class wanted to remain at that point. Protagonist was from the upper class. Scrooge was the actual representation of the Bourgeoisie. The study found that his role was to rule over the society. He was ruling over others because of his business of money lending. He overcharged people with high interest and penalized them for not paying on time. He was a greedy man and does not sympathize with anyone. He does not even care for his clerk and his miser condition. He cut down from his small salary even after knowing that this is Christmas event and his clerk's son is ill. He also does not sympathize with his own nephew. His nephew invites him repeatedly on his house but he does not go there and hide his face in public when his nephew calls him uncle. He considers his reputation and wealth as a purpose of his life. He is purely Marxist element according to Karl Marx theory.

The current study also made a comparison to see different classes among society and it clearly indicates that two major classes are there in the movie. One is Bourgeoisie and other is Proletariat. Bourgeoisie belongs to Jacob and Scrooge; whereas Bob and Tom represents the Proletariat. Another aim of this research was to identify the false consciousness. It was presented in all the characters. It was the thought of characters to remain at present position and does not think that other classes are oppressing them. Bob, especially, represented false consciousness as he thinks his master is doing nothing wrong with him. Scrooge also felt the same that he is doing right with others and others are born to bear him.

Conclusion

The results of this research has shown that this movie "Scrooge: A Christmas Carol" is full of elements of Marxism. Usually, animated movies are not in a greater focus of researchers and application of Marxism showed significant results. It showed that there is a class division among the society and each member belongs to either Bourgeoisie or Proletariat. It gives a picture of reality as in reality this division is prominent. The characters, setting and plot has given extension to Marxist point of view. There was an element of false consciousness among characters as characters were having a sickened thought especially labor class. All classes are in a continuous struggle as marked by Karl Marx in his theory. This study reveals all the major aspects of Marxism. Its methodology can be applied to more animated movies to do such researches. Not only Marxism, but same application can be done by using other theories such as Feminism or Psychoanalysis. By following the above pattern, hidden ideologies related to Marxism can be found in any text.

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