



“Majeed and Hossein Miya, the Representatives of the capitalist social system in *Lalsalu* and *Padma Nadir Majhi*”

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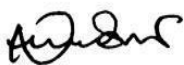
The thesis is submitted to the Department of English, Daffodil International University, during the Spring 2023 for the partial fulfillment of Bachelor of Art (Hons) in English.

Certificate of Completion

This is to certify that Mahmuda Akter Mariya, ID number: 192-10-2090, has successfully completed this thesis paper as part of her academic course ENG: 431- Project Paper with Internship with special focus on academic thesis under my supervision during Spring 2023. As far as I am concerned, this is a genuine work and she has solely contributed to it with consultations from different sources, which she gladly cites in her work. It could not have been possible without her courage, consistence, and coherence.

I am happy to see this wonderful work that contributes to a considerably new epoch in Bangla Literature especially in the field of Capitalism. It was wonderful to work with her. She would go a long way with such courage, skills, and ambitions.

I wish her all the best.



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Declaration

I, Mahmuda Akter Mariya, hereby declare that I have read the guidelines for project paper submission of the Department of English, Daffodil International University and I accept all the mentioned terms and conditions. My thesis titled “Majeed and Hossein Miya, the Representatives of the capitalist social system in *Lalsalu* and *Padma Nadir Majhi*” is my intellectual contribution to the field of capitalism. While completing this study, I consulted with necessary and relevant sources, which are properly cited in the paper.

This project is completed during the Spring 2023 semester under the supervision of Md. Nuruzzaman Moral, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Daffodil International University, as requirements for the partial fulfillment of my Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in English. This paper or any part of it has yet not been submitted anywhere else for degree, scholarship or publication of any kind.

I take all the responsibilities for this work.

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ABSTRACT

This article offers an analytical study of how both Majeed from the novel of *Lalsalu* (1948) and Hossein Miya from *Padma Nadir Majhi* (1936) are representing the capitalist social system in Bengali literature. The study aims to examine the ways in which these characters embody and reflect the impact of capitalism on their lives, identities, and societal roles. Majeed is depicted as an extremist who uses religion to gain power and wealth, while Hossain Miya is a boatman who involves in illegal activities to improve his economic status. Through these characters, Bengali literature highlights the impact of capitalism on society and raises important questions about the ethics of economic systems. The thesis explores how the characters engage with the capitalist system, as well as their aspirations, struggles, and relationships within the context of the novels, drawing on literary analysis and socio-economic theories.

Keywords: Capitalism, extremism, women objectification, marginalization, exploitation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The novels *Lalsalu* by Syed Waliullah and *Padma Nadir Majhi* by Manik Bandopadhyay offer profound insights into the intricate dynamics of a capitalist social system and its impact on individuals. Within these narratives, the characters of Majeed and Hossein Miya emerge as poignant embodiments of the byproducts of capitalism. This paper aims to delve into the portrayal of Majeed in *Lalsalu* and Hossein Miya in *Padma Nadir Majhi* to explore their roles as representative figures, revealing the detrimental effects of capitalism on human lives and society as a whole.

Drawing upon a comprehensive analysis of the novels, this paper will shed light on the struggles, compromises, and moral dilemma faced by Majeed and Hossein Miya, who find themselves entangled within the complex web of capitalist dynamics. The novels thoroughly depict the consequences of economic exploitation, social inequity, and the degrading effects of a profit-driven society via their experiences.

Syed Waliullah and Manik Bandopadhyay demonstrate extraordinary capacity for expressing the core of human experiences in the framework of a capitalist society in their novels. Their creative and evocative descriptions, intriguing characterizations, and thought-provoking plots demonstrate their literary prowess.

Waliullah is a well-known Bengali novelist and short-story writer. He is recognized as one of the most influential authors in contemporary Bengali literature and is known for his analytical and critical writing style. His writing is distinguished by its vivid depiction of rural Bengali life, investigation of difficult social and political topics, and intense engagement with issues of identity, belonging, and alienation. His works frequently questioned prevailing narratives and social standards since he saw literature as a potent weapon for bringing about social change. His literary works often depicted the harsh realities of life during the early twentieth century, including the exploitative and unequal economic system. He portrays the suffering of the poor and marginalized and criticizes the capitalist system that he believes perpetuated their poverty.

His writings frequently show his idea that literature might be utilized as a tool for the struggle against injustice. *Lalsalu* (*Tree Without Roots*), his most well-known book, was released in 1948. The story of Majeed, a religious hypocrite uses religion as a tool to make control over ignorant village people. His other writings, particularly *Kando Nadi Kando* (*Cry of the River*, 1968), demonstrate his talent for penetrating the innermost selves of his characters. His other well-known books are *Chander Amaboshay* (*Dark Moon*, 1964), *Nayanchara* (1946) and *Dui Tir O Anyanya Galpa* (1965). (“Syed Waliullah - Wikipedia”)

Another well-known Bengali author who made a large impact on Bengali literature is Manik Bandopadhyay, a novelist and playwright. His writings are renowned for their realistic and perceptive depictions of rural Bengali life as well as for his examination of challenging subjects including social injustice, poverty, and the human condition. In many

other writings, he describes the struggles of ordinary people against the oppressive social structures and hierarchies that reflect Indian society, particularly capitalism. Bandopadhyay depicts the detrimental impacts of capitalism on the lives of working-class individuals and their families in his works. (Sanyal)

Padma Nadir Majhi (The Boatman of the River Padma), one of his most well-known works, portrays the effects of capitalist exploitation on the fishing community in a remote Bengali village. The struggle of the fisherman to make their living and their exploitation by moneylenders and middlemen are both shown in the novel. Hossein Miya is a moneylender who preys on the vulnerabilities of poor fishermen by charging high-interest rates on loans to them. He exhibits full disregard for the welfare of the fishermen and their families by using his wealth and influence to control their lives. Through the course of the book, Bandopadhyay underlines the systemic issues that prevent the fishermen from escaping the cycle of exploitation and poverty. In *Chatushkone (The Quadrilateral)*, he explores the intricacy of interpersonal interactions in a capitalist society. There are elements of competition, market forces, and the pursuit of financial success that are align with the capitalist principles. The characters' aspirations for fame, recognition, and commercial success portray the reflections of capitalist values and the pressure to thrive within a capitalist system. His books generally encourage readers to critically analyze the social and economic forces that shape their lives.

The goal of this thesis is to provide a thorough analysis of how Majeed and Hossein Miya are portrayed as representatives of the capitalist social system in the novels peeling back the layers of their individual traits to show the profound effects of capitalism on both individuals and society as a whole.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY, RATIONALE, LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Methodology:

The thesis will initially be guided by a qualitative analysis of literary texts. It will additionally delve into publications on capitalism, including books, articles, and news stories. In order to develop the thesis, the study will additionally search for information on websites that offer trustworthy data. As a result, an analytical method will be used. This approach is expected to assist the study go in the appropriate direction.

2.2 Rationale of the Study:

The social, economic, and cultural facets of life are all impacted in significant ways by capitalism. Economic disparity is one of its major consequences. The pursuit of profit and the accumulation of wealth can result in significant disparities between the rich and the poor. This leads to social divisions, limited opportunities for upward mobility, and unequal access to resources and opportunities. A consumer-driven society, where materialism and the relentless desire of things and services are prioritized, is fostered by capitalism as well. This may result in a preference for individual desires over group interests, excessive consumerism, and environmental degradation.

The motif to write this paper lies in the exploration of the characters' experiences and their relationship with the socioeconomic context depicted in the novels. This motif enables an in-depth investigation of how capitalism influences the characters' lives, decisions, and identities, offering insightful information on the larger social ramifications of a capitalist society.

This paper focuses on analyzing how capitalism affects the characters, their roles in the system, and the wider societal implications portrayed in *Lalsalu* and *Padma Nadir Majhi*. Using this perspective, the article aims to expand the discussion on capitalism, literature, and social critique while providing insightful analyses of the intricacies of the human experience in capitalist societies.

2.3 Literature Review:

The concept that Majeed and Hossein Miya, the Representatives of the capitalist social system constitute an idea that is unique and thought-provoking but hasn't received much attention in the literature that has already been published. While previous studies have individually explored these characters, this paper aims to analyze them together, drawing from two different novels in Bengali literature. Despite their distinct narratives, Majeed and Hossein Miya share common characteristics that connect them to the capitalist social order.

Waliullah's *Lalsalu* attracted a number of researchers who criticized Majeed from diverse angles. For instance, Md. Rezaul Karim's paper "Male Subjugation and Female Submissiveness in Syed Waliullah's *Tree Without Roots: A Feminist Reading*" focuses on feminism. In that study he commented that, "Men dominate women and women from ancient times to the present are deprived of equal treatments and opportunities which make them marginalized, vulnerable, and the 'Other' in the male-dominated society" (Karim 221).

In another study, Nure Jannat depicts Majeed as a colonialist in her paper "*Tree without roots: an archaic of Majeed as an extremist and a colonialist*". She says, "Majeed believes in himself as the rightful ruler of Mahabbatpur and here like a colonizer he is fabricating the penance for the colonized people living in the colony known as Mahabbatpur" (Nure Jannat et al., et al.)

Similar to this, *Padma Nadir Majhi* has been the subject of numerous articles. For example, Leena Sarkar Bhaduri's essay "Marxist Ideology and Colonial Interpretation of *The Boatman of the Padma*" focuses on how colonialism affected the lives of fishermen.

In a separate investigation, Madhumita Roy examined an ecofeminist viewpoint in her paper titled "*Padma Nadir Majhi- An Ecofeminist Reading.*" Madhumita Roy attempted to identify ecofeminism in *Padma Nadir Majhi* via the lens of ecofeminism and analyzed the relationship between the treatment of women and the Padma River in the book. (Madhumita)

Capitalism is a vast area for discussion and by analyzing Majeed and Hossein Miya's characters in the framework of the capitalist social order, this essay offers a thorough comprehension of the complexity and impacts of capitalism. This distinct viewpoint clarifies the human costs and social repercussions of a society that is motivated by profit and self-interest. It challenges conventional wisdom and casts doubt on the values and institutions supporting capitalist societies. The possibility for critical analysis and the start of insightful discussions on the effects of capitalism on people and communities are offered by further investigation of this concept.

CHAPTER THREE

Capitalism:

Capitalism is an economic and social system (as well as a mode of production) in which the majority of the means of production are privately owned and run for profit, and where trade and distribution take place primarily in a market economy. Private property ownership, open markets, and minimal government economic involvement are its defining features. The economy in a capitalist system runs on the principles of supply and demand with the intention of turning a profit. Market forces determine the prices of goods and services, and firms compete with one another to draw customers. Individuals are free to pursue their own self-interest and make their own financial decisions under this system. The capacity for profit-making and market competition determine their viability.

According to Karl Marx, "Capital is dead labor, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks." (Marx).

In this paper, the portrayal of capitalism is explored in the context of the characters Majeed and Hossein Miya. To clarify their relationship to the capitalist social structure, these characters are referencing two distinct Bengali novels. In light of their common traits and experiences, the paper explores how capitalism affects the growth and conduct of these characters. It explores how the capitalist social order has affected their choices, interactions, and way of life. The paper tries to offer a greater understanding of the complicated repercussions and consequences of this economic and social system.

The portrayal of capitalism in Bengali literature:

Bengali literature has a long history of illuminating how capitalism has impacted society, especially in the 20th century. Many Bengali authors have examined how capitalism can result in inequality, exploitation, and alienation and have been critical of how it affects social structures and interpersonal relationships.

Syed Waliullah's novel *Lalsalu* (also known as *Tree Without Roots*), which examines the effects of capitalism, is one of the most well-known novels of Bengali literature. The novel tells the story of a village that, under the influence of economic forces, becomes increasingly stratified, finally culminating to the upper classes' exploitation of the lower classes.

The novel *Padma Nadir Majhi* (also known as "*The Boatman of the River Padma*") by Manik Bandopadhyay, which examines how capitalism affects a community of fishermen, is another noteworthy work of literature. The novel shows how the advent of capitalist production methods upends the community's established way of life, causing conflict and stress.

In both of these books, the authors emphasize how the capitalist system exploits the working class and subjected them to the whims and fancies of affluent businessmen. They demonstrate how capitalism fosters a system of injustice and inequality in which the wealthy prosper at the expense of the underprivileged.

A number of other Bengali authors, including Satyajit Ray, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, and Rabindranath Tagore, have written about the effects of capitalism on society. They criticize the exploitative nature of capitalist relationships and illustrate how economic pressures can result in social dislocation and fragmentation. These authors experiment with form, style, and language, and their writings are characterized by an awareness of oneself. Overall, Bengali literature in the twentieth century was a thriving and dynamic field that was influenced by several social, political, and cultural forces. (“Bengali Literature in Early Twentieth Century”)

CHAPTER FOUR

Portrayal of capitalism in *Lalsalu*:

Waliullah's *Lalsalu* is regarded as a valuable outcome of a talented author's thoughtful work. The middle-class lifestyle in Dhaka and Calcutta was unsteady during his lifetime, with several setbacks. Life became difficult due to a number of difficulties, including the struggle against British rule, the Second World War, Manwantar of 1943, riots between races, the partition, the refugee crisis, and the impetus for the creation of a new state of Pakistan, among others. However, Syed Waliullah chose the rural way of life and its social setting for his debut novel, departing from this familiar world. (“লালসালু উপন্যাসের সমাজ-বাস্তবতা এবং সমাজচিত্র একাদশ-দ্বাদশ শ্রেণির গাইড”)

Most people of this region live in villages. The life of this vast rural population has been harbored on various unchanging so-called anachronistic features for a long time. Waliullah chooses his novel's background, subject, and character from this society. The background of this society is rural; the subjects are social norms and conventional beliefs; and the characters are superstitious, pious, exploited, on the other hand honest, religious, traders and exploitative landowners.

Lalsalu is a novel that portrays social problems. This book explores the tension between rural people's superstitions and their desire for a happy existence. It is rich in details of how the hypocritical religious trader Majeed establishes his power to rule and exploit through the spread of deception by taking advantage of the simplicity and religious faith of the villagers. This story is simple, short, and meager but the writing and setting are very strong.

The primary function of capitalism is to establish a competitive environment where class division, dominance, and the power of money are all present. In the novel *Lalsalu*, Majeed makes a particularly dramatic entrance on a gloomy afternoon, leaving an impression on the villagers' common imaginations.

“Taher and Kader looked at the street of Matiganj and saw a stranger standing in the posture of praying with his hands raised to the sky. Moments passes, but the man is unconscious. The cloudless sky has transformed him into a stone figure” (Mahmuda Akter Mariya, 2023, p. 5) [My Translation].

Majeed is well aware of the widespread mistrust of religion in this nation. He thus employs religion as a tool to increase his status and power in this area. He succeeds. Very quickly, he outpaces Khalek Bepari, the local chief, in terms of wealth and power. But once his wife and son perished from starvation when he used to reside in the Garo Hills. This struggle for survival is a staple of capitalist society. (Waliullah)

Majeed as a Capitalist:

Majeed is a fortune hunter. He makes a fake Mazar to fear the common village people. The villagers most of whom are landless peasants and day workers are the representatives of colonized people who are dominated by Majeed through the fear of Mazar. Majeed thinks he is the rightful ruler of Mohabbatpur now and there, like a colonizer he is fabricating the convulsion for the colonized people in the colony known as Mohabbatpur. Even though he has different relationships with some of them like Rahima his wife, Khalek Bepari the head of the village, Amina Bibi (wife of Khalek Bepari) and the other villagers who are serving him, showing him respect but still he dominates them through his strategies. Amina Bibi doesn't believe him, so even he coerced Khalek Bepari into divorcing his first spouse. He keeps them under his control by instilling in them the dread of God and the fear of Mazar. We are aware that "colonialism is the policy and practice of power in extending control over weaker people or areas," (Collins). Additionally, it is a feature of a capitalist society where upper-class individuals want to rule the lower class in order to amass wealth and power. In this novel, Majeed controls the naive peasants of Mohabbatpur by exploiting their dread of Mazar. (Nure Jannat et al., et al.)

When Modabber Miya's son Akkas comes from the city and wants to open a school for the children of the village, Majeed cannot accept it. He fears that he cannot continue his plans once the village people become educated. He aims to implant his ideals in people's minds at the very beginning because it enhances the process of control easily. He tries to brainwash individuals into following his predetermined courses and converts them. Majeed shows his antagonistic attitude towards the establishment of a school. With an irrelevant question, he tries to insult Akkas. He shows his superiority over them. He demonstrates that Akkas' establishment of the school is nothing but a bad purpose. (Waliullah 55)

At the beginning of the story, the author says: "There are more tupees than heads of cattle, more tupees than sheaves of rice" (Waliullah 3). People of this country are willing to die without food but will not be willing to come out of superstition. And Majeed has seized the chance to expand his power by taking advantage of vulnerability of the village of Mohabbatpur.

One of the traits of capitalist society that we may observe in *Lalsalu* is the objectification and domination of women. Majeed, the protagonist of the novel, is the embodiment of patriarchal subjugation and domination of women, who oppresses Rahima and Jamila and subsequently manipulates Khaleque to walk in his path. It is Rahima who after coming to Majeed's house faces similar kind of imprisonment and oppression as her mother did before. Women like Rahima have to undergo a lot of obstructions in the patriarchal regime. It is the wish of Majeed, the patriarchal demigod that Rahima cannot walk in the way that 'makes earth suffer'. Majeed, the religious imposter, claims that- "it's a sin to walk like that" (Waliullah 21). To show the wretched condition of women the narrator contextually remarks: "Rahima had heard this before. The elders had told her at home, her parents, and her relatives" (Waliullah 21). Thus, Men dominate women, and women from ancient times to the present are deprived of equal treatment and opportunities which make them marginalized, vulnerable, and the 'Other' in the male-dominated society. (Karim 221)

CHAPTER FIVE

Portrayal of Capitalism in *Padma Nadir Majhi*:

Padma Nadir Majhi is a famous novel by Manik Bandopadhyay. The story depicts the terrible realities of life for the fishermen community who live on the banks of the Padma, set against the volatile backdrop of pre-partition Bengal. The work also offers a harsh critique of the capitalist system, which keeps the masses in a state of exploitation, inequality, and suffering.

The East Bengal fisherman, who make a living by collecting fish and operating boats, are depicted in *Padma Nadir Majhi* in a detailed depiction of their familial, social, and economic lives. The identity of these fishermen is questioned both inside their own culture and in Moynadeep, a new place to which they are finally drawn and to which they are compelled to submit. Understanding the many plights of these fishermen in the riverfront delta region of the Padma is strengthened by the novel's geopolitical, economic, and topographical setting. In order to create a new identity, the imperial endeavor to demolish and erase earlier histories and geographies is depicted by Bandopadhyay as a process of subjection and extreme displacement (Bhaduri 3).

One of the main characters in this novel, Hossein Miya, is described as a moneylender who preys on the vulnerable situation of the poor fisherman by charging them exorbitant interest rates on loans. He uses his wealth and power to control the lives of the fishermen and their families, showing complete disdain for their well-being. Hossein Miya's persona is a perfect example of the exploitative side of capitalism, where the powerful and rich take advantage of the poor to maintain their dominance over society. He spent a lot of money purchasing the island of Moynadeep. He wants to build his own continent in which to rule. This reveals his colonialist plan, which included settling among the helpless Padma River bank residents. (Bandhopadyay 88)

Hossein Miya as a Capitalist:

The persona of Hossein Miya is portrayed as both the ideal capitalist and colonialist. His colonial tactic succeeds in destroying the life of the fisherman living along the banks of the Padma River who are always fighting for survival while being subjected to starvation, poverty, and lack. He exploits their impoverishment, seduces them with his capitalist power, and essentially exiles them to the remote island of Moynadeep. He wants to establish his own continent, replete with his own set of laws and slaves who will work for him. The brutality of the Padma makes us think of the Irish play "Riders to the Sea" by Synge (1935), which is about the unrelenting might of the water. The sea and/or river serve as both a source of life's energy and a destroyer of life in each of these literary works. The unfortunate Padma River fisherman live with the perpetual fear that they could one day be wiped out by the Padma. The warmth of the sun rarely makes their lives happy. (Bhaduri 9)

By taking the advantage of this hazardous circumstance, Hossein Miya is able to entice them away and direct their energies toward creating a better environment and a better chance of survival. He strives to provide something fresh for the underprivileged class of fishermen, which is numerically dominating. The simplemindedness of the fishermen prevents them from understanding Hossein Miya's hidden agenda. With the assurance that they will receive food and lodging, he transports the residents of Ketupur to the isolated island. He initially gives them everything they need to live comfortably, but the evicted fisherman quickly realizes how challenging their new circumstances are. They become cheap, bonded labor under his control. He views the fishermen as an 'other' who has been colonized, merely being used as a means of advancing his own interests, much to how imperialist forces in the Indian subcontinent defeated the strength of the Indians to colonial them. (Bhaduri 9)

By studying Kuber's life, the main character in this book, we can understand how Hossein Miya gradually captures him with his complicity. Hossein Miya first helps Kuber financially and aids him in rebuilding his hut after it is nearly destroyed by the rainy season. But in exchange, he wants Kuber to work for him at his company. When Kuber agrees to this proposition, he knows that he has committed a serious mistake in life and that one day, he too would be sent to Moynadeep. In order to frame Kuber, for whom Hossein Miya leaves no hope of living in Ketupur, the police eventually discovered a jug full of money that the fisherman Pitam had hidden away in Hossein Miya's home (Bhaduri 9). Kuber will be imprisoned if he remains in Ketupur. He can start a brand-new, wretched existence in Moynadeep. Kuber faces a challenge but ultimately gives in to his fate's will. But he pathetically claims, "I have not committed the theft" (Bandopadhyay 115).

Hossein Miya's entrepreneurship fuels his desire to create his own utopian island. In contrast to their current existence on the bank of the Padma, he assures the poor fisherman of a life of comfort and care. It is telling that the book's omniscient narrator discusses postcolonialism and describes how native people had to fight not just the European colonizers but also the "overlords at home" (Mukherjee 16).

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this thesis paper has explored the portrayal of Majeed and Hossein Miya in as the representatives of the capitalist social system. They both embody the characteristics of a capitalist individual who seeks to maximize their own profits and wealth, often at the expense of others. They use their power, influence, and resources to exploit those who are economically weaker, ultimately perpetuating the unequal distribution of resources and reinforcing the class divide. Their actions and attitudes illustrate the negative effects of capitalism on society, including the creation of a competitive and exploitative environment and the objectification of human beings. Overall, the portrayal of these characters highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of the capitalist system, as well as the social and economic inequalities it creates.

This paper argues that these novels can be seen as particularly good examples of capitalist theory concerning the misuse of privilege and power, which also criticizes colonial rulers and their sleazy use of authority. These novels undoubtedly contain a lot of societal critiques and offer dramatic illustrations of how underprivileged people are manipulated by the capitalists.

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