R.K. Narayan’s novel *The Guide* published in 1958 is one of the most popular novels which have been successfully filmed and it fetched for its writer The Sahitya Academy Award in 1961.

*The Guide* is the story of a man whose apparently whimsical nature of interfering in the affairs of others lands him in an awkward situation. Raju, the protagonist, is a man who deceives society by passing for a spiritual man. It is the spicy tale of the village people who take an ex-prisoner for a saint. It is a farce on a swami whose mind hovers on bondage while preaching the *Bhagwad Geeta*. It shows that materialistic needs of a person are stronger than spiritual needs.

Raju seems to be a man in pursuit of selfishness and self-gratification. His view of the world is very superficial in so far as he cares only for a glamorous position.

While interpreting this novel, *The Guide*, from Marxist perspective, it becomes clear from the life of the protagonist, Raju that, “life is not determined by consciousness but consciousness by life” (Marx, *German Ideology* 47-51).

We can establish a special kind of analogy through the character of Margayya in *The Financial Expert* and Raju in *The Guide*. Consciousness of both these characters is materialistically determined.

We will interpret the novel *The Guide* by considering Marx’s famous proposition of a determining base and a determined superstructure. We can begin from a proposition that social being determines consciousness. Marx himself has put such determination in man’s own activities. The base is the real existence of man. The base is the real relations of production corresponding to a particular stage of development. It marks Marx’s emphasis on productive activities, in particular relations, constituting the foundation of all other activities. According to Raymond Williams in *Culture and Materialism*:
When we talk of 'the base', we are talking of a process not a state.... And, ironically, we have to revalue ‘the base’ away from the notion of a fixed economic or technological abstraction, and towards the specific activities of man in real social and economic relationships, containing fundamental contradictions and variations and always in a state of dynamic process. (34)

After studying R.K. Narayan's novels *The Financial Expert* and *The Guide*, we find various similarities in characters of Margayya and Raju. Both are conscious of their lower economic status in the society. Both try to accumulate wealth, make money a way to achieve higher status in the society. We find an explicit change in their attitude, behavior, beliefs, concepts, ideas due to change in their social status.

Like Margayya in *The Financial Expert*, Raju's life shows that the way people act and think is determined in the final analysis by the way they get their living, the foundation of any society is its economic system and therefore economic change is the driving force of history.

In *The Financial Expert*, R.K Narayan portrays a man who by means of his ingenuity and favourable circumstances comes to assume a role which is highly profitable. But this role is too big for him to play for a long time. In the character of Raju, the author has explored the further possibilities of the strange and sudden rise and fall in man's life. Like character of Margayya, Raju's character also proves the Marxian concept that the consciousness of a person is determined by the society. Change in the social status of a person is directly responsible for change in his attitude, ideas, and opinions, social and personal relations in the society.

Raju is a man who deceives society by passing for a spiritual man. He is carried away by his deception until a point comes when it is difficult to undo the enormous life. At the end, he finds it more and more difficult to tear off the mask until he finds that the mask has become his face. Raju drifts into the role of sadhu willy-nilly. But once he finds himself cast in the role of an ascetic, he attempts to perform the act with gusto, partly for the sake of self-preservation, partly because it suits his personality wonderfully.

This drifting into role of a sadhu fits in with the general pattern of Raju's life. The account of his past as narrated to one of his disciples makes it sufficiently clear that Raju
never did anything; things always happened to him. His illustrious career as a guide also began very casually, almost as an accident.

The chief characters in the novel *The Guide* are Raju, Rosie and Marco. Raju, the son of a petty burgess who has built a house and a shop away from the city, sells peppermint, fruits, tobacco, betel-leaf, parched gram, to way farers. He comes to own a shop at the Malgudi station when it is built opposite to his house. For sometimes, Raju also, like his father, caters to the demands of travellers and sells besides other things, bananas, oranges, fried stuff, coloured peppermints, sweets, biscuits, cigarettes and aerated water.

The first phase of life of Raju provides hints for the emerging personality for railway Raju. His dominant trait is his capacity to rise to any occasion with an amazing flexibility. Raju's early life suggests a mould in cast for a person who can adapt himself to his surroundings. He not only plays the given role to perfection but to the point identifying him with the role.

The smooth progression from the hut-shop to the railway stall forestalls the next promotion as railway Raju, the tourist guide. It is true that Raju is not a hero in the true sense, but "a kind of anti-hero, Narayan's common man with potential for the uncommon" (Narsimhaiah 158).

The modernization and industrialization is explicit in arrival of Lorries and railways have not only made an indelible imprint on the character of town but have also brought about a fast change in the life of Raju.

*The Guide* presents Malgudi in the process of continuous modernization. Malgudi is advancing towards a modern township. The installation of railway station and setting up of Albert Mission College have accentuated the growth and development of the town by giving a new mode of conveyance and offering new motives for the arrival of outsiders and strangers. The tourists find it an interesting place having "many things to offer, historically, scenically, from the point of view of modern developments and so on..." (Narayan 55).

Marx views such development as responsible for the increase in capital. Malgudi is undergoing such developmental process which helps in the expansion of its market: "This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land" (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 14). Installation of railway station will help in increase
of capital in Malgudi: "This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry, and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital..." (Marx, Communist Manifesto 4).

The Railway Station in Malgudi has transformed the entire social life of Malgudi by creating new problems and opportunities. Malgudi turns into a town bustling with activity and sophistication. Raju's railway associations take place quite early in life and shape his mental make-up. He says:

The railway got into my blood very early in life. Engines with their tremendous clanging and smoke ensnared my senses. I felt at home at the railway platform, and considered the station master and the porter the best company for man, and their railway talk the most enlightened.... (Narayan 6)

After his father's death, Raju neglects shop keeping vocation. He discards the old shop and maintains only at the platform. He has little interest in running the shop. He thinks: "selling bread and biscuits and accepting money in exchange seemed to me a tame occupation. I always felt that I was too good for the task..." (Narayan 42).

Consequently, he stuffs his shop at the station with old and discarded magazines and books and takes to a desultory reading in his leisure. He learns much from these magazines about the new world around him: "I read stuff that picked up a noble thought, a philosophy that appealed, I gazed on pictures of old temples and ruins and new buildings and battleships, and soldiers and pretty girls around whom my thoughts lingered. I learnt much from scrap..." (Narayan 44).

Raju's association with the older ways of life, which his father had followed for a whole life time with ease and equanimity, are little by little left behind. Here at this point, we can observe the effect of bourgeoisie on the rural people. Installation of railway immensely facilitated the means of communication. Raju's decision to change his vocation from a shopkeeper to railway guide is stimulated by installation of railway. Bourgeois culture is bringing change in the attitude of rural people towards their ways of earning a livelihood. Raju is also swayed by the charms of bourgeois culture: "The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule to towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population..."
as compared to the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life" (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 9).

In his railway shop “new lines” (Narayan 42) which consists of two main things: containing the old books and discarded magazines; and Raju’s activities are confined to reading them and listening to the enlightening talks of his customers. These two things transform his mind and thinking. He becomes an unconventional youth equipped with modern thinking and sensibility. He grows susceptible to the passion of his youth and to the impression of outer world. This leads him to fall apart with the orthodox ideas of his aged mother. He finds his mother’s point of view intolerable. The clash of ideologies ultimately leads to the alienation of the mother and son. This is the period when Raju, in search of his personal ambition, tries his energy in worldly pursuit such as fame, money and love. In pursuit of these, he overlooks his duties towards his mother, and flouts all traditional decency and norms of behavior. Like Margayya, Raju has also neglected his family in pursuit of his ambition. As has been already shown in chapter VI and quoted there that: “the bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil…” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 6).

It is apparent that when Raju thinks of changing his profession, there is a gradual change in his thinking, attitude also. He feels like Margayya that: “only a change in material conditions of existence, in economical relations, could be of any advantage” to him (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 53).

This change in Raju’s profession as well as attitude towards old ways of life proves that: “within the old society, the elements of new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 37).

As a guide, Raju learns new unconventional tricks of the trade. He learns how "to be pleasant" (Narayan 49) and agreeable with the customers even at the cost of truth. He never says no to anybody: “I never said ‘I don’t know! Not in my nature, I suppose…I am sorry said it, an utter piece of falsehood. It was not because I wanted to utter falsehood, but only because I wanted to be pleasant” (Narayan 49).
He is very tactful and cautious while dealing with enlightened customers, where as in case of an average tourist he behaves as if he were Mr. Know All:

... the age I ascribed to any particular place depended upon my mood at the hour and the type of person I was escorting. If he was of academic type I was careful to avoid all mention of facts and figures and to confine myself to general descriptions, letting the man to himself do the talking... on the other hand, if an innocent man happened to be at hand, I let myself go freely. I pointed out to him something as the greatest, the highest; the only one in the world. I gave statistics out of my head. I mentioned a relic as belonging to the thirteen century before Christ, according to the mood of the hour.... (Narayan 51-52)

This is how Raju has been serving his visitors in turn to their handsome payments. He calculates everything in terms of money. He fixes the visiting sites for his different customers in accordance with the size of their purse:

The data was how much time and money he was going to spend.....It was adjustable. I could give them a glimpse of a few hours or soak them in mountain and river scenery or archaeology for a whole week. I could not really decide how much to give or withhold until I know how much cash the man carried or, if he carried a cheque-book, how good it was.... (Narayan 54)

Engrossed in pursuit of his worldly ambitions, Raju behaves like a young man whose likes and dislikes, interests and aptitude are all materialistic. He despises all that stands for the old and traditional way of life. He learns his trade while practicing it. As a guide, Raju had learnt through some empiric lessons in popular psychology what kind of sentiment went down well with the tourists:

I found everyone who saw an interesting spot always regretted that he hadn’t come with his wife or daughters, and spoke as if he had cheated someone out of a nice thing in life. Later, when I had become a full-blown tourist guide, I often succeeded in inducing a sort of melancholia in my customers by remarking, ‘This is something that should be enjoyed by the whole family’, and the man would swear that he would be back with his entire brood in the next season. (Narayan 51)

His life as a tourist-guide is governed by his inordinate passion for money. For achieving this, he discards family honour, motherly affection, friendly counsels and goodwill in society.
Society, for him, is nothing to be respected or dreaded. He treats it merely a store house of opportunities.

Raju is the very antithesis of his mother and maternal uncle. While the mother and uncle are helpless to overcome their love of tradition, Raju throws to the winds the considerations of caste, tradition and proper conduct. Raju is a tourist guide to Marco, the man with enormous capacity to trust, which Raju uses to achieve his own desired end. Raju’s second role as an entrepreneur also came upon him quite by accident. Once he had tried to win Rosie away from her husband, but failed in his attempt, and had settled down again to his old ways of life. He would have got over his disappointment if Rosie herself had not reappeared in his life.

Raju for the sake of Rosie, discards a whole set of people, the society. He picks up quarrel with railway men. He keeps at bay his mother and maternal uncle, who ask him to save family’s honour. The following dialogue between him and his mother is enough to show how little he cares for society and its people to attain his goal:

‘What will people say?’

‘Who are “people”?’ I asked.

‘Well, my brother and your cousins and others known to us.’

‘I do not care for their opinion. Just don’t bother about such things’. (Narayan 136)

Raju is true neither to society whose values he defies nor to Rosie whom he exploits for his personal gains. His every move smacks of cunningness and selfishness. For self-aggrandizement, he stakes all good sense and morality. He breaks Marco’s trust, commits adultery with Rosie, and abuses her youthful passion and her art for his own selfish motives. He commits forgery, betrays friendship, violates social values and contaminates sanctity of wed-lock.

His selfishness reaches its heights with the arrival of Marco and Rosie. Marco and Rosie, the husband and wife, are also unconventional characters. They are cases of extreme type. While Marco is wholeheartedly and single-mindedly devoted to scholastic pursuits, Rosie has wholly dedicated herself to dancing. To her, life means passion for dance. The tragedy of their married life is woven out of their own extraordinary talents and noble
aspirations. Their sufferings are shaped on the anvil of their uncommon interests and uncompromising temperaments.

Marco marries Rosie for a highly unconventional reason, the humanitarian consideration. Rosie was the daughter of a devdasi, dedicated to temple gods. They are public women for whom it is very difficult to get a respectable husband. An extra ordinary scholar like Marco alone can choose her to be his life-partner. Although they are married, but they lack the warmth and love which is essential to make husband and wife a congenial couple. Rosie is obsessed with her ambition to be star dancer, and the more she pursues her ambition, the more Marco hates her for it.

Rosie's dancing and Marco's archaeological work initially seems to be diametrically opposed. When Raju asked Rosie what interests her, she replies: "Anything except cold, old stone walls" (Narayan 72). Both her sexuality and her ambition to be a professional classical dancer seem to be at odds with Marco’s absorption in what Raju sees a sterile past: "Dead and decaying things seemed to unloosen his tongue and fire his imagination, rather than things that lived and moved and swing their limbs" (Narayan 71).

So, they come across as an ill-matched couple who represent a contrast between a dead past and a living present. In case of Raju, despite his familiarity with cave paintings that Marco is examining, he is dismissive of mythic past, seeing it as ossified and irrelevant to contemporary living:

I was bored with his ruin collecting activities. The wall painting represents episodes from epics and mythology, and all kinds of patterns and motifs, with men, and women and kings and animals, in a curious perspective with proportion of their own, and ancient like the rocks. I had seen hundreds like them, and I saw no point in seeing more. I had no taste for them, just as he had no taste for other things. (Narayan 71)

In case of Rosie, despite her being highly educated, an M.A. in Economics, she fails to understand her husband’s devotion to his profession as a scholar. He expects from her consideration, maturity of behaviour and an unquestioning faith in her husband. She expects from him a manly attachment towards her youth and appreciation of her youth. Their likings and temperaments are incompatible with each other’s.
Through character of Rosie, R.K. Narayan seems to set an example of newly liberated women in the post-independence Indian society. She is the representative of a new class of women, released from the confinement of the house to join colleges and universities in order to acquire formal education.

In comparison to Marco, Rosie is more deeply rooted in tradition. Even though she is deserted by Marco, she still regards him as her husband. Despite her physical relationship with Raju, she has never accepted him as a substitute for her husband. Like a true Indian wife, she fondly remembers Marco and always assails herself for the disharmony of her family life. When she is reminded by Raju about Marco’s misbehaviour with her, she quickly retorts: “I deserved nothing less. Any other husband would have throttled me then and there. He tolerated my company for nearly a month, even after knowing what I had done...” (Narayan 179).

But at the same time, it has been conceded that Rosie is a liberated woman. In pursuit of her taste, she neglects the wishes of her husband. Finding an opportunity, she indulges in an affair with Raju, and consequently ruins his house hold by driving out his aged mother and leading a voluptuous life with him. In many ways, she is the reverse of what a traditional Indian woman is expected to be “the keeper of the hearth, and the bringer up of the children, the role that Savitri of The Dark Room is made to play much against her wishes and dreams” (Mathur 74).

In Marco also we find ambivalence as the most outstanding quality. Though professionally he is engaged in a study of ancient Indian culture and art, his thoughts and feelings are more unconventional than traditional. He marries the daughter of a temple dancer on the basis of her response to his matrimonial advertisement. His criterion for selection of the bride are not her birth, her parentage, her caste or creeds which are the foremost considerations in a conventionally arranged marriage. He rather gives weightage to her personal attainments such as her personality, her looks and her education. He hopes that her M.A degree in Economics will help her in managing the house hold in a better way than any rich family background. After marriage, he discovers in himself a deep-seated dislike for Rosie’s traditional dance. Though professing matrimonial fidelity, he does not believe in the eternity of the bond of marriage. He neglects his wife and lost in the work of “wall gazing” and leaves her "to languish in her hotel room" (Narayan 63).
An avid researcher of ancient art, he is totally lost in his work. He is “absentminded” (Narayan 63) about everything else except his research. This is what Raju says about him: “All that he could do was to copy ancient things and write about them. His mind was completely in it. All practical affairs seemed impossible to him...” (Narayan 100).

The arrival of Rosie and her ill-matched husband Marco changes the complexion of Raju’s life. He is deeply infatuated by the beauty of Rosie. It does not take long time for them to become intimates. He supports Rosie’s passion for dance whole heartedly and soon ingratiates himself with her.

Emotionally starved Rosie falls an easy prey to the shrewd and crafty designs of Raju. The existing emotional incompatibility of ideas between Marco and Rosie further widens, and their relationship almost comes to a breaking point. This further paves the way for Raju’s hold on Rosie. Marco leaves her. Raju takes Rosie to his house and arranges for her training as a good dancer, as he shrewdly marked the potentialities of star dancer in her. His clandestine love affair goes along. His mother, relatives and other people discouraged him in this new venture and advised him to concentrate on his ancestral job. But he turns a deaf ear to their sane counsels and his determination for a new life with Rosie is further steeled. As a result, his business suffers a sharp decline, and he is thrown into heavy debts and litigations.

But the dashing young man does not lose courage and sticks firmly to his plan. Rosie is educated but she is a woman who feels she has stigma attached to her because of her caste background. She comes from a family traditionally dedicated to the temples as dancers and is consequently viewed as a public woman.

Realizing the popularity of Bhartnatyam and latent potentialities of Rosie’s talent, Raju considers her gold mine. He carves out the career of a public dancer for Rosie. Her successful performances bring him a large fortune. This “illegitimate loafer” becomes a popular and wealthy man (Narayan 165), who has rightly discovered in Rosie a “gold mine” (Narayan 162).

Margayya in The Financial Expert has also changed his profession and has undergone a series of revolution in the mode of production. Similarly, Raju’s change from a tourist guide to an impresario canvassing for a fixture of Rosie’s dance programs shows that:
“modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of long course of development, of a series of revolution in the modes of production and exchange” (Marx, Communist Manifesto 4). This fact has been already shown in chapter VI.

His becoming wealthy man proves the Marxian idea that: "the essential condition for the existence, and for the sway of bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital" (Marx, Communist Manifesto 24).

His phenomenal affluence intoxicates him, and lust for more and more money grips him. Raju finds himself acting as Rosie's business manager and publicity agent without making any conscious plan. His change of profession from shop-keeper to tourist-guide and from tourist-guide to Rosie's business manager can be interpreted from Marxian perspective. Since the course of the protagonists in The Financial Expert and The Guide follow the same pattern, we can't help quoting from Marx's The Communist Manifesto over and again:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production and there by relations of production and with them the whole relations of society….Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. (7)

Rosie more or less willed him into accepting this role. Once cast in a part, it is Raju's nature to perform it with relish and perfection, and hence he excelled as an impresario and manager. Raju picks up the enough jargon about dancing to pass for a connoisseur of Bharatnatyam when actually his knowledge of this art goes no deeper than his knowledge of the relics around Malgudi. He feels: “I never know I could speak so fluently on cultural matters. I had picked up a little terminology from Rosie and put it to the best use. I described 'The dancing feet' and explained its significance word by word and almost performed the dancing act myself” (Narayan 158).

At this stage, Raju disregards society with a gesture of arrogance and treats it “with the scantiest attention” (Narayan, 167). He falls a prey to gambling and drinking. He does all this for the appeasement of his lust and rapacity. In his later life, he feigns sainthood and exploits the immaculate faith of the villagers to earn for him easy bread. He is an example of “motives, explanations and performances against existing ideals” (Holmstorm 68).
Raju's entire life is a series of improvisations. His quick adjustment to the part of tourist-guide, business-manager and sadhu falls in line with similar improvisations done throughout his life. Living for the moment, and postponing the crisis indefinitely, these seem to be the principles that guide his actions.

As a business-manager for Rosie, his phenomenal affluence intoxicates him and his lust for more and more money makes him possessive and jealous. Money is squandered recklessly in gambling, drinking and outward-show. Rosie leaves Marco for Raju. Raju becomes the impresario behind her enormously successful public performances. He says: "I was puffed with the thought of how I had made her..., he says, “there was no limit to my self-congratulations” (Narayan 161).

Raju considers himself master of Rosie, the dancer. Now his relation with Rosie is interpreted by him through his “egoistical calculations” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 6). For Raju, money is the only bond between him and Rosie. His relation with Rosie can be observed as: “The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand... has left remaining no other bond between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous cash-payment” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 5-6). Such selfishness is also evident in Margyya’s character in his relationship with his wife and brother.

Raju’s enhancement in social status changes his attitude towards Rosie. It can be seen as: “The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 6). The evils of money are shown through the life of Raju. Change in social status and attitude drives him to leave his mother’s house. Raju and his mother live in a mud-house. Raju records the inconveniences faced by him in this congested dormitory:

The hall was a passage, a dressing room, drawing-room, and study, everything combined. My shaving mirror was on a nail; my finest clothes hung on peg; for a bath I dashed to a chamber in the backyard, half open to the sky, and poured water over my head, drawn straight from the well....(Narayan 126)

Later on Raju reacts sharply over the suggestion given by his lawyer to give a nominal amount in the form of rent:
...paying rent for my own house I said if I have to pay rent I prefer a better house. For our growing stature, the house was inadequate. No place for any furniture. My father had designed this house for a shopkeeper, not for a man of consequence and status who had a charge of growing celebrity. Moreover, where is the place for you to practice in? I asked Nalini when she demurred at the notion of moving out. Somehow she was deeply attached to the house- the place which first gave her asylum. (Narayan 165)

When Raju shifts to another house he feels somewhat satisfied with the locality. The shift in the economic status of Raju is implied in the shift to the larger house. Not only does he feels satisfied but he also chalks out the plan in order to change the arrangement to suit the need of Rosie’s dancing show:

The stylish house at rent extension was more in keeping with our status. It was two storied, with a large compound, lawns, garden and garage. In the upper floor we had our bedroom and a large hall where Nalini practiced her dances. It was carpeted with a thick deep blue silk carpet at one end, leaving a space of marble tiles for her to dance on. I had managed to fix up a pedestal and bronze image of dancing Nataraja in one corner. It was her office. I had now a permanent group of musicians-five of them, a flutist, a drummer etc. (Narayan 166)

At this particular juncture, Raju feels proud of his achievements in managing all the affairs very efficiently. Gradually, the life style changes with the progression of material prosperity. Now Raju can see and realize everything in reality in respect of material prosperity. His life-pattern keeps on changing day-by-day. He starts enjoying everything in life.

Raju, who is busy in managing the affairs of the company, starts behaving like a wealthy man, all kinds of people are always there in and out of his house. He expresses his overwhelming attitude as: “I had a large staff of servants-a driver for our car, two gardeners for our garden, a Gurkha sentry at the gate with a dragger at his waist and two cooks because our entertainments were beginning to grow” (Narayan 166).

He further says:-

A miscellaneous population was always in and out of the compound. Musicians, their friends, those come to see me by appointment, the servants, their friends and so on. On the ground floor, I had an office with a Secretary-
in-waiting, a young graduate from the local college, who dealt with my correspondence. (Narayan 166)

Thus, Raju remains busy throughout in all these arrangements. It is even more interesting that Raju has divided all the visitors into three or four grades. He entertains them not alike but in different ways. He says about visitors: “Some I received on Veranda, these were musicians or aspiring musicians who wanted chance to accompany Nalini” (Narayan 167).

Raju becomes so busy that he has no time to talk with all the visitors. For the evidence, we may have the words of Raju:

Leave your address with my clerk there. If there is anything that can be done, I’ll ask him to call you up.... Sometimes when I was at the office table, I did not mind if they peeped in and took, their chance to speak me. I never offered this class of visitors a chair, but did not mind if he pulled up one and sat down. (Narayan 167-168)

Raju is found in a different role with entertaining the higher grade of visitors. Here, Raju’s attitude towards different visitors is very close to Margayya’s attitude towards people of higher status. Both characters are:

...the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possess, however, this distinctive feature; it has simplified the class antagonism. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into great hostile camps, into two great classes directly, facing each other; Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. (Marx, Communist Manifesto 3)

He becomes courteous and behaves with them in a good and proper manner. We have glimpse of this in his following words:

Apart from those that came as supplicants, there was other who approached me with genuine offers of engagement. They were the higher grade of visitors. I received them on the sofa of hall, and rang the bell for coffee. I offered my inner circle of visitors’ coffee day and night. Our coffee will alone amounted to three hundred a month enough to maintain a middle class family in comfort.... Sitting in that hall and looking round, I had the satisfaction of a feeling that I had arrived. (Narayan 167)

In the above mentioned lines, R.K. Narayan has tried to show the attitude of Raju which changes gradually as he earns more and more money from the dancing show of the
company. The elements of comforts and luxuries creep into life of the protagonist who was previously unaware of these things. He wants to enjoy every moment with full precaution and sufficient comforts. It is fact that Raju has taken so much trouble not in the interest of visitors but to earn more and more money and thereby to adopt a comfortably good life.

Raju further expresses his views about visitors:

There are however, a few friends of the inner circle whom I took upstairs in her room. It was very electric group. They had to be my intimates, I had had no friends at all formally, and my friendship was now sought after by other. I was on back-slapping terms with two judges, four eminent politicians of the district and two big textile mill owners, a banker, a municipal councillor, and the editor of The Truth, a weekly in which an appreciation of Nalini appeared from time to time. These men could come into my hall without appointment, demand coffee and ask loudly, where is Nalini? Upstairs? Well, I think I'll see her for a moment and go. They could go up, talk to her, offer coffee and and stay on as long as pleased. They addressed me as "Raj", familiarly I liked to hobnob with them because they were men of money or influence. (Narayan 168-169)

These details are real proof of Rosie's immense popularity on the one hand; while on the other hand, it proves Raju's inclination towards material achievements. The monetary gain for Raju is rather more important than Rosie's appreciation. Contrary to this, Rosie has less liking for money than fame. She wants to earn name and fame. So, wide popularity for Rosie is more important than anything else.

R.K. Narayan has a dig at the social as well as political life of the country. The rich, though immoral in their private life, become influential in the society, and their show of social services get undue importance as we find in case of Raju himself. His own remarks are enough to sum up the social scene. Raju says: "Well, the prohibition law was not for a man of my influence. I had managed to get a medical certificate to say that I needed alcohol for my welfare" (Narayan 196). We can observe the similarity between Raju and Margayya
because, in Marxian terms: “to be capitalist is to have not only a purely personal but social status in production” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 28).

At this stage, we can observe Raju as a man who is adapting to the new ideas, attitude which are generated due to his higher social status. Raju explains his social status as:

Through my intimacy with all sorts of people, I know what was going behind the scenes, in the government, at the market, at Delhi, on the racecourse, and who was going to be who in the coming week, I could get train reservation at a moment’s notice, relieve a man summoned to jury work, re-instate a dismissed official—all of which seemed to me important social services, an influence worth buying at the current market price. (Narayan 196)

The rules and government laws enacted from time to time are meant only for the have-nots; the rich remain entirely untouched. Like Margayya, Raju’s attainment of power due to his higher social status proves Marxian notion that: “each step in the development of bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 4-5).

But Raju’s relation with Rosie is neither sanctified nor legalized. Whether it is Raju’s all consuming physical passion for Rosie or the gnawing sexual jealousy or the fear of displacement from the position where in he is reigning supreme that proves his undoing is a controversial matter. That Raju is not an ideal householder is an accepted fact. What we observe that his relationship with Rosie is not what it ought to be and definitely not what Rosie expected it to be. Drunk with money and power, Raju looses contact with Rosie’s heart. Later on he realizes that it was his love for money that landed him in trouble.

Poor Rosie puts her heart and soul in the job, but Raju, in his pursuit for fabulous wealth, lacks feeling for her hard work. In case of Raju, money “has resolved personal worth into exchange value...” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 6).

Rosie begins to feel like “the bull yoked in an oil crusher, “who goes round and round and round in circle, without beginning or an ending” (Narayan 202). She says frankly to Raju: “What is one to do with so much? All day long and all through the week you are collecting cheques, and more and more often. But when is the time coming when we can enjoy the use of these cheques?” (Narayan 173).
It is her eternal craving for passionate life which makes her leave her husband and then reject the materialistic Raju. Now, she feels tired of life and soon begins to realize her folly. Rosie to her utter disappointment understands that Raju is no better than Marco. If Marco sneered at her art, Raju tries to exploit it to his best advantage. But it is too late for her; ambition puts her in such a miserable predicament. Raju’s meanness is exposed when he forges Rosie’s, signature for misappropriating jewelry. This action of Raju gives a great emotional set back and jolt to Rosie, who has hitherto looked on Raju as her mentor and savior. The discovery of the crime lands him into prison. Like the downfall of business empire of Margayya in The Financial Expert; it is the downfall of Raju’s business. But here we can observe a paradox in the causes of downfall. Margayya’s downfall is due to Dr. Pal while Raju himself is responsible for his own downfall. Again, it is Rosie who comes to his rescue. She worked hard day and night to raise funds to meet the exorbitant cost of the services of an outstanding lawyer.

After his release from jail, a new phase in Raju’s life begins. He has no where to go, and decides to keep himself away both from Rosie and his mother. His aimless wandering brings him to village Mangla which becomes the scene of his activities. Luckily, a foolish rustic meets him and takes him for a holy man. The transition from Rosie’s business manager to guru is rather the outcome of a compelling and inescapable situation but not of voluntary option.

Raju’s decision to stay at Mangla is more of a necessity to him than a choice. Asceticism is thrust upon him. He accepts because it suits his present condition. He fits into the mould as if it were cast for him and begins to play it with such real fervour and enthusiasm that at times he wonders at his own capacity to rise to the occasion.

Very hesitatingly, Velan piles on courage to put his problem before the sacred man. As he is worried on account of his sister’s refusal to marry the man arranged by him, he humbly seeks the help of the pontificate who gives an evasive reply: "If you show me a person without problem then I’ll show you the perfect world" (Narayan 71). However he consoles him by asking him to bring his sister so that he could personally speak to her. Out of reverence, he prostrates before him. Velan is much impressed when Raju rejects his gesture, saying: “God alone is entitled to such a prostration. He will destroy us if we attempt to usurp his rights” (Narayan 16).
Raju feels in him the thrill of becoming a holy man. Velan's problem is somehow solved through the change in his sister's mind. Raju is hailed as a miracle man, who has solved Velan's problem. The news spreads like a wild fire, and an endless stream of visitors to the holy man becomes the new order. He is delighted to see his popularity among the ignorant villagers who respect him as a sacred man. Thus a regular supply of food is assured. This is what Raju wants at this stage. At this stage of Raju's life, we can correlate the attitude of Margayya and Raju towards religion. Both of them take help of religion to continue their existence in this materialistic world. Both have drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour in their materialistic advancements. Here selfish Raju thinks that for real appearance of saint growing beard will add to his spiritual status:

Raju soon realized that his spiritual status would be enhanced if he grew a beard and long hair to fall on his nape. A clean shaven, close-haired saint was an anomaly. He bore the various stages of his make-up with fortitude, not minding the prickly phase he had to pass through a well authenticated beard cover his face and come down his chest. (Narayan 47)

In case of Raju, as a spiritual guide, Marxian concept is again proved that consciousness of a man is determined by his position in society. Raju as a business manager was thinking of grabbing more and more money while Raju as a spiritual guide is thinking about how he can appear before rustic people as real saint. In role of saint, we find Raju again revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby, relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. He grows beard and finds that: “the essence of sainthood seemed to lie in one’s ability to utter mystifying statements” (Narayan 46). As the bourgeoisie resorts to falsehood to flatten its capital, so the sainthood is based on mystifying reality.

The act that confirms Raju’s career as a sadhu is his establishment of night school in the temple. The school becomes nucleus around which the village people gather every evening to listen to Raju’s discourses and story telling. These evening sessions grow in popularity until Raju becomes a public figure. But the idea of school originates quite by accident. He is taken aback a little, when he comes to know from the children that they had never gone to school. To cover his embarrassment he utters some pompous exhortation on the need of education. And out of the casually uttered idea develops the evening classes that bring him popularity and prestige.
Even the final episode of fasting originates in a similarly insignificant and casual manner. During the prolonged drought the nerves of the village people are tense, and some minor quarrel flares up into a riot. This news upsets Raju, but not because he is genuinely concerned about the welfare of the village people, but because he is afraid that a disturbance might attract public notice to the village, and if newspaper reporters and policemen arrive there, Raju’s identity might be disclosed. It is purely selfish reason that makes him announce that if people go on doing such foolish acts, he would not eat. The young man, to whom this message is given, gives a completely different version of the message that the swami will not eat until it rains. The others believe him because only a few days ago Raju told them of a saint who brought the rains down by his fast.

Hereafter begins a series of misunderstandings that narrow down his path of escape. Here the picture of superstitious village people is given for whom religion and saints are the only solution for their problems. For them “religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of heartless world... it is the opium of the people” (Marx, On Religion 39)

The narration by Raju of the story of his sinful life, which he thinks will lower him in the eyes of Velan and procure him a deliverance from the fatal penance, is considered by his disciple as a matter of special favour shown to him by his holy master. Again he is led to perform a penance which he has himself casually suggested in one of his spiritual talks as a panacea against draught; he now regrets having given them the idea:

Did they expect him to starve for fifteen days and stand in knee deep water eight hours? He sat up. He regretted having given the idea. It had sounded picturesque. But if he had known that it would be applied to him, he might probably have given a different formula: that all villagers should combine to help him eat bonda for fifteen days without a break. Up to then to see that the supply was kept up. And then saintly man should stand in river for two minutes a day; and it should bring down the rain sooner or later. (Narayan 97)

Before this stage is reached, being a sadhu has merely been a bit of play acting for Raju, and by his excellent talent, he had even persuaded himself of his authenticity: “...he began to feel that it was but right that they should touch his feet, as a matter of fact it seemed possible that he himself might now take the dust of his own foot and press it to his eyes. He began to think that his personality radiated a glory (Narayan 34).
Raju had nearly convinced himself of his own exalted status. But this was a familiar feeling of Raju. He had always been in the habit of surprising himself with his own excellent performance years ago when he was launching Rosie on her career as a dancer. He was impressed by his own oratory: "Heaven knows where I had found all this eloquence. I delivered such a lecture on the importance of our culture and the place of the dance in it that they simply had to accept what I said" (Narayan 161). Raju exploits the emotions of religious villagers, which in Marx’s terms: "In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked and shameless, direct, brutal exploitation" (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 6).

Now, Raju is caught in the coils of his own self-deception. He is aware that he could not make a living out of hard work. When he finds that food is coming to him unasked, he adjusts himself to the inner sanctum of the shrine and begins to play the saint. The role Velan has given him as "he had not trained himself to make a living out of hard work. Food was coming to him unasked now. If he went away somewhere else certainly nobody was going to take the trouble to bring him food in return for just waiting for it" (Narayan 33).

But now Raju has no way to escape. In excess of zeal, his disciples stop bringing him all food. This has an ironic side to it, because food had been the just link that had connected Raju with the inhabitants of Mangla village. He had accepted the role of a saint because it gave him unconditional and free supply of food. Fresh out of jail, Raju had appreciated the value of this, and at first when they used to leave food for him, Raju used to be "filled with gratitude and prayed that Velan might never come to the stage of thinking that he was too good for food and that he subsisted on atoms from the air" (Narayan 30).

But the very stage that he was afraid of was duly reached. People gathered round Raju for darshan, and brought him their reverence but not food. He could not help himself. Though he wanted to cry to those that thronged round him: "get out, all of you, and leave me alone. I am not the man to save you. No power on the earth can save you if you are doomed" (Narayan 235).

Raju, for the first time, confronts a situation in which he does not know how to act as: "something was happening on a different level over which he had no control or choice and where a philosophical attitude made no difference" (Narayan 83-84). Here, through entrapped Raju, we find: "...a man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real
conditions of life, and his relations with his kind” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 7). This Marxian proposition is applicable to both Margyya as well as Raju.

And it is at this point that the penance of purification through fasting was thrust upon him. Raju now realizes that he has worked himself into a position from which he cannot come out: “He now saw the enormity of his own creation. He had created a giant with his puny self” (Narayan 99).

Raju is called upon by the community to undergo an act of vicarious suffering to purify the sins of others. It was dangerous task and even Raju who has so far always lived for the moment, improvising and acting the part that is convenient, senses the destructive risk of the situation. During the early days of the fast, in desperate attempts to escape, Raju contemplates running away from the whole show.

R.K. Narayan clearly depicts the selfishness of Raju, while discussing on the *Bhagavad Gita* to his audience one evening, Raju has a sudden craving to try frying the *bonda* out himself because he is now equipped with a charcoal stove and a frying pan. Raju thinks that what can be more musical than well-kneaded dough dropping into boiling oil. He has already made it (*thebonda*) appear like a spiritual need something of man's inner discipline to keep his soul in shape and his understanding with the heavens in order.

Irony of the situation is that at the height of his popularity and prestige as a mahatma with people thronging the temple to have his *darshan* comes the swami’s craving for *bonda*.

Raju is forced to undertake the fast unto death much against his will. Raju dies a ruined man, not because he wanted to die, but circumstances so conspire that the only alternative before him is to become an unwilling martyr.

At every stage of his life—shop keeper, tourist guide, business manager and saint, Raju remains true to himself. He always tries to secure himself and his existence whether it is done by befooling tourists or Rosie or villagers. All incidents of his life depict his pursuance of selfishness as a value. His journey from shopkeeper to spiritual saint highlights the Marxian notion that ideas, views and conceptions or man’s consciousness changes with change in the conditions of his material existence.
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Primary Source


Secondary Sources


