

## **I. Representation of Margin in *A Free Life***

This thesis is the critique of capitalistic society of America as shown in *A Free Life* by Ha Jin. It also analyzes the conflicting situation of the characters who are dominated and exploited by the society and the nation policy. In the novel Ha Jin depicts the clear picture of the exploited workers of the companies and organizations in the society. After the Tiananman massacre on June 4, 1989 in China. The protagonist Nan Wu and his wife Pingping determine to stay in America as he was suspected to be guilty for the revolt by the government of China. When he is obliged to stay in America he quits his study as he sees no scope in studying political science. By working day and night with reducing his half fooding he manages to save a certain amount to receive his wife and a son, Pingping and Taotao from his homeland China. When Wus receive their only son in America. Nan being a husband and a responsible father turns out to be a hard working labor from a student of a university. He manages to stay in a woodland, a sub urban town twenty miles west of Boston. There, he and his wife both work for the lady widow owner, Heidi Masefield, and in return they get a shelter. When Wu lives with his family his life becomes difficult and unable to manage it easily. He works out in a factory as a night security guard departing his family. He is forced to quit his interest of writing poetry because of financial crisis.

Ha Jin in this novel presents the drawback of the capitalism. Capitalism is based on the mentality of investing and gaining more from it by the owner. The owner never values the worker's labour in fair. The workers are always exploited in this system. The protagonist Nan Wu is also the victim of capitalistic ideology. He is presented as an absent minded, and frustrated character who is fed up with his life. When he is caught by the police for his fault while driving, he insists him to shoot and

finish him. He expresses his mental frustration to the officer that he does not want to live his problematic life in this world.

Ha Jin carefully opens the story of WU's family from the arrival of their young son, Taotao, who is only eight years old. The novel begins in 1889 and ends in a decade. It illustrates the environment of American society and the impact. Ha Jin explores the bitterness of the capitalism and also presents the interests of the character which seems ambitious to those of working class people. Nan being a scholar of a university fails to earn a good living standard and other characters who are rich by material prosperity are also not happy because of busy daily schedule. When WU's couple struggle for daily meal their masters are also struggling to maintain their status in the society. As in the communist manifesto, Marx declares that "The modern state power is merely a committee which manages the common business of the bourgeoisie" (2). The historic mission of every subject class is to seize power and establish its own state as an engine of class consolidation. States will exist so long as economic classes exist. In the same way American government also prioritized the upper class or the so-called bourgeoisie who always look the loop holes to exploit or dominate the working class people who sell their strength in a low price and rise their masters.

Nan WU, a pathetic character, is helpless from beginning to the end of the novel. He is helpless is deceived by everyone. Even the close friends and relatives also look for the opportunity to get benefit rather to give anything. When Wu works as a night security in a company, he neither gets sympathy from his master nor from his coworkers. Pingping also works for the Masefield but in return she gets hatred and accuses of misdeed. In the capitalistic society ideology plays the vital role to dominate the weak and determine the existence of the poor. Owner or the ruler take help of

ideology to manipulate the workers. People like Nan WU, in the society have no right to live a luxurious and prosperous life.

This novel traces the story of Nan and Pingping, Chinese immigrants chasing the American Dream. This novel is a tale of immigrants in modern America. It also reveals a core commonality. The Wu's dealing with the day to day events of work and life, events that so-often seem routine and constant but which ultimately add up to goals realized and dream unfulfilled, and like life, *A Free Life* unfolds and reveals itself slowly. A purposeful struggle in the novel is actually what Wus want Pingping says to Nan:

I hope we just live a life similar to others' here making some money and having our home, so that everyday will be the same as the previous one, Pingping tells Nan. Despite the fact we are observing ordinary lives at least ordinary for modern immigrants. (442)

After having a house and a small restaurant Wus are not happy with their lives. They have the fear of losing their business and finally the house they have own. Pingping fears that the life in past is similar to present because they still have the problems of daily needs. That is health insurance, bank mortgage and secure future for their son.

Jin's style not only keeps us reading but also pulls to see how Wus will live and how their lives turn out. *A Fre Life* is an invention to savor our life experience as much as we are indulged to appreciate the Wus'. Still, even significant events, since as a miscarriage of a baby, a brief visit to China are relayed in an easy style by Jin. Nan and Pingping are not the happiest couple even though Pingping loves Nan deeply, he stills pines after his first love, something Pingping knows as the novel opens they are waiting in the arrival of their six-years old son Taotao. He was living with relatives in

China when Nan first came to the U.S.A. When Nan was a graduate student in political science in Boston. The Tianana Massacre protest in China in 1989 Nan makes to stay in the United States but to abandon his studies. Despite being college educated and long dreaming of being a poet. Non takes on a variety of low-paying jobs such as night watchman and dishwasher to provide food and shelter for his family.

Ultimately, the Wus save enough money to make a down payment on a Chinese restaurant in the Atlanta suburbs. Working fourteen hours a day, Nan and Pingping first make sure they have the business paid for so no one can take it from them. Then each bank deposit goes toward paying for the house they've found. Even as their relationship grows stronger, Nan still desires to be a poet a dream he defers because of the obligation of work and family, so he tells himself. Jin, an immigrant himself, explores the contradictions and ironies of the immigrant experience in a variety of ways. For example, shortly after his arrival, Tootoo, is puzzled by a fortune cookie they receive with a Chinese meal. Born and raised in China, he had never seen this American creation before. Years later when Nan, now the accomplished owner and cook in a Chinese restaurant returns to China to visit his family, he finds the food wanting. Nan and Pingping have more freedom to pursue their dreams than in China. Yet they are almost enslaved by their desire to make their business a success. Nan and Pingping have more freedom to control their lives than in China. Yet despite owing and running a successful business, they can't afford health insurance and dental visit. Nan and Pingping are entirely free to pursue the American dream as they perceive it, Although never being totally free of their upbringing. Yet perhaps the ultimate proof that they can become "Americanized". Wus are free to choose their own business and

maintain their living standard but the principle of capitalism does not allow the common people to raise their status as the powerful capitalist owner. As it is obvious that capitalism is fruitful to those who can invest a large amount and re-invest the profit from the business but Nan could not follow this principle because he is a poor citizen of a huge capitalistic country, America.

When a fellow Chinese immigrant frequently praises Nan for having everything - a beautiful and a devoted wife, a son, a home and a business of his own. It does not succour to Nan. Rather, the words leave him wondering why he did not feel as content as he should. When Wus finally pays off their mortgage in less than five years, a kind of disappointment sinks into his heart. His success does not mean as much to him as he should. Most part of Nan that still desires to be a poet always succumb to the dream of success.

*A Free Life* wraps in such a way as to how an immigrant history gives unique expression to the American dream and how that dream influences and effect their lives and relationship.

Ha Jin, a China born American writer knows the every aspect of life in different ruling system. He has the experience of communist ruling system as well as the capitalistic ruling system. He gives the picture of both systems in the same novel via some characters who had once lived the life in communist China. But the presentation of communist system of China and impact on citizen and the scenario in capitalistic America is different but the characters feel the same problems of lodging, fooding, shelter and health insurance. One has to forget his/her personal interest when s/he has the responsibility of family. Nan wants to write poetry but his responsibility dominates his interest. Responsibility is the result of system and it is guided by the

ideology and ideology is created by the bourgeoisie or the ruler. Every common man has no right to live happily when the society is guided by such ideology created by the upper class. It is the theme of the novel.

To be honest and dutiful is also a curse for the common people. Wu is an example of it. He never wishes to deceive and never wish to earn by the short root. He labours hard so he is in same condition from beginning to end. He earns a small restaurant and runs for few years with his wife and be able to pay the mortgage but fails to get health insurance for his family and also becomes helpless to organize a painting exhibition for his uncle who is in his homeland China and refuses to fetch his parents from China when his mother insist to come America. He fears with her age and expensive life of America. An immigrant coming to America in hopes of living the America dream while escaping the massacre in Tiananmen square brings his wife and a son does very well and proves that almost anyone with the impetus and drive can make it in America. Nan's perspective on life, may not always be agreed with but is understood as a man who has overcome the obstacles of life as we grasp the realization that not everyone can make it in American and America in not the place where dreams come true unless you make that dream come true.

Ha Jin in his interview with Jerry A. Varsava says:

Nan, with his family members Pingping and Tootoo, through didn't of extremely hard work and application and self denial achieve a version of the American Dream. Is that American Dream generally available to the immigrant these days ? (20)

Varsave, the interviewer raises the issue of immigrant family and their success and adjustment in the Newland, far from their native land. It is really possible for the

immigrant to get success in America as Wus get in the novel. In response to the question he argues:

Not that soon, usually toward the end of your life, if you work hard and are well-disciplined, it's possible. In some places, especially in Georgia at the time. It was possible. The state had only four million people, had a lot of land, a lot of space, so it was entirely believable and feasible at the time. Again, this version of the America Dream is the popular version. But there are different kinds of American Dreams Immigrants come to this country not just for good opportunities - there's another side, the metaphysical dimension. From the very beginning, religion has been a big part of it. There's always a spiritual, mental pursuit. (21)

Ha Jin explains that the American Dream for the immigrant is really a day dream in the beginning but the effort of the dreamer turns that dream into reality. He says it is possible to achieve the American Dream to some extent especially in such parts of America like Georgia as it is less populated and city of opportunity and cheaper than the rest. He further says that the American Dreamer are also of different types. Some wish to grab the opportunity here and some other come for it's metaphysical dimension. He also speaks about the impact of religion and also the spiritual and mental pursuit.

He Jin also argues that everything is possible if we make an attempt to get success. If one tries for it American dream is not an exception. When a state far from the crowded and developed cities welcomes the new comer. It opens multiple doors of opportunity which leads to the fulfillment of the American Dream.

It is not easy to fulfill all the necessities with little success in such a capitalistic society where the nation becomes passive to the problems of the citizen. People always run after money to overcome the difficulties they face in daily life. Except lodging and fooding health insurance is also another prime factor which creates problem. In an interview with Varsave Jin says about the health condition and it's problem in America, where health care is not accepted as the human right by the nation.

Jerry A. Varsave raises a question related to health care in America. Ha Jin responses in an interview:

There are a couple of themes in Free Life - I would not say they are major themes, particularly - That are perhaps worthy of brief discussion. Health care, the need for health care, comes up recurrently. And I, as a Canadian, perhaps take health care for granted. But clearly immigrants, and many, many American's, do not take health care for granted. (21)

Interviewer raises the question related tot he health insurance and medical visit of the characters which is expensive and difficult to afford for it. He also poses the question why these immigrant and most of the American do not take health care for granted. In response to the question Ha Jin says;

It should be taken for granted. For me, it's an issue for human rights. If people get sick, they have the right to get treated. That's very basic. It's like food. It should be available. It's a shame that the United States, as one of the richest countries, doesn't take care of its own people. (21)



Actually Ha Jin in the novel focuses on the issue of health care of those common people. Nan and his family face problems of health and finds it difficult to get healed as the hospital charge is high in America. Ha Jin raises this issue as a human right. Government should provide health facilities as human right to its citizen. It is the duty of a government, especially the country like America, one of the richest country in the world, should not ignore this matter of health care. It is important like food to the people. It is a shame on America and its government.

Walter Kirn in his article, *Pleased To Be Here*, argues:

The WU's credentials as model neo-puritans - their humility self sacrifice efficiency and unremitting skepticism about easy credit in all its forms, including the loans to the erotic self afforded by commercial sex and porn, which Nan feels calling to him an occasion-are so unavailable that if they failed the book would wind up as an uptown Sinclair-ish protest novel; a case study in humanity's futile puniness against the great machine. [ . . . ]. The novel's sole mystery is how satisfied the Wus will feel when they pull up the rape holder behind them and kick back in their little piece of heaven. The range of possibilities is narrow. They won't be euphoric. It's not their way - but they won't be radically disappointed, either. A head spinning windfall might unhinge them, yes, but what seems most likely, and what we watch occur, is their introduction to the faint melancholy of 'Is this all there is ?' American comfort, followed by Nan's resolution to aim higher on the spiritual and mental plane the instant his mortgage is paid off. (3)

The protagonist in the novel is presented as a noble character who does not care about the present but struggles for the future. Nan is a pathetic creature who is humiliated and dominated by the commercial market and also the porn market. Self sacrifice, soherness, nobelty and dutifyl are some characteristics of Nan which help him to rise up in such a hard situation to pay the mortgage, rare his son and to fulfill his family needs to some extent. Sometimes he is glad to overcome the bitter situation and create a heaven for his family. He is bount to be frustrated but no always. Despite all ups and down in his life he is always hopeful and sometime confused whether this is the life what he wished to live.

Similarly Caroline Wilkinson argues in:

The novel I want to write about now, however, comes from Random House and has been reviewed widely by many critics have made similar points about *A Free Life* by National Book Award winner Ha Jin. Walter Kirn in *The New York Times* calls the pace of this realistic narrative "show, imparable and steady." [. . .] Nan doesn't just have to support himself; he also has a wife and son to consider. After leaving Brandeis, he works as a security guard and than as a busboy and cook. In a matter of months he has lost some of the thinking he bought with him for this communist homeland: he was no longer ashamed of working hard to make a dollar. "With consistent work and prudent savings, the Wus achieve financial security relatively quickly for new immigrants. Unfortunately, Nan's dream of writing poetry ends up getting buried beneath his need to make money. (1-2)

Ha Jin, a Nation Book Award Winner, uses the mundane details to show the link of the characters with his native homeland, China. Many critics have praised the skill of the writer that he uses the minute details of mundane in the characters and shows the simplicity of the characters how they are devoted to their daily work to make dollars and how he feels when he achieves something within a short span of time in America but it is not sufficient for the Wus family to maintain their livelihood and accomplish his own wish to write poetry.

As many critics have argued about the novel, characters and plot in a different way but my focus is based on Marxist point of view. How the plot is created and the characters face it. Ha Jin adopts the narrative technique but includes the conversation of the characters in the novel. He makes the use of conversation and use of mandarin to make the language like real as the characters are from China. This novel is full of incidents and characters who belong to another homeland. The plot in the novel is created in such way that the reader feel it real. To make it real like writer uses the common and unstandard language and minor issues in a simple way.

The novel begins from the late 80s from America and ends in a decade. It is created due to the Tiananmen massacre in China which affect the life of Nan Wu and his family. He is bound to leave his homeland and settle in U.S.A. He is charged guilty for the protest of Tiananmen square incident so he can not return back to China for his life settlement completing his study in America. He receive his son in America after three years of separation from his baby son. His hard working busy life and fluctuating job in America is presented by Ha Jin is a perfect way. Busy schedule of Nan and bitter experience of menial jobs like. Security guard, busboy, cook and newspaper man is the reality of a common man in a capitalistic society. A decade of

WU's family struggle in America for daily needs is the main theme of the novel which begins from Boston to Atlanta in search of stability.

Nan is such a character who is optimistic and responsible for his family but being a citizen of a communist China he hates his homeland and the system of communist China. He is such a character who wants to enjoy the freedom in life so he choose to live in U.S.A. being the citizen of America. He does not appreciate his relatives who demands more than his capacity to afford. He is fond of writing poetry so he frequently reads the poems of foreign poets. He also writes some but fails to publish a collection of his poems due to lack of time and also the financial problem. He prefers to work rather staying idle. Nan is such a character who is created by the ideologies in the society by the ruling class who believes in hard work. He never shows anger against the system but lives a miserable life suppressing his personal interest. He sometimes get frustrated and disturbed by the memory of his ex-beloved, Beina, but overcomes the situation transforming it to the inspiration for writing. He takes her as a source of inspiration for writing poetry. By the end of the novel he visits China and search for his ex-girlfriend but fails as she had been living in America since a long time so he finds her and realizes the changes in her later. His love life also fails because of his poor economic condition.

There are many issues in the novel which helps to create a realistic world of American society and the life of the immigrant as well as the native American but my focus goes on to the issues of capitalistic impact on the people. Especially the main characters Nan WU and Pingping who are representing the entire group of people who are living a cheap life in America Nan's involvement in menial jobs and his struggle for his livelihood are the prime focus of this thesis.

This thesis dissertation focuses on the issues of poverty, chief labour, frustration, family breakup caused by the capitalism society. It also finds the loopholes of the state policy and primary cause of it. The limitation of this research is to use the concept developed by Marxist scholarship. It does not offer a detail analysis of Marxist literary theory, rather an analysis of effort of capitalism. The incidents in the novel such as poverty, menial jobs, frustration, failure in life confirms the features of Marxism but the delimitation of the research is that it only sticks to the notion of capitalism. The issue of how the major characters are victimized by capitalism will be the basic concern of research.

This project makes significant contribution in two areas of critical concerns: Firstly this study recognizes the capitalistic society of America with the view of critical analysis. And lastly this study makes significant theoretical representation of capitalistic criticism in American society. It also analyzes the complex social structure of capitalistic society in *A Free Life* in term of Marxist discourse. Ha Jin demonstrates the negatively of the American society in a simple way. Under capitalistic policy. He presents the clear picture of the society dominating the common people and leading them to difficulties. This research's objective is to reveals the changing lifestyle of the immigrant in new society and complexities in the capitalistic society where success in counted in money., This study makes the recognition of the cause and effect of capitalism in the life of the characters.

This proposed thesis is a library based research. It uses close, discursive, analytical style which will draw on the changing life style and difficulties in capitalistic society. It also uses published articles, books, and internet as its source. As

the focus of the research is a Marxist critique which establishes Nan Wu, Subho, Gerald as the major characters through a capitalistic discourse. It mainly focuses on the issues of frustration, poverty and hard work resulted by capitalistic society.

This research contains three units which includes the introduction of the text, review, articles published by different newspapers and media houses and the second unit contains the brief introduction of the Marxist theory and the textual analysis based on Marxism theory and the final unit concluded the research with summary of the analysis and conclusion.

## II. Critique of Capitalism in Ha Jin's *A Free Life*

This thesis is based on Ha Jin's *A Free Life*. It valorizes the Marxist thoughts popularized by the Marxist writers. As Marxism refers to the economic, cultural and political theory, popularized by Karl Marx and his friend Friedrich Engels. *A Free Life* sketches an image of a society consisting in an economic foundation, for instance; mode of production, means of production, distribution and exchange. All these are features of Marxist interest. Karl Marx, in the opening lines of the *Communist Manifesto* states, "the history of the hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle" (1). He argues that the evolving history of humanity, of its social groupings, of its thinking, and of its institution is moulded by the changing mode of economic foundation. Therefore Marx, in his "German Ideology" argues, "Life is determined by consciousness, but not consciousness by life" (625). The way we think and the way we experience the world around us is either wholly or largely conditioned by the way we economy is organized.

Ha Jin simply presents the hardship of the capitalism through the protagonist Nan Wu and his family. They are victim of the capitalistic ideology and bound to suppress their personal interests. Nan is guided by the principles of capitalism. He does not revolt against the system but accepts it as his destiny. He believes in hard work. Ha Jin is successful to portray the realistic picture of capitalistic society.

According to Marxist thinkers, history proceeds through class struggle. Class struggle happens due to the uneven distribution of economic foundation. In the same way allocation of opportunities and facilities also vary in the life of the characters in *A Free Life*.

Ha Jin, himself is an immigrant writer and he has the experience of American life and social structure. He knows the drawbacks of capitalism. Ha Jin expresses his bitterness and dissatisfaction regarding the capitalistic nature of America. He shows that capitalism is only for those few people who have influence in the authorities and in the large portion of the nations wealth.

In the period of 1930s, a group of critics emerge from Frankfort school, come in mainstream and are called neo-Marxist. Neo-Marxist raised the voice base on the Marxist theory but their intention is slightly different than classical Marxist. They focuses more on social influence that perpetuate not only the economic oppression but social oppression. *A Free Life* represents the story of social and economic oppression. Neo-Marxist focuses its area of interests in such disparities in social construction. Poverty, depression, frustration, sense of humiliation in working place are the consequence of social oppression. It is also the result of capitalistic atmosphere prevalent in the very society. This thesis prime focus is to find the loopholes in the capitalism and its impact in the society.

Ideology is a perception and a way to judge the contemporary world, it means believes, values, and way of thinking, may it be true or false. Ideology is set of belief and ideas. The word ideology is used in mid eighteenth century to define the "science of idea" or philosophy of mind." This has its self contradictory in meaning. Ideology is used in discourse of political theory particularly in Marxist theory. Ha Jin also uses this term ideology in his characters who do not revolt against the biasness of the nation policy.

Ha Jin's *A Free Life* presents the vivid picture of interpellation of an individual in the capitalistic world. The working class people's subordination and interpellation



of capitalistic values in Ha Jin's *A Free Life* reflects not only objectification, but also their interpellation by capitalistic ideology. Since time immemorial our world is spoiled by the ideas of bourgeoisie and the proletariats which there by, have held in the domination by the so called higher class upon the lower class. The social structure has been set in such a way that there is a gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats. The bourgeoisie think that s/he is superior and the proletariats are supposed to be inferior.

Ha Jin's *A Free Life* reveals a prevalent Neo-Marxist tract. The novel exposes the social disparity in American society and comments on the unequal distribution of wealth as a means of shaping the lives of the people belonging to different strata. Ha Jin', a Chinese American writer presents the clear picture of the American society where life is possible until you have the money and the academic qualification does not matter for the livelihood in the capitalistic society of America. Jin writes forcefully about the corrupt culture, selfishness, frustration and family break-up issues created by the ideology of capitalistic world. He also depicts the hypocrisy of the rich people. When Nan Wu and his wife live in Boston, in a woodland of a wealthy widow Heidi Masefield. They work for the Masefield so they get the place to live but in return Wu has to take the Masefield's children to school and Fetch them back and Pingping has to work as a cook and do laundry. Masefield represents the upper class citizen but doesn't allow her children to go to restaurant very often, to prevent them from falling into the habit of dining out but the outcome of her thought surprise Nan when her daughter runs away from home and having the habit of taking smoke and drugs in her early child age.

*A Free Life* is a story of class division. Most of the characters of the novel are divided into two categories, 'Haves and Have not; ruling class people and working class people or capitalistic and working class people and male and female. In this society, money matters and prosperity declares the social status and their prestige. Heidi Masefield, Janet Mitchell, Howard Ding represents the aristocratic or haves group who possess a huge amount of property and behaves as the capitalistic master on the other hand Nan Wu, Pingping, Gerald, Danning Ming belongs to the group of working class or haves not group. They are either forced to leave work hard for low payment or leave the job. They are unable to manage their daily needs despite hard work. Domination, suppression, sense of alienation, frustration are some characteristics of capitalistic society. The capitalist always remain in mainstream society. Capitalist think themselves as the master of all products. Being a ruling class they use their value upon marginal group. Capitalists ignore the interest and desire of working class people. Capitalist are indifferent to the emotion, feeling and lifestyle of working class people. The second class is working class, proletariat, repressed and marginal group. They belong to 'have not' and empty handed. They are compelled to follow the capitalistic order. Capitalist pay any cost to save their throne and throne of their capitalist kingdom.

In the story Ha Jin presents the clear image of Nan Hu, Pingping and their son, Taatoo, who struggle to survive in the world of capitalistic American society, Nan Hu, a father, husband and a student of a university. He cannot return to his homeland, China, because of his involvement in a revolution against the Chinese government so he is obliged to struggle for survival in American society. When he receives his wife and son in Boston he decides to quit graduate school, but he is confused to find the

right way for his survival and maintain his family life secure. In this situation Ha Jin explains the condition of Nan Wu:

He had decided to quit graduate school, but he had no idea what he was going to do [ . . . ] He couldn't rely on the university for financial aid anymore. Such an independent condition was new to him. Backing China he had always been a member of a work unit he had always been a member of a work unit that provided a salary, shelter, coupons for cloth and grain and cooking oil, medical care, and sometimes even free condoms [ . . . ] How he would have to earn a living and also support his family. He was free, free to choose his own way and to make something of himself. But what were the choices available for him ? Could he survive in this land ? The feeling of uncertainty overwhelmed him. (17)

Nan Wu represents the pathetic condition of the working class people in a capitalistic society where life is uncertain and career of a man becomes hard working just to survive and run his family. He is educated, honest and dutiful but the university does not support him on his study when he faces problems in his life. His honesty and loyalty does not have any value in the society. The only basic need of the working class people is food, cloth, shelter and health insurance. Which Nan also tries to pass for his wife and a son. When the son of Wu wants to return to China his parents stop him saying, "You know, Dad and Mom are going to work very hard so we can have our own house somebody" (20). It was difficult in the past too for Nan Wu to collect \$3000 for his wife's visa. To make it possible, being a student of science he worked hard, doing all his works by himself and keeping his abdomen half empty

and sleeping for about five hours. This is the fate of the working class people in a capitalistic world. He tries to overcome this situation but it is difficult for a poor to rise economically in the capitalistic society where labour is exploited by the masters mercilessly. Loyalty and sincerity is neglected by the masters and workers are forced to work under the circumstances made by the owner. None of the owner or master offer health insurance to the workers who work for them all day and night. Workers are dominated by economic power everywhere.

A brutal view of migrant's class struggle is presented by Ha Jin's presentation of Wu's family in the new world of America. Wu's family hopes to get a comfortable life in America but never get success. Wu manages to work leaving his university to survive and look after his family working for a rich wealthy widow, Mrs. Masefield, his wife works for her as a house keeper. The Wu's family struggles for the betterment of life but the obstacles and the culture of the society always pulls him down. He is a decent and a noble creature.

As Althusser argues that ideology hails to interpellate concrete individual as concrete subject. Wu is interpellated as a subject of ideology. His identity that he is a poor man who is appointed as a subject in and by specific familial ideological configuration. Despite exploitation he realizes he never speaks against his master. He is subjected to the social injustice and exploitation. As Louis Althusser sees ideology is itself a determining force shaping consciousness, embodied in the material signifying practices of ideological state apparatus and enjoying 'relative autonomy'. All the poor believe that they should agree and do what the rich order them. As the masters are always superior to the servant. When Masefield's family come back from Cape Cod Wu get busy working for them and Pingping has to cook two meals for

them one for Masefield's family and another Wu's family and they have to have their meal after Masefield's and the children of Masefield's were not allowed to play or interact with Taatoo as he belongs to the working class family. It shows that how the master treat their workers and their family on the basis of class. Here everything is counted with money-and power.

Marx sees ideology as a method employed by the ruling class of the capitalist system to oppress and exploit the working class. Althusser sees it as a material and objective process that works on an entirely unconscious level. However, they both agree that it is ideology which ensures the perpetuation of the capitalist system. Marx believes that they have control over their own destinies when they are in reality being oppressed by the ruling.

Terry Eagleton, in his book *Ideology*, remarks that ideology has wide range of historical meaning and relates it with the interest of ruling class. He puts forward;

The term ideology has a wide range of historical meaning, all the way from the unworkably broader sense of social determination of thoughts to the suspiciously narrow ideas of the development of false ideas in the direct interest of a ruling class. Very often, it refers to the ways on which signs, meaning and values help to reproduce a dominant social power but it can also denote any significantly conjecture between discourse and political interest. (221).

Ideology is granted to be the production of its economic and resulting class-interest and class relation. Marxist believed that a society's dominant ideology is a part of superstructure. Ideology has a wide range influence on the working class people.

Ideology has a dominant nature and it creates hierarchy in the society in the history of

development. False idea is developed and imposed by the ruler to dominate the society.

Terry Eagleton, in the very book ideology, is of the view that ideology is the product of discourse rather than the product of language. He argues:

Ideology is a matter of discourse rather than of language of certain concrete discursive effects rather than of signification as such. It represents the points where impacts up on certain utterance and inscribes itself tacitly within them. But it is not therefore to be equated with just any form of and discursive partisanship, interested speech or theoretical bias, rather the concept of ideology aims to disclose something of the relation between an utterance and its material condition of possibility when those conditions of possibility are viewed in the light of certain power-struggle central to the representation, it represents the whole form of social life. (223)

Ideology is the matter of discourse but not the product of language. It hegemonizes the working class people and ideology is the concept introduced by the ruling class or the upper class to have control over the so called inferior class. The protagonist in the novel, *A Free Life*, Nan Wu is also a man guided by the ideology of capitalism. Who always accepts the obstacles of the society in his life.

As Althusser argues that ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real condition of existence, same in the text when Danning shows his interest and lust for the wealth and the luxurious life which is beyond his reach at that time Wu presents his opinion in this way. He says:

We all work so hard, but how could we ever get as rich as this family ?  
 "Heidi owns half a bank and an insurance company. Old new England  
 Money. We shouldn't measure ourselves against her." Danning sighed,  
 "we will never live like this. What's the good of working myself to a  
 skeleton here ?" . . . "I should give up. The American Dream is not for  
 me. (41-42)

Danning wants to be rich as Masefield and wishes to have bank balance and luxurious life but he forgets that the common people have no right to pass these all. Nan suggests him that they are not the native American and they have no right to make such dream. Nan is guided by the ideology and he does not compare himself with those native rich American because he is a common man and he has no right to see the dream beyond his reach.

We can see the conflicting thoughts of two friends Wu and Danning where Danning wants to be a rich man very soon but Wu denies the way his friend expects to be.

From this way the protagonist of the text Ha Jin presents him as being dominated by ideology. Ideology does not reflect the real world but represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to the real world. When he lives in Masefield's property he takes care of her property and lives with his family in a corner flat miserably. Masefield is rich and pretends of being responsible and sensitive regarding her children's health and habit that she does not allow them to go out for lunch and dinner but eventually her daughter runs away from home and indulges in drug addiction.

Marxism is a theoretical - practical framework based on the analysis of the conflicts between the powerful and the subjugated; and Karl Mark and Engels explores the impact of capitalism as alienation one of the consequence of capitalism. Marx believes that alienation is a systematic result of capitalism. Under capitalism, the fruits of production belong to employer, who expropriate the surplus created by other and in so doing generate alienated labour. When Nan Wu come from China he was an enthusiastic scholar of a university but the economic condition turned him to a hard working labour. While he was working in a factory in Watertown as a night-watchman he leaves his wife and son for his work but the master does not understand him and in a short time he is fired from job and when he returns back to work after a day holiday from home he loses his job. The supervisor informs him:

"Well, I 'm sorry to tell you we are moving." Don said to Nank, "Zer whole factory ?" Nan asked Don "Yep".

"Where are you going ?"

"We bought a place outside fitchburg. If you want, you can come work for us there."

"Zat is hard. My son goes to school here." (46)

The merciless master never reward their labour but only use them for their benefit.

Nan Wu does not accept the proposal of the supervisor to move with factory as he has the responsibility to look after his family. He is alone there leaving his family in distance for their survival. The dark side of the capitalistic society is this, the workers life is insecure and uncertain. They leave their family and work like machine until the interest of the owner.



As in the industrial societies, workers are paid to produce material goods, and these goods are then sold to others; thus labor is objectified, and the worker is alienated from this object: his/her days are spent producing things for others, so he becomes separated from his/her life. Workers are not the human but the working machine which can be operated by the owner for their benefits and according to their interest. The working class labor has no value of their real-work.

In industrial, capitalistic society labor is a commodity. It is something bought and sold on the economic market. Thus capitalistic society produces an ideology where-in all its members perceive one another as commodities. Further capitalism encourages exploitation since the pursuit of capital . . . pursuits of morality, or love, or community . . . in the dominant ideology: The economic system pressures to get as much labor from one another for the least amount of capital. Simply put capitalism forces everyone to perceive one another as commodities, objects for generating more capital.

Ha Jin presents the oppressed protagonist struggling for his life. Who shifts from one place to another with the hope of getting stability. In course of time he moves to New York to work for a magazine for only \$1,000 for issue of the quarterly, *New Lines*. He is always worried for the health of his family, but never gets the insurance for health in any job. Low paid salary does not help him so he looks for other jobs in Manhattan too.

Ha Jin, who was born in China began his career in late 90s of the twentieth century in America. He had experienced the brutal life of American society. He presents the vivid picture on the working class people. He explains the internal conflict of the protagonist in a simple way. His protagonist, Nan Wu, is a

representative character of the whole people of working class. Who always try to achieve but always lasses. He is trapped in his own circumstances. He can not return back to China and unable to survive easily in America. Ha Jin focuses the activities of his protagonist who is fighting against the barrier of the society.

As we use ideology to refer the term as a set of belief awareness and articulation. For Marxist, the term is much more encompassing and is a belief system that is product of cultural conditioning. Hans Bertens, in his literary theory: *The Basic*, states, "For Marxist, ideology is not so much a set of beliefs or assumptions that we are aware of, but it is that which makes us experience our life in a certain way and makes use believe that way of seeing ourselves and the world is natural" (84). He further says:

Ideology distorts reality in one way or another level and falsely presents as natural and harmonious what is artificial and contradictory the class differences that we find under capitalism [. . .] If we succumb to ideology we live in an illusory world, in what in Marxism has often been described as a state of false consciousness. (84-85)

As Gramsci defines, social hegemony is the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group i.e. the ruling class. Gramsci defines hegemony as the power of the ruling class to convince other class that their consents are the interests of all, that a social class achieves a predominant influence and power, not by direct and overt means, but by succession in making its ideological view of society so pervasive that the subordinate classes unwillingly accept and participate in their own oppression. Hegemony consists of socio-political power that flows from enabling the

spontaneous consent of the populace through intellectual and moral leadership or authority as employed by subalterns of the state. Nan Wu's former owner and his brother represent the hypocrite upper class who acts as the heartless human to the Wu's family and the supervisor of the Hampden Park (Where Wu works for few months as a night security guard) are the caricatures of the incentive upper class people.

Ha Jin creates the two different worlds. Nan Wu's or the working class' world of poverty, alienation and trouble and another world of aristocratic upper class world where the owner of the industries and properties. World of haves and world of have-not. The world of working class people is full of hopelessness, scarcity of instability. The relationship between a security guard and the masters in Hampden Park gives the obvious picture where a lady seduces Nan Wu offering some food and drinks. She wants to exploit him sexually. He is decent and a loyal employee and also a father and husband. Ha Jin portrays the picture of a dualistic character, Ivan, co-worker of Wu in Hampden Park who is a security guard but speaks about the contract of millions of rupees. He reveals his identity as a rich but unsuccessful person who wants to enjoy and live a luxurious life. He has no family and no responsibility.

French Structural Marxist, Louis Althusser builds up the work of Jacques Lacan to understand the way that ideology functions in society. Thus, he moves away from the earlier Marxist understanding of ideology. In the earlier model, ideology was believed to create what was termed "False consciousness" but he opposes its definition, he declares instead that the ideology of each mode operated by means of a type of discourse which interpellates the individual to take up a pre-established "subject matter" that is a position as person with certain views and values which in

every instance, serve the ultimate interest of ruling class. He argues: "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real condition of existence" (123). According to Althusser, ideology does not reflect the real world: The ruling ideology is itself already at once removed from the real. Althusser argues; "Individuals are always-already subjects" (129). He further argues that our roles and activities are given to us by social practices; for instance, the production of steel worker is a part of economic practice, while the production of lawyer is a part of political-legal practice. However, other characteristics of individuals, such as their beliefs about good life or their metaphysical reflections in nature of the self, do not easily fit into these categories.

Althusser also opines that, "Ideology is the necessary element of 'society' itself. He further states:

In a class society, ideology is the relay whereby, and element in which, the relation between men and their conditions of existence is settled to ideology is the, reality whereby, and the society, in which, the relation between men and their condition of existence is lived to the profit of all the men. (313)

As the society changes in course of time and people's need also change Nan also moves to Ding's Dumplings to work as a dish washer and gradually promoted to busboy and finally a chef cook. When he works in that hotel he discovers the dark side of the conjugal life in America. He realizes that business flourish with the help of aids and ladies are the charm of business. The female waitress are offered as the goods in the hotel by the owner. In Dumplings a waitress having her husband in the

same place flirts with the customer which surprises Nan, Chinchin, another waitress says:

You people have been brainwashed by the commies and are too serious about what happens between a man and a woman. A husband should feel proud if his wife is attractive to other men . . . If only we had more pretty girls here. Than you all could get more tips. (117)

It clarifies the fact that the business runs with the help of sex. The hidden but the reality is exposed. Not only that the women does not like to make relationship with men who are penniless. The same thing happens to Maiyu, the waitress, and Danning's wife who loses their partner for other rich.

Theodor W. Adorno, wrote much later that the change of expression was not intended to 'make materialism acceptable but to use it to make men theoretically conscious of what it is that distinguishes materialism'.

When Nan Wu meets his brother sibling who is fond of the attractive life of the west who thinks the material possession and the standard lifestyle of the people attracts him to Australia. He expresses his bitter experience of the living standard of working class people in those countries. He knows the principle of capitalism and the state policy of the capitalistic country. he further try to convince him saying:

"At least you have many friends here", Nan said. "Our life in America is very solitary. It would be hard for you to endure a lonely existence in Australia".

"I'm not afraid of loneliness, which is better than hopelessness. This place is totally ruined . . .worst of all, there are lots of criminals roaming around." Nan says, "It will take several years for you to settle

down in a foreign country, unless you have a lot of money or extraordinary talent. (555-56)

People bright side of American life but in reality how is it we can understand from Nan's opinion. He is a successful man with his own restaurant in America in the eyes of his friends and relatives but how is life in there is unknown to them. His mother also insist argues to America hoping to enjoy the good life there but she could not imagine the life of that society. She says to her son:

"I'm well now, and I'd like to see America before I die." "Truth be told, for old people life there is harder than here." "I don't mind, I can work". "Work, at your age ?" . . "we make more there but have to spend more too." (558)

He is afraid of taking his mother to America where life is full of problems and scarcities. As she is old enough to work with them. He fears with the expensive health insurance and expensive life in America. He even has the fear of losing his property in America if he fails to pay the mortgage in it. He had the bitter experience of the loss of his neighbour's residence. Who is unable to save his house from auction. When Nan's father writes to Nan with the intention of his Uncle Zhao, who wants to hold a show in America he gets furious with him and pours his disgust with his wife Pingping;

What is this ? He thinks I am curator of a museum or a college president ? I told him on the phone that I couldn't help uncle Zhao hold a show here . . . If our business goes under, we'll lose our home and everything. Can my parents help us ? They'll continue to ask for money every year. They'll never understand what life is like here. They steal

believe I'm heading for a profession, even though they know I'm working my ass off in a restaurant . . . They think we're making tons of money here, eating nutritious food, drinking quality wine, and living like gods. (330)

He fears to face the reality in his life where life is terribly tangled into difficulties. Paying mortgage, feeding of his family, health insurance and his suppressed desire to write poetry drags him to frustration which he explodes in the Gold Yoke burning his own money which they had collected by spending whole day and night for years when he begins to think of his life, his sacrifice for his son, his effort to pay off the mortgage, his pursuit of the American dream, his family's need for financial security, the expected arrival of the daughter and absence of an ideal woman in his life loathed himself especially for his devotion to make money, which consumed so many years and dissolved his will to follow his own heart. In his frustration he cries, "I want to burn it all, all 'Zis "dirty acre". When his wife stops him he gets more furious and shouts. "Yeah' I'm sick, sick of every sing here, sick of myself. Sick of everyone of you, sick of Zis goddammed restaurant" (606).

As Gramsci writes that all men are potentially intellectual in the sense of having an intellect and using it but not all intellectuals by social function. He means that everyone has an intellect but not all are intellectuals by social function. He means that everyone has an intellect and does it but not all are intellectuals by social function. He argues this by stating that everyone is a cook or tailor. Each social group that comes into existence creates within itself one of most strata of intellectuals that give it meaning that helps to bind it together and helps it function. They can take the form of managers, civil servants, the clergy, professors and teachers, technicians and scientists, lawyers,

doctors etc. Essentially, they have developed organically alongside the ruling class and function for the benefit of the ruling class. Gramsci maintains that the notion of intellectuals as being a distinct social category independent of class way a myth. He identifies two types of intellectuals-traditional and organic. He writes:

Intellectuals in the functional sense fall into two groups. In the first place, there the "traditional" professional intellectuals. Literary, scientific and so on, whose position in the interstices of society has a certain inter-class aura about it but derives ultimately from past and present class relations and conceals as attachment to various historical class formations. (3)

As the traditional intellectuals give themselves an aura of historical continuity despite all the social upheavals that they might go through. One of the intellectual, Dick Harrison, Friend of Nan Wu also falls into the group of intellectual but the professional traditional intellectuals overshadows his talent by rejecting to print the second edition of his book, 'Unexpected Gifts', which drags him down to frustration. He talks with Nan:

"My book is doing well but 'the press won't reprint it."

"I don't know. They've never planned to make money from poetry.

Once a book has sold out, it's dead." "Dead in just two mons ?" "Well not yet. They still have three hundred copies in stock, but once those are gone the book will be out of print." (481)

He is one of the disappointed and frustrated character presented by Jin who is fed up with his life and does not have any hope and charm in life. The more he works the more he gets dissatisfaction. Working for other in restaurant, laundry, park and



'company finally he owns his own restaurant in Atlanta but the condition of a grasshopper level never quit him. He can not stand in the society. The capitalistic atmosphere of the novel evokes the subordination of the working class people. The structure is set up in such a way that all the characters are bound to think that whatever the hardship and sufferings are happens to them are because of their misfortune or inferiority. Nan HU, the protagonist of the novel loses his girlfriend because of his misfortune or his status, when he meets her in America he says: "I was poor man you despised, and I couldn't buy you anything like the red scooter Hongbing got for you from Japan" (589) and further Beina, former girlfriend responses him "Couldn't you promise me a red car ?" (589) here every relation is based on money if you have money then you can buy the relationship too. Most of the characters are bind with the bondage of suppression, and are compelled to live under the power of capitalism ideology. Characters like Nan Wu and his family are the marginalized and working class people. The social status of the people is valued on the basis of their property in capitalistic society where the doubtful distribution of means of production, establishes so called prosperity as the means of social status. Where the Hippocrates pretends to adopt other children and in the same society like Nan Wu is afraid to have second baby as it looks like burden to them. The Wus are unable to bear the child because of poverty. Upper class people interpellates the working class people are dominated and subordinated not only by objectifying but also dehumanizing. Pingping is proposed by Mrs. Jannet to bear a baby for her and in return she offer a huge amount which clarifies that the rich can do everything and think that the poor people do everything for money. The Wu's family suffers from identity crisis through

out the novel as a real citizen of a particular country with dignity.

As, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, clarifies that:

The culture industry remains the entertainment business. Its influence over the consumers is established by entertainment: that will ultimately be broken not by an outright decree, but by the hostility inherent in the principle of entertainment to what is greater than itself. Since all the trends of the culture industry are profoundly embedded in the public by the whole social process, they are encouraged by the survival of the market in this area. Demand has not been replaced by simple obedience. (239)

Due to the influence of the culture industry by the capitalistic mentality every means of social media and networks are affected. Which also destroy the originality or reality and cause negative impact in the society. As the small children fall into the habit of consuming these all. Taatoo, son of Nan, becomes the victim of it using the networking sites in internet which cause tussle between father and son. And the indulgemen of adolescence in cyber sex is also a problem in the busy life of capitalistic society people. Pingping presented the example of their friends. She says:

I have a friend whose teenage boy often visited pornosites on the internet. He even called some women. At the end of a month his father received a phone bill for more than nine hundred dollars." "My goodness, when did this happen ?"

"Two years ago when that boy had just turned thirteen".

"What did his parents do about him ?"

"His father strapped him, but the boy kept visiting porn sites addicted to cyber sex." (349-50)

Misuse of the cyber and business of the parents, who have no time for children are the cause of such acts. Following the entertainment sources children even fall into drug addiction and finally to wrong deeds. As culture industry is hegemonized by the capitalistic master of the media houses.

This book is about an immigrant who comes to secure his future in America. He first comes to Boston from China, American city, and lives in Mrs. Masefields and moves to New York and finally to Atlanta in search of stable life. He has the experience of all menial jobs such as security, busboy, dishwasher and cook. He moves from one place to another to secure his life. When he works for Masefield he could not manage every needs for his family so he moves a Atlanta owning a small restaurant but he never get help from his friends. He trusts on other but is deceived by them. He becomes the surrogate father of Jannets adopted daughter but they refuse to be the same for him and when he sells his restaurant to Subho, his close friend, he refuses to give work for Pingping. He says, "Nan should have sold him the restaurant for less money if he had intended to leave Pingping at the Gold work, so Nan mustn't interfere with his work" (613). Here he shows his selfishness nature and betrays his own friend. And the technology also corrupts the society where Taotao fall involve with the daughter of Nan's former mistress Masefield at his adolescence.

The book purpose to tell he story of a struggle made by the protagonist, Nan HU, from Boston to Atlanta. Nan Wu is always optimistic and loyal person but the impact of the capitalistic ideology he is affected much and compelled to think about his life in a different perspective. The novel has a single plot from beginning to end.

Struggle-struggle, obstacles, oppression, betrays and frustration. Ha Jin has been able to sketch the real picture of the capitalistic society of America which is full of difficulties.

Through the minute study of the text, almost all the characters belong to the suppressed group who could not dare to raise their world for their own right and the research has come to the conclusion that Ha. Jin's *A Free Life* resembles the working class who always remain under the hegemony of capitalism.

### **III. Exploited Condition of Margin People in *A Free Life***

This thesis is based on the conflicting situation of the capitalistic society where the workers and masters are presented in such a situation where the workers are victimized and exploited by the owner of the organization. This novel *A Free Life* is a story of a Chinese immigrant young couple and a son. Nan Wu, Pingping and Taotao. They are the major characters who have the bitter experience of life. Ha Jin presents the drawback of the capitalism, which counts money as the base of status. When someone is obliged to stay in the society constructed on the principles of capitalism, it dominates the commoner. Common people are suppressed and exploited in this situation.

*A Free Life* is a novel which does not portray the clear picture of a free life. It is a satire on the society where life is chained when one becomes the member of a capitalistic society. Nan is a character in this novel who never feels the freedom even in his personal life there in America. When Nan stays in America, he quits his university and works hard reducing his half meal to establish in the society. He works for a Masefield, who is a wealthy widow, but could not manage all the necessities for his family. He involves in menial job and able to save some amount to buy a small restaurant in Atlanta but being the owner of a restaurant he fails to fulfill his basic needs such as health insurance and writing poetry. He suppresses his personal interest of writing poetry. Ha Jin explains that the American Dream for the immigrant is really a day dream in the beginning but the effort of the dreamer turns that dream into reality. Nan Wu as a strugglish for life suffers a lot when he works a night security guard in a company he is abused by the young guys when he visits a super market for snacks. Even the rich ladies try to exploit him physically but he manages to escape

from there. The same thing repeats in the hotel where he works first as a busboy, and a cook ladies staff are presented as a show piece. They are offered as goods to customers and the flexible relationship of husband and wife is also presented as the result of capitalism. Unwillingness of the second baby by WUS also demonstrates the bitterness of capitalistic impact on them. Adopting child is better than bearing oneself is also the dark side of capitalism which require extra time and physical difficulties in the rich people.

This thesis focuses on the negative aspects o capitalism. It also explores the hidden truth that the suppression is not the solution of any problem When the desire is suppressed or deferred, it creates frustration or revolution ultimately. Protagonist, Nan Wu and Pingping also suppress their personal desires so they never feel happy in life. Ideology is a set of belief created and imposed by the ruling class to the poor citizen. Ideology is a powerful weapon for the bourgeoisie which helps them to create the world of domination in the society or nation.

Ha Jin describes the story of a typical Chinese immigrant family. There are other minor characters too in the novel. They are also similar to the protagonist who resemble the very nature of struggling society that posses the unavoidable relationship of capitalist and proletariat. Through this work of art Ha Jin presents the supremacy of capitalism. The capitalistic atmosphere of the novel evokes the subordination of the working class people. The structure is set up in such a way that all the characters are bound to think that whatever the hardship and sufferings happen to them are because of their misfortune or inferiority. Nan Wu is a pivotal characters but he is transformed into a machine. He works for about eighteen hours a day like a machine. Gerald, a neighbour of Nan in Atlanta is a technician. He earns well but his wife leaves him in

his old age because of economic condition. Nan is neglected by his former girlfriend due to poverty and there are other incidents in the novel which is against social norms. They are the result of capitalism and my prime focus in this thesis is to find out the real causes behind these social evils.

Almost all the characters belong to the suppressed group who could not dare to raise their world for their own right. They are compelled to follow the directions remaining in the trap of capitalistic ideology. This work by Jin presents the image of domination and exploitation of lower class society.

At last, through minute study of the primary text. Althausser's and Gramsci's notion of Neo-Marxist the researcher has come to the conclusion that Ha Jin's *A Free Life* depicts the prevalent domination of capitalism over working class. *A Free Life* reveals the condition of the working class who always remain under the hegemony of capitalism and who has no option to choose in that very society. Whatever the policy is made and imposed to them they are bound to follow without any objection. It is the reality of capitalism.

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