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Language and Life in *Thottappan*

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Francis Norona is a Malayalam writer who has created a modern and polyphonic theme and sculpture in short stories. He is disparate with his remarkable language style. The variation and sentimentality in the implementation of language enabled the author to create a standpoint of his own. *Thottappan* could be read only with a complete astonishment.

Norona from Ambalappuzha writes about his living ambience. All the stories of Norona are about marginalized and desolate coastal habitants. Keralites have been familiar with their lives since the days of Thakazhi's *Chemmeen*. Nevertheless, Norona takes us to the substratum of their lives that remains completely anonymous to us. They have their own socio-cultural order, responsibilities and values. Meanwhile there are living conditions that create disgust and hatred for others. The narrator uses native dialect full of local words and expressions to express them realistically.

Thottappan tells the story through a girl called Kunjadu. The events that occur around us are similar. Readers are amazed by what the narrator tells us and not by the context of the story. Each stories is so cleverly expressed in *Thottappan*.

Thottappan is a collection of seven stories. Norona's language seems to be a revelation throughout the narration. The narrator reveals to the society what is happening around him. The story amazes the readers with the background and narrative style. The coastal language and life are so powerfully and naturally exposed in *Thottappan*. The characters, cultures and styles of Anglo-Indian and Latin Catholic names are experienced in most of the stories.

The reflection that is resonated in every story is I. The first person narrator could be a woman or a man. The narrators in *Thottappan* are women. The spirit of love appear in the stories. The land and culture are not the main characters here. Man and man's life are at the forefront. A man of goodness and beyond that a man of diversity and heterogeneity. The abundance of magical realism is evident in *Thottappan*. A story that hides a beautiful creative marvel, more than that teaches how to steal.

The narrator discloses a lot of stories within the story. The story is timeless and can transcend time. So the young woman who addresses herself as I shares the emotional intensity of an individual of a nation and society and her indifference. Besides showing the culture, language and the grievances of a particular community, the expression of the black god and the white god gives the impression of a caste system that does not alter no matter whatever change takes place.

She goes to school for food. Poverty is what she and her mother possess. So she is sent to the Muslim school from the school where she has to go with the package. Hunger is valued beyond caste and religion there. Thottappan keeps her close even when others make fun of her. He is complicit in the lies she tells. He supports her when she cheats the blind shopkeeper. Consequently, the girl feels adoration towards Thottappan. But he eventually dies after a major theft. A custom called Thottappan prevails in the Christian community. This Thottappan may be the girl's Thottappan. She follows his path. Thottappan encourages misdemeanour.

Thottappan's death affects her deeply. She gets the answer at the denouement of the story as to what death is like. Her mother also fell ill and passes away after Thottappan. She is subjected to various forms of exploitation faced by a woman who lives alone in a society. However, she is ready to face it all with strength and self-confidence. She possesses the spirit of a woman who has changed over time.

The heroine is portrayed with masculine traits that breaks down the concept of a heroine. This kind of female representation is inexorable presently. The narrator adds another truth that it is not enough to be a woman and that every woman needs the strength and courage of a man. The typical portrayal of heroine is an expression of sacrifice and peace. On the contrary, the narrator portrays the heroine as an image of virago in the society.

The narrator takes the story to divergent ideological conflicts through different writing techniques. Thottappan and the girl symbolize two aspects of life. Different decisions are being made sometimes. Life is something that changes over time. Norona has manifested it differently.

Norona's *Thottappan* is a story that deals with the wild lusts of human beings. Norona narrates the story of marginalized lives mingled with sexual pleasures, persecution, hatred and revenge. There are incidents that connects time and place in the story. Many instances such as On Mother's Ascension Day, I grabbed Daniel's arm and slammed him into a cotton tree. On the evening of the fifth day of the Feast, when I was alone at the banks of the river, When I returned from chapel, I walked to the cemetery last evening after the fifth bath of Pongan and son on. Although this is the main structure that determines the course of the story, short phrases are used in many possible parts of the story. That is why these narratives are brimming poetically.

Linguistic and narrative specialities are the life of stories. When the coastal realms and the burning realities of life that give them life are marked with such harsh language, political, social and cultural dimensions and explanations can be read from this book.

Norona writes about his living environment. All of Norona's stories are about marginalized coastal inhabitants. The narrator takes the reader to the depths of the lives of the poverty-stricken, the children of the sea that is completely anonymous to us. There are living standards and social conditions that solely belong to them. They have their own beliefs and desires. Their lifestyle is different from others. The narrator uses native language full of local words and expressions to express them true to life.

For instance: Since she has no father, Baptism was done by her uncle and he who named her Kunjadu (lamb) teaches her to steal. The Thottappan family is celebrating the birth anniversary of Christ by stealing even a hen offered to God.

Norona's language in the stories of *Thottappan* is strenuous to grasp. There are multifarious truths that lie above reality. There are a lot of obvious characters. There are social and political realities. Some stories have resonating and dramatic living background. The language and life in Thottappan can be understood through the wonderful world created by the amalgamation of all these.

Works Cited

Norona, Francis. *Thottappan*, D. C. Books, 2018.

