



Cultural And Social Ethos Depicted In The Novels Of R.K. Narayan

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Abstract

One of the greatest writers of Indian Literature, R.K Narayan has contributed his literary wealth to the Indian Literature in English Language. He is a well known person who expressed his thoughts in English origin. His readers were associated with the adjoining world in a manner of comical aspect yet genuinely. His work has been acclaimed globally and reinforce those who want to see a change in community through the mirror of a man who found compassionate humanism through the spirit of customary life. Without showing the robustness of his characters he displayed the exact image of society on his write up pages. His work is a true tribute to one who wants to find an avid range of fiction and non-fiction in the most magnificent bearing.

This paper unveils cultural & social ethos are dealt in a very realistic manner. India is a land of great opportunity and its citizens are known for their valuable spirit as it is depicted in the epics like Vedas. Indian ethos refers to the principle of self management, entity or system by wisdom as revealed and brought- forth by great scriptures like Vedas, Quran, Mahabharata & Bible.

Culture is based on respect for elders family unity, honesty & hardwork.

Keywords Myth, reality, cultural diversity. The Indian and the Universal, Social Value, superstition , East -west theme

INTRODUCTION

The author of Malgudi Days, R.K. Narayan, is a celebrated writer of early Indian English literature. Rasipuram Krishnaswamiyer Narayan Swami, was a writer of fiction, non-fiction and mythology. He proposed a eminent range of pen work for his readers worldwide. His famous autobiographical trilogy of "Swami and friends", "The Bachelor of Arts" and "The English teacher" are one of his excellent pieces, even the renowned fictional town of "Malgudi" was introduced in the book "Astrologer's Day" and "Swami and friends." In R.K. Narayan's fiction, the town of Malgudi exudes such an in-depth connection with the characters living in and around it. Though Malgudi is an imaginary town, it has been regarded as "a real living presence" (Hariprassanna 1994:23)

R.k Narayan was compared with one of the great writer William Faulkner because of his connection to the characters and highlighting of the social context.

His writing is a unique fusion of western technique and eastern stuff and he has superseded greatly in making an Indian receptivity a roof over one's head in English art. Indians have been writing in English for nearly a century and a half. Indian writing in English, now termed, as Indo-Anglian writing is one of the quite a few manifestations of the new creative impulse, which came over the country in the early decades of the nineteenth century, often described as the period of literary renaissance in India.

India exemplifies the concept of unity in diversity. The land of wealth and royalty is known for its prestigious culture of traditions and rituals. India is socially, cuturally and linguistic ally very diverse. Different cultures and tradition are represented here. Diversity is a source of strenght and success in every element of Indian society., There exist thousands of traditions and culture in India, and quite a few of them would leave outsiders rather curious. But the crux of Indian society and culture has always been to be well mannered, polite, respect others, and progress together.

The purpose of this paper is to take a look at the contrast of Indian and Western concept. India is a land of belief and logic. Both runs parallel. Sometime belief rules over logic. The belief represents Indian culture and logic represents sophisticated western culture.

R. K. Narayan the narrator of Malgudi Days chronicles the lives of people of fictional town. The story shares the life of everyone from beggar to entrepreneur among the stories the reader meets an astrologer, Guide, Vendor of Sweets in the Narayan's short novels. This keep the reader guessing as to what the next story will show in the lives of people who become endlessly fascinating, if only for the reason that you have met them before in your own town.

The people of Malgudi are the middle-class people of India. They do not take part in politics, nor do they want to become famous stars. They only want to spend their days with the members of their family and friends happily. As M.K. Naik observes, "he (Narayan) has no great heroes and heroines - only local nobodies and local eccentrics, and his style habitually wears a deliberately drab air so that the thrusts of his insistent irony are felt all the more sharply"(Naik, p.174). His portrayal of human life is correct to realities.

He reliably portrays the life of Indian common people as he finds himself among them. As Graham Greene says, "he has offered me a second home. Without him I could never have known what it is like to be Indian"(The Occasional Review).

The Guide reveals the Indian way of life and also the culture and tradition of India. R.K. Narayan has used typical Indian characters and Indian atmosphere to portray Indian culture. The main characters of this novel are Raju, Rosie and Marco. R.K. Narayan has given a true social picture of India through 'The Guide'. The traits of Indian manners and customs are also reflected in this novel. Hospitality of Indians is a well known trait all over the world. Narayan has given a clear picture of India at the time of narration without idealizing the country and he has not also condemned it. The poverty of India has been reflected with a personal touch of the author. The villagers are shown as suffering from poverty and ignorance and their illiteracy has been reflected as the root cause for all their sufferings. There are as gullible and kind hearted as any Indian village habitats.

Narayan represented Indianness through symbols also in many of his novels. In *The Guide* Narayan has used symbols which represent typical Indian tradition and culture. The Temple, River, The faith and the excessive innocence represents the old nature of Indian culture. The busy Railway Station as portrayed by the Narayan originally symbolizes the upcoming of the new culture and tradition. It represents the beginning of the modernity into Malgudi. The unwilling fast underwent by Raju is a symbol that indicates that a fake sanyasi has started his real sacrifice to the welfare of the Mangala villagers. The appearance of the swami represents the characteristics of an Indian swami as well

'An Astrologer's Day' is a fascinating tale about falsehoods and a chance encounter of an astrologer and a man named Guru Nayak. From the start, it is obvious that the astrologer is a scam artist, and does not really possess the power to predict the future or any other mystical powers. However, the irony laced through the narrative, even though it is glaringly obvious, is only explained at the end of the story when it is revealed that the astrologer and Guru Nayak used to be friends.

There is also an underlying, almost prophetic, theme of the cyclic past and present; Guru Nayak's chance encounter with the astrologer, an enemy of the past; and the astrologer's profession of predicting the future, hint at this theme. This is also a subtle connection to the Hindu belief of birth and rebirth, and to the concept of karma.

The story, as stated earlier, is rich in symbolism and colourful imagery of India and its rich plurality vis-à-vis regionalism: the setting of the Town Square of Malgudi, the astrologer's profession of prophecy, the crowds, narrow streets, street vendors, poor municipal lighting, cheroots, jutkas, jaggery, coconut, a pyol, and of course, the astrologer's infamous paraphernalia.

The astrologer's encounter with Guru Nayak, also poses an interesting observation of the juxtaposition of the modern and traditional; the astrologer, though a fraud, participates in the trade of astrology because traditional belief creates such need; whereas the scepticism showcased by Guru Nayak represents the logic borne by modernity.

The *Vendor of Sweets* of R. K. Narayan came in 1967 and the novel was published in London by the Bodley Head Limited. The east-west encounter is the major theme of the novel. It is the conflict between the staunch Indian or eastern father and his western-bred son, depicting the rare complexities of the Indian middle-class society trying to adapt to the changing world, blinding the eastern values with the western outlook style. Jagan is the most active character of the novel 'The Vendor of Sweets' from the first to the last, Mali, his son who returned from America after his 3 yrs of education has totally changed from an Indian to a western, Grace, the companion of Mali from America is undoubtedly western and rational. The relationship between the father and the son is hashed, based on mechanical exercises and expectation from the son by the father. The story revolves around the life, deeds, confusions, policies and beliefs of the protagonist and his final ultimate decision to dislodge himself from the material world and live a life of recluse and isolation.

Grace the woman who Mali has married, is a woman of duty, responsibility and sensibility. She is the one who is charmed by the Indian traditions and culture finds it

fascinating and makes every effort to bide by the customs and traditions at times even more than the Indian themselves. She promptly wins Jagan's (father-in-law) heart with her extreme sweetness and rational temper.

The opening paragraph of the novel is highly comic specially to western ears. To quote from the text, "conquer taste, and you will have conquered the self", said Jagan to his listener, who asked "why conquer the self"? Jagan said, "I do not know, but all our sages advise us so." The listener's question and answer of Jagan shows western and eastern cultural thinking.

Conclusion

This research unveils on one of the greatest writers, a world known man of learning of the twentieth century, pioneer of Indian English fiction –R.K.Narayan, his fiction bestow with varied dimensions of Indian life ,tradition, myths and reality, ethos presented through his unique genius.

This research unveils on one of the best scholars, a world renowned abstract figure of the twentieth century, establishing father of Indian English fiction - R.K. Narayan, his fiction managed shifted measurements of Indian life, custom, fantasies and reality, ethos portrayed through his exceptional individual ability. The scientist has broken down commentator's remarks on his best accomplishments, for example, achieving a harmony between "the Indian all inclusive, joining strategy and disposition" and his books dharma and karma concentrating essentially on how the heroes seek after the profound mission for self-acknowledgement and self-understanding, Indian reasoning, values, characters religion ,superstition, fantasies, conventions ladies human condition and battles,grandiose reality, super regular, everyday living in india human relationship, east-west topic, youngsters rationality of life and journey for personality are broke down in this part.

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