



Theme And Composition In The Novels Of R.K Narayan

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Abstract:

R.K Narayan is one of the most prominent novelists of Indian writing in English. His novels are full of realism and a present mirror image of microcosmic India caught in the conventions traditions and social changes. He is a novelist of international repute. R. K. Narayan, being a social reformer. His novels are thematically based on the well-known classical myth because of the inevitable victory of good over evil. His novels have also reflected the concept of karma and the cyclical existent as well as the four ages of human life. In his later novels, he reflects his extraordinary fictional imagination. Some other novels are shown ironically to throw light on the religious and cultural glory of Indian society. This Article Discuss the Thame and Composition in the Novels of R.K.N.

Keywords: R.K. Narayan, Gandhian Ideology. Theme and Composition, Indian Writing, cultural, intellectual, The Great Trio.

Introduction

The present study focuses on the works of the eminent and very popular and foremost Indian English writer R.K. Narayan (1906 – 2001). His writing is a distinctive blend of western technique and eastern material, and he has succeeded greatly in making an Indian sensibility at home 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 numerous manifestations of the new creative urge, which came over the country in the early decades of the nineteenth century, often described as the period of literary renaissance in India. The basic themes of his novels are the place of man in this universe and his predicament. He wants to suggest that life is illogical and man is always trying to translate his fantasies into reality, Narayan completes the story of man's rise and fall and thus presents a total view of life. This study deals with Gandhian ideology and Consciousness in the Novels of R.K. Narayan in detail.

This article shall deal with the question of the radical value of Narayan's mode of contextualising in the following chapters. Yet, it must be said that merely situating the traditional narratives in new settings does not have much potential to be culturally subversive. The stand expressed by the

above-cited argument, however, is typically representative of the views of the critics who have chosen to valorise Narayan's decision to write in a language that was an integral part of the extended apparatus employed to consolidate the colonial rule. There is a sense in which this move by Narayan could be seen as radical: he chose to write in English which was seen by the majority of the Indians as being incapacitating non-Indian. The same view held by the Indian readership, in general, continues to hound Indian-English writers though they seem to have gained more confidence and have cultivated a stronger illusion of wider representability regarding their embeddedness in the culture and ethos of the nation. There is also a constant perpetuation of the long-sustained myth that whatever is produced within the geographic boundaries of the nation is bound to be incontrovertibly Indian. This kind of cultural aberration is a result of the fact that indicators used to categorise Indian literature in terms of their conformity to the national metanarratives are indiscreetly Eurocentric. Indian writing in English has, as against the previously prevailing tendency, come to be privileged as representing an authentic Indian culture, through the use of these terms in the singular is in itself extremely problematic.

Allied closely to this issue is the question of the very existence of a single national culture and literature that can be termed as distinctly Indian. And, the possibility of imposing a homogenised cultural and literary narrative to encompass the literature of the entire nation is what sustains the idea of producing the literature of the nation in one single set of cultural idioms and paradigms. Two questions the thesis intends to address itself to at this point are: first, is there a specific point at which Indian writing in English can be inserted into the grid of Indian literature; second, where does Narayan latch onto to Indian writing in English and where does his writing fit in with the rest of Indian writing in non-English. The formulation of these two questions is premised on a few simple, apparently reductive and one-dimensional assumptions. The most important of them is that there is something given and innate about all literature, and more so about a body of literature bundled together and branded as national. The second assumption is that it is possible to conceive of a body of literature that is intrinsically Indian, and, as such, there is the literature produced within the imagined frontiers of India that fall short of meeting the standards required to attain the elevated status of Indian writing. The third assumption is that certain qualities make literature singularly Indian. Simply as they appear, these assumptions demand a greater theoretical engagement.

The kind of cultural, intellectual and scholarly conditions under which a writer like Narayan started writing in English has changed, radically relocating the locus of intellectual investment in the English language. Two very important common features bind these two kinds of literature and their producers together on a grand epistemological and ontological plane. Writers of both Sanskrit (though some of the earlier ones were mere oral texts) and Indian-English writers have always made and continue to make a conscious choice which is often seen as brazenly elitist and snobbish- to turn away from the widely-used Indian languages. The second and more important similarity comes from the most formidable difficulty in defining the spatial imagination at work in the production of these two kinds of literature that are defiant in their cultural non-inclusiveness. Even when this kind of parallelism runs the risk of being misconstrued as wild and unfounded the caste, class and cultural origins of Indian-English writing reveal certain disturbing dynamics operative in deciding its agenda. There is a range of subtle shared features that make it possible to forge an ontological and ideological association between Sanskrit and Indian-English literary cultures. This thesis tries to deal with the cultural, religious and intellectual hegemony of the groups that produced Sanskrit and continue to produce English textualities in the Indian subcontinent. An eminent critic of Indian English fiction and post-colonial fiction in general, Meenakshi Mukherjee perceives in Narayan's *Malgudi*, a quintessential Indian town; ordinary and uneventful where different characters engage in their habitual. round of action all in a gentle and unchanging rhythm. If complications arise, they are bound to be resolved gradually and balance is normally restored. 'According to her, the order-disorder... "order pattern discernible in almost all the novels_ of Narayan gives rise to a problematic: "... whether Narayan was

consciously using myth as a technique or was it an unconscious manifestation of the basic outlook which sees in the existing order of things the desired stability that should be permanent, and any external element threatening to change this order as something illusory" (144).

The same problem of roots and identity is also operative in the sphere of Narayan's technique as an Indian English writer. In addition to the problem of indigenisation of a foreign language (what Boehmer terms to be true to oneself in borrowed robes') and his view of English as a swadeshi language, Narayan also categorically acknowledges the social concern of novels written in English in his non-fictional prose and interviews. Yet it is the same writer who once remarked: "I am an inattentive quick writer who has little sense of style".²⁰ On another occasion, Narayan further said in one of his interviews: "I'd be quite happy if no more is claimed from me than being just a storyteller.

Only the story matters, that's all". In this self-adopted mantle of a 'storyteller', which, according to many hostile critics of Narayan, surely underscores the 'naivety' of the writer's art, one can equally trace an emancipatory search, a desire for transcendence. in a writer who seeks to purge literature off all academic and institution-biased compartmentalisation and categorisation, of the turning and twisting of the spontaneity of expression to the desired shape of some 'other' interests. He writes in his essay, "The Nobel Prize and All That": "Geographical, topographical, hemispherical or ethnic considerations are irrelevant in literature" (203). In another essay, titled, "Reluctant Guru", Narayan has written: " (...) to take a work of fiction as a sociological study or a social document could be very misleading" (101). Narayan's exaltation of the status of a story-teller thus enshrines, in the context of the oral tradition of Indian literature, not only the traditionally honoured role of a writer but also the sacrosanct and primaeval purity of literature which deals with fundamental truths of experience, only receives multiple forms of expression in different ages. Narayan's narrative technique too, like his characters, shows a search for a rooted identity in the oral tradition; but the quest leads to the attainment of a transcendent reality like that of Malgudi and men

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