



Moral Vision and Indian Identity in R.K. Narayan's Fiction.

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Introduction

Rasipuram Krihanaswami Narayan is considered to be the founding pillar of the Indo-Anglican English Literature. The great definitely goes to Narayan who brought Indian English literature to be known to the rest of the literary world. As an artist, he is taken to be the first and foremost novelist as he has realistically presented pure and simple Indian life of the Indian masses, their culture, civilization and traditions. His journey as story writer and a novelist starts with original form of psychic status of children to communal disputes, routine mysteries of common man to the confused family relationship, human bondage to his manners and traditions. Malgudi is a fictional town which, no doubt, represents the Indian villages and pastoral folk traditions. It is beyond doubt that Narayan is known as the mastermind Indian English literature.

Narayan got a break through his friend Graham Greene, a Swiss writer of Catholic and thrillers, who proved to be very helpful in publishing Narayan's books consisting of his semi-autobiographical trilogy "Swami and Friends", "The Bachelor of Arts" and "The English Teacher". 1 His famous novel "The Financial Expert" (1951) was granted the Sahitya Akademi Award. Many of his fictional works have translated in the major languages of the world. His stories as well his novels depict a vivid and varied picture of rural Indian life full of pathos and predicament, local mishap and monotonous activities. But this rural life mirrors the true and real picture of Indian people, their rites and rituals and traditional values.

Actually, Narayan as a novelist with full sense and sensibility who sincerely loves his country, countrymen and the countryside. Criticism of Narayan is neither bitter nor violent but smoothing and far-reaching. His narrative elaborates the gentleness, the piousness, the simplicity of his country people. 2 His works are based on the realistic settings, day to day incidents in the life of the Indian society, the real characters of the social classes and the routine communal clashes. In the due course of the life of a character, chance or fate as we find in the novels of Thomas Hardy, plays very important role where ordinary events or incidents or mishaps are transformed into inordinary ones. The unexpected and unimagined disaster thrashes the hero very easily into an unforeseen fortune. The characters expect their fates without any grudge under whatever conditions they are living.

In his stories and novels, Malgudi is a pure fictional town chalked out by R.K. Narayan as that of Border Countries of Sir Walter Scott, Lake District of Wordsworth, the Wessex of Hardy or The Five Towns of Arnold Bennet. It is absolutely true that his characters and landscapes seem to be alive and active. The analysis of the critics "Narayan is a story teller, nothing else and seldom more." This statement proves his power as an excellent narrative writer of stories and not a weakness of his. Narayan himself replies: "I'd be quite happy if no more is claimed from me than being just a story teller, only the story matter, that's all." 3

Moreover, Narayan's stories move around to the native soil and pastoral people with their pure moral vision, their intense attachment to their culture and traditions, their dresses, their simple living, simplicity and their deep faith in the 'Pagan Gods.' His are fascinating plots where innocent people just take up a man as a saint because he has a beard while in reality Raju of "Guide" had illicit relations and committed forgery as well returned from the jail. No doubt, it is the moral vision of Narayan with a feeling of identity that this very character takes an oath to go



on fast if it rains. 4 Certainly, not only the narratives but characterization of Narayan is par excellence.

Conclusion:

It would not be beyond words to say that R.K.Narayan is known as the shining star of Indo-Anglican English literature. He made his literary field fertile only through the major themes and characters as well as the narratives of his fiction. His literary fiction is easily accessible and can be understood with an ease. Narayan individualizes his characters who meet out life's subtle problems with a healthy sense of humour, irony and satire but maintaining their Indian identity. His variety of characters consists of astrologers, clerks, guides, painters, dancers, parents, siblings etc. He has given a mythological shape to Malgudi naming it after the river Sarayu. Malgudi represents not only the panorama of Narayan's fiction but it symbolizes the whole village community of India. 5

Howsoever, the fictional literary world of Narayan along with the concept of moral vision and Indian identity, makes him the greatest Indian English fiction writer.

References:

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