



Minor Research Project (MRP)

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Lecture In English

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Minor Research Project

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Title of the Project- The Complexities and excitements in the Social system of R.K. Narayan's Novels

Objectives of the Project – Reader's Appreciation of an Indian English writer whose immense love of his own soil is beyond fathom.

Whether objectives were achieved:- Yes

Achievements from the Project – The objectives have been achieved through subjectivity.

Annexure –VIII

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The Indian English novelists of whom it can be said that they have established the assumptions, drawn the first models of characters and elaborated the visions of the English fictions, are Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan. "Mulk Raj Anand is the novelist of reformers, Raja Rao is the novelist of metaphysical poets and Narayan is of individual man."

Mulk Raj Anand's important novels include "**Untouchable**" (1935), **Coolie** (1936), **Two Leaves and a Bud** (1937), **The Village** (1939), **Across the Black Waters** (1941), **The Big Heart** (1945), **Seven Summers** (1951), **The Private life of an Indian Prince** (1953), **Gauri** (1960), **Morning Face** (1968), **Confessions of a Lover** (1976), **The Bubble** (1984), **Little plays of Mahatma Gandhi** (1991) and **Nine Moods of Bharata : Novel of a Pilgrimage** (1998). In most of his works, social realism and reforms are the major concern.

Raja Rao is the youngest of the trio. He delves deep into the Indian metaphysics and catches hold of traditional hindu culture and ancient moorings. His important novels are "**Kanthapura**" (1938), **The Serpent and the Rope** (1962), **Cat and Shakespeare** (1965) and **The Classmaster and His Moves** (1988). Raja Rao deliberately makes an effort to create an english idiom which is acceptable for it acclimatizes an indigenous tradition to english language.

Rashipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan continued to write as a true Indian till the end of the twentieth century. He occupies a respectable position in the literary world. He has identified India abroad on account of his tremendous achievements in the field of literature. He is a true Indian who indianizes his monumental works without selling India in foreign land. "It is true that the artists draws his sustenance from the society

he lives in, but it is equally true that he breathes new life in to it, invigorates it and renders the drab life a shade better than he found it." Narayan is not at all an exception.

The Dark Room (1938), in some ways is the opposite of "**The English Teacher**" written in 1945, the latter is a hymn to all the joys and sorrows of married life, but the former is a catalogue of the tensions implicit in that 'permanent contract based upon a temporary feeling'. In '**The Financial Expert**' (1952), the element of fantasy predominates over a sense of realism. It is mildly satirical, excitingly interesting and entertaining. '**The Man-eater of Malgudi**' and '**The Waiting for the Mahatma**' present Gandhiji's pontifical outlook, untouchability, truth and chastity. It seems to be outdated because the area depicted in this novel is no longer accessible. Narayan, here has kept 'old wine in a new bottle'. "It is about India that Narayan writes, rather, it is the world of Malgudi whose various influences act and interact and whose different strands of culture co-exist. He knows his men and women; he knows their pettiness as well as their ideals and aspirations and above all, the little ironies of their lives. He looks at all of them with a tenderness and a compassion more like a Jane Austen than as a George Eliot, much less as a Hardy. Incidentally, he was in the opinion of blurb writers, first the 'Indian Chekhov', then 'Jane Austen and Joyce Cary' until at last he is himself".

In the last group of novels, "**Mr Sampath**", "**The Financial Expert**", "**The Guide**", "**The Man-eater of Malgudi**", "**The Sweet Vendor**", one finds the 'exotic world of half-headedness and half-heartedness'. Narayan's visit to America seems to be the chief source of "**The Sweet Vendor**" published in 1967. Here, Narayan tries to depict the generation gap because of India's encounter with the West. "**My Days**" projects the life and work of the writer. It is an autobiography in form of a novel. A delicate and exact vehicle to his later works is "**Swami**" published in 1935. It is the story with minute observation of a child. It is full of humour and psychology. Malgudi, here, is neither a village nor a South Indian town but it is every Indian town and we have known so much about them from his novels. The author gives us a chance to see them pass from an agricultural to an industrial economy and he uses the setting to make it serve as an authentic background for the different phases the characters go through.

"**The Bachelor of Arts**" (1936) raises hope against hope. The hero becomes desperate and frustrated. "**Mr Sampath**" was published in 1949. Here, the character becomes the plot. It is an outstanding work comprising social milieu. Narayan has drawn the portraits of artists, financiers, speculators, twisters, adventurers, eccentrics, cinema stars and several of them in his work. They are not originally Malgudi products but imported from outside.

"**A Tiger for Malgudi**" is the latest novel depicting a man full of sympathy for the people of Malgudi. Narayan asks some fundamental questions about human predicament and also offers answers to them. For finding the answers, he measures his own cultural ethos. In it, a number of references to the theories of Karma, Punarjanma, evolution of the soul, etc. have been juxtaposed.

"**The Painter of Signs**" was published in 1976 almost ten years after its immediate predecessor "**The Vendor of Sweets**". This novel can be analysed in terms of God, money & success. In "**The World of Nagraj**", Narayan inculcates pathos and disillusionment in a realistic manner. The plot gives complexities as the writer tries to focus on the predicament of its day-dreaming protagonist.

"**The Guide**" of R.K. Narayan is typical. The plot of the novel is very simple. The story focuses Raju, the hero. He begins his work as a tourist-guide and ends as a spiritual guide. Raju's transition from Vanaprastha to Sannyasa is evident. He first emerges a Railway-Raju. He has talent to adapt himself like a chameleon in his surroundings. He plays the role not only to perfection but identifies himself with the role itself. The progressive evolution continues till the sinner is turned into a saint. Various roles played by him baffles the readers. They say "what a piece of work the man is!"

R.K. Narayan's fiction is imbued with a strong "sense of place". His setting, Malgudi, develops from novel to novel but always possesses a "genius locus" which gives reality to his men and women. Narayan is no poet and can not give us what Henry James called the 'aroma of the meadows and lanes' in Hardy, but

he certainly makes clear to us the 'ankle deep' dust in Anderson Lane and the raucous noises in the market. Like Arnold Bennett, Narayan relies more on keen observation and steady accumulation of small details than on evocative description.

'The art of R.K. Narayan offers an interesting contrast to that of Mulk Raj Anand. His delicate blend of gentle irony and sympathy, quiet realism and fantasy stands poles apart from Anand's militant humanism with its sledge-hammer blows and his robust earthiness.'

"In Narayan's novels, there is generally a flight, an uprooting, a disturbance of order followed by a return, a renewal, a restoration of normalcy. No doubt, Narayan seems to see the world as a mere balance of forces wrong doers and policeman keeping one another properly engaged, light and shadow endlessly chasing each other, hope and failure for ever playing, a duet never to be concluded, but the 'soul' of Narayan's fiction is not this delicately self-adjusted mechanism of ironic comedy, but rather the miracle of transcendence and the renewal of life, love, beauty, peace". His novels focus all the small talk and crazed thoughts, all the comic gestures and frantic movements, the miracle of faith and the complexities and excitements in the social system.

Contribution to the society- The society has given positive response to Narayan's call through his fictional world.

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