

R.K.Narayan's Style and Indian Sensibility

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ABSTRACT: *Narayan can do all this without forcing the normal tone and structure of English and within the most ordinary gamut of words which retain their original lucidity and force. This has won Narayan high praise. For example, William Walsh writes, "Narayan uses a pure and limpid English, easy and natural in its run and tone, but always an evolved and conscious medium, without the exciting physical energy – sometimes adventitiously injected – that marks the writing of the West Indians. Narayan's English in its structure and address is a moderate, traditional instrument but one abstracted from the context in which it was generated – the history, the social condition, the weather, the racial memory – and transferred to a wholly different setting – the brutal heat and hovering vultures, flocks of brilliant glittering parrots, jackals rippling over the rubbish dumps, an utter shining clarity of light and the deadly grey of an appalling poverty. It is clear of the palp-able suggestiveness, the foggy taste, the complex tang, running through every phase of our own English. Instead, it has a strange degree of translucence. Narayan's language is beautifully adapted to communicate a different, an Indian sensibility." Narayan's language is very much like the language of newspaper and the Sunday Weekly and the common use an Indian makes of it for conversation among educated Indians of different language groups. From the limited vocabulary, Narayan has fashioned for himself a kind of diction of common life for his Indian scene- a medium which is at once casual and convincing and used with complete confidence. "It can always subtly convey the flavor of Indian speech in an Indian setting without any of the awkwardness of translation. He does not attempt to find crude equivalent for that delicious Indian vocabulary of abuse, of bawdry, of endearment as a Mulk Raj Anand or a Khuswant Singh may do. Nor does one meet with the kind of strange construction that results in rendering the North Indian idiom into literal English. Narayan has none of these bizarre effects and yet he manages to make an encounter sound authentic and Indian, as for instance, when Velan first meets Raju."*

Key Words: *pure, limpid, easy, natural, suggestiveness, Indian sensibility*

Introduction:

R.K. Narayan is one of the most famous and widely read Indian novelists. His stories were grounded in a compassionate humanism and celebrated the humor and energy of ordinary life. R.K. Narayan was born on October 10, 1906 in Madras. His father was a provincial head master. R.K. Narayan spent his early childhood with his maternal grandmother, Parvathi in Madras and used to spend only a few weeks each summer visiting his parents and siblings.

R.K. Narayan's famous works include *The Bachelor of Arts (1937)*, *The Dark Room (1938)*, *The English Teacher (1945)*, *The Financial Ex*, *pert (1952)*, *The Guide (1958)*, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi (1961)*, *The Vendor of Sweets (1967)*, *Malgudi Days (1982)* and *The Grandmother's Tale (1993)*. Narayan is the writer of the social novels, which are more or less comic novels.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the present study to attract the attention of the readers and lovers of literature towards the simplicity of Narayan's language which is beautifully adapted to communicate a different, an Indian sensibility." Narayan's language is very much like the language of newspaper and the Sunday Weekly and the common use an Indian makes of it for conversation among educated Indians of different language groups.

Style and Comic Purpose:

"Well-deserved as such tributes are, one sometimes has the uncomfortable feeling that the Western critic may be inclined to see far too much in this success. It is true that Narayan's success is never to ignore his instinct for limitation. He rarely attempts to charge his meager words with what they are unable to carry. In this respect, one must take note of a gradual development in Narayan's art of story-telling. In the earlier work, as in the short stories, the whole action often hinges on an amusing turn of event to be narrated with his inimitable mixture of gusto and irony. The words do not have to carry a strong emotional charge. They serve the comic purpose admirably."

Narayan's Style and Indian Sensibility:

Narayan can do all this without forcing the normal tone and structure of English and within the most ordinary gamut of words which retain their original lucidity and force. This has won Narayan high praise. For example, **William Walsh** writes, "Narayan uses a pure and limpid English, easy and natural in its run and tone, but always an evolved and conscious medium, without the exciting physical energy – sometimes adventitiously injected – that marks the writing of the West Indians. Narayan's English in its structure and address is a moderate, traditional instrument but one abstracted from the context in which it was generated – the history, the social condition, the weather, the racial memory – and transferred to a wholly different setting – the brutal heat and hovering vultures, flocks of brilliant glittering parrots, jackals rippling over the rubbish dumps, an utter shining clarity of light and the deadly grey of an appalling poverty. It is clear of the palp-able suggestiveness, the foggy taste, the complex tang, running through every phase of our own English. Instead, it has a strange degree of translucence. Narayan's language is beautifully adapted to communicate a different, an Indian sensibility."

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Lacks Emotional Intensity:

But when more complex effect is attempted, as in *The Guide*, where the situation has a certain intensity, one is not always sure that the language is equal to the task. We seem to be left in doubt how to take in what is presented, whether to respond in sympathy or in comic detachment. Now, it is possible of course, to regard this as the very effect Narayan's art aims at. **William Walsh** calls it an intricate alliance of the serious and the comic, considering it as a sort of culminating point of the art. "The serious and the comic flow in and out of one another throughout in an intricate in separable alliance." But the mingled effect may simply be the result of the fact that the language lacks amplitude. The same language that formerly served the comic purpose is now employed for situations which have emotional magnitude and complexity. There are scores of places in **The Guide** where one seems to feel this want rather keenly. Nothing happens to the language, though the narrative raises the expectation of a heightened tone.

Fiction of Common Life:

Narayan's language is very much like the language of newspaper and the Sunday Weekly and the common use an Indian makes of it for conversation among educated Indians of different language groups. From the limited vocabulary, Narayan has fashioned for himself a kind of diction of common life for his Indian scene—a medium which is at once casual and convincing and used with complete confidence. "It can always subtly convey the flavor of Indian speech in an Indian setting without any of the awkwardness of translation. He does not attempt to find crude equivalent for that delicious Indian vocabulary of abuse, of bawdry, of endearment as a Mulk Raj Anand or a Khuswant Singh may do. Nor does one meet with the kind of strange construction that results in rendering the North Indian idiom into literal English. Narayan has none of these bizarre effects and yet he manages to make an encounter sound authentic and Indian, as for instance, when Velan first meets Raju." - (V. Y. Kantak)

Summing Up:

To sum up; the research scholar comes to the point Narayan is the writer of the social novels, which are more or less comic novels. Every event is described with precision and care, so that the details are correct and the event is psychologically convincing. His social life is full of college boys, college teacher, school masters, merchants, municipal members, tourist guides, taxi drivers and most of other full blooded character, which form lower middle and poor classes of Malgudi. Princes of blood, commercial magnates and rich people rolling in wealth have no fascination for Narayan and the poor and the down-trodden class of workers does not inspire Narayan with imagination. Narayan steers the middle course and does not go beyond the people he has seen and lived with. The heroes of the Narayan are never drawn on a heroic scale. Narayan is the creator of un-heroic heroes. The heroes of the Narayan do not control events, the events control them. In **Waiting for Mahatma**, we have the fantasy of the intrusion of Gandhi and Gandhian politics into the simple and realistic love-story of Bharathi and Sriram. In this very novel, there is even the more

fantastic coming to life on the cremation ground of an old women supposed to be dead. Even **The Financial Expert** and **the Sweet-vendor**, two of Narayan's finest novels, are spoiled by this uneven mixture of fantasy and realism. In the former, there is the fantastic worship ritual and fast to win the favor of Goddess Laxmi, and in the latter, as already mentioned, there is the fantastic story-writing machine, besides many other eccentricities and absurdities of character and event.

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