



Nature As The Backdrop In R.K.Narayan's Novels

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Abstract: This paper tries to make an attempt on the nature consciousness in the writings of R.K.Narayan, provides emphasis to 'Swami and Friends,' 'The Man Eater of Malgudi,' 'The Guide', 'A Tiger in Malgudi' and 'An Axe'. R.K. Narayan never takes serious issues and never writes in a serious way, but his consciousness of the nature is seen in his every volume of writing. Through the exploration of R.K.Narayan's fictional world from the approach of nature and its elements guide us analyse the cause of imbalance between man and nature, its changes time to time. One can visualize the spirit and theology of nature and eco system from Naraya's works.

Key Words: Narayan, a nature lover, eco criticism, natural elements, environment, nature, and literature.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanswami was one of the reputed pre-independence Indian English writers. his parents were Gnana Iyer and Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer. his splendid work 'The Guide' was adapted to a film. his style of writing is simple and humorous but not in serious way. He was awarded with Padma Vibhushan, Sahithya Academy Award, A.C. Benson medal .

2. NATURE DESCRIPTION IN 'SWAMI AND FRIENDS':

R.K. Narayan's first novel 'Swami and Friends' has an immense show of nature and its relationship with humans. Malgudi town is an interesting mix with motor cars and bullock carts. A rural life is portrayed with the sparkles of modern wheels. Malgudi town is beautiful by the surroundings of Nallappa grove in its episodes with the flow of river Sarayu. a tremendous picturization of donkey in Ellamma Street, the last street of Malgudi town and oil mongers, the dwellers of the street and a cow munching bread and green plantain leaf are an absolute co-existence of animal and human living together.

R.K.Narayan recounts the relationship between the nature and human beings. Ecology is crystal clearly picturized in throughout the novel 'Swami and Friends.' The readers can enjoy the greenery of trees, the sounds of animals and birds, the flora and fauna according to the seasons. with the beauty of nature, the power of nature to destroy also narrated in 'Swami and Friends'. A streak of water running under the culvert on a short stretch of sand, the view of paddy fields on the either sides of the pavements, the flavour of mangoes from the mango groves, the scene of busy roads or main roads deserting during summer and the sounds of creaking movements of bullock carts are thoroughly narrated in and around Malgudi. (1)

3. RURAL SETTING IN 'SWAMI AND FRIENDS':

The life of urban and rural is also differentiated through depicting thatched huts and dingy novels smoke-tinted and evil-smelling, clustering together irregularly. Scurvy chickens cackled and ran hither and thither, the snore of mongrels laying under the shade of the threes, a bad smell of hencoop are the instances for the ecosystem and Narayan's harmonious setting. 'The river's mild rumble, the rustlings of the peepul leaves, the half-light of the late evening and the three friends eating and glowing with new friendship – Swaminathan felt at perfect peace with the world.(2) Narayan portrays dogs and donkeys of Malgudi rest under the shades of trees. children are also an unavoidable part of nature but the children of Malgudi, Swami and his friends dare to walk and play on roads during summer. Swami escapes from the house and enters a deep forest that has white balls like wood – apple, green figs, deep purple Eugenia and peeped put of thick green foliage. At the beginning Swami attracts by the nature and calms by plucking a fruit but the same nature afterwards becomes a horrifying scene to him after night falls. Swami scares by the rustling sound of his feet, the shades of the huge trees on the road horrifying him as beastly bodies, in Narayan's words 'an immense monster.' Swami



envisions elephants, snakes, tigers, leopards and lions appear before him and try to pounce on him. The different elements of eco system are portrayed in his first novel of R.K.Narayan. he tactfully gives the other side of the nature. (3)

4. NATURE EXPLOITATION IN MAN-EATER OF MALGUDI:

In Narayan's 'Man -Eater of Malgudi' nature has become a character. A deep encroachment and exploitation of nature is shown through a character called Vasu. Vasu is a massive killer of innocent animals and birds. he is ruthless. he does not have any concerns for others' wellbeing. Nataraj is completely contaminated by the evil thoughts of Vasu. Vasu enters Malgudi and spoils the tranquility of the town. (4) The forestry officer of Malgudi also kills eighteen elephants and sixty tigers only to call himself as a good person and saviour of the society from the wildlife. The heartless – creature Vasu occupies Nataraj's attic domineeringly without his concerns and he uses the attic to keep the dead bodies of the animals that are brought from the Mempi forest. Vasu kills many dogs to threaten the people around him. Vasu is named 'Aggressor' and he unknowingly carries an invisible weapon to kill himself, through his behaviour.

Vasu, the taxidermist uses Nataraj's attic for hanging hyenas and pythons. he also brings dancing girls to the attic. through the lens of ecocriticism Narayan's 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' deals with hunting animals the cruel activity and literature. Vasu hunts elephants as it is a great source for earning money for him. Vasu feels Taxidermy is a marvelous art as he master's in it. He boasts that he can make a lion more terrifying than it would be in the jungle. He is the warrior to the nature. Sougata Sahoo opines that 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' has ecocriticism through postcolonial novel. The readers surely recognize R.K.Narayan's the multi-standard pluralism of world views.

5. THE GREAT OUTDOORS IN 'THE GUIDE':

Eco criticism is portrayed in R.K.Narayan's 'The Guide' with a panoramic view of Raju, the protagonist of the novel 'Guide' was born and brought up in the lap of nature. Raju had an immense pleasure on the tamarind tree near the railway station. he recollected his experiences with the tree as he had played under the tree all day. the shade of the tamarind tree across the road was dense with leaves, many birds and monkeys lived, fed on tender leaves and fruits of the tamarind tree. Raju had a great intimacy with the tamarind tree from his childhood. Raju loved every piece of work, the blue sky and sunshine and the shed of the house. he felt delightful with the smell of freshly turned earth. (5) Raju took shelter in an old shrine after coming from jail. When Velan, a villager from Mangal went back home Raju had only companion that was only nature. so, Raju sat for a long time watching the river flow, listening to the rustle of huge trees, peepul and banyan trees and sometimes frightened with loud noises of the water and started counting stars. Raju was much congenial to sit on the steps of the river and enjoyed that dazzling in the morning the cool breeze of the river. The description of the tamarind tree and the river are the great witness for presenting a great bondage between mankind and the nature.

"The sun was setting; its tint touched the wall with pink. the tops of the coconut trees were a flame. the bird cries went up in a crescendo before dying down for the night. Darkness fell" is a clue for the inseparable relationship between Raju and the nature. He describes "It was about seven-thirty in the evening. we had a gorgeous sunset. We have seen the purple play of colour in the northern skies after that and admired it. We saw the tops of the trees lit up by stray red ray seven after the sun was out of view and had found a common idiom to express our admiration." The Guide shows both the sides of the nature. one side with beauty and bounty of nature and the other side is environmental problems like drought, earthquake, and floods.(6)

6. COUNTRY-SIDE IN 'A TIGER IN MALGUDI':

A close relationship between nature and literature has been textualized by R.K. Narayan in his most of the works as he wants to prove that nature is inbuilt of the society. wherever we live. in Narayan's novel 'A Tiger in Malgudi' a tiger who lives in the forests of Malgudi is the protagonist and the narrator. it has a mate and cubs when they are captured by the hunters, the tiger becomes furious and starts chasing the cattle. a circus animal trainer captures him and makes the tiger starve. The tiger agrees to starve and its master who is 'a monk.' The freedom in his cave and the life in the cage is analyzed by the tiger. The tiger thinks, feels, and behaves alike human. It is the skill of R.K. Narayan to equalize an animal with human being. The tiger is handed over to a film maker and producer now and he plays to feature a film Raja, the tiger. It is trained to be peaceful. The director wants to remove the claws of the tiger but the tiger escapes and reaches to jungle and becomes spiritual wants to qualify the human attributes. Narayan narrates the egos and values of animal. It is taught the art of meditation. Raja goes to a saint. Finally, the conveys the civilized human life through the wildlife. (7)



7. LOVE OF NATURE IN ‘THE AXE’:

‘The Axe’ is Narayan’s one of the short fiction stories in which Velan works in a garden. He has no expectations of life except busily working in the garden. He has no hungry and no complaints except working with the nature. Unfortunately, the building that has the garden is sold out to someone and he must leave suddenly which he never expected. He feels sorry, walks around the garden, taking care of the plants and stares at them sadly. He also weeps and sobs when he sees the sight of cutting Margosa tree. He says to the workers “This is my child. I planted it. I saw it grow; I love it. Do not cut it down.” again, he wipes his eyes, controls himself, and says, “Brothers, don’t start cutting till I’m really gone far, far away.” His long-standing relation with the garden comes to an end. (8) Velan is an icon of the nature lover. He took care of many plants all these years, Hibiscus, Chrysanthemum, Jasmin, and Rose. The deep love, passion and respect towards nature is represented by Velan through Narayan’s story ‘The Axe.’

8. CONCLUSION:

R.K.Narayan has utmost spirit on environment. It is unnoticed that he always deals with significant problems of the world from a sociological perspective, and he also proves that he is the writer of environmental issues and nature lover but always in his exquisite approach. To conclude with the opinion of K.R. Srinivas Iyengar ‘human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it.’(9)

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