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ABSTRACT:

The Indo-Anglian fiction was experimental up to 1920. Writers like S.K. Ghose, S.M. Mitra and Raj Laxmi Devi were experimenting to provide recognition to Indo-Anglian Literature. The period between 1920-1950 was dominated by novels with political and social themes. The contribution of K.S. Venkatramani, Shanker Ram, S. Nagarajan, Kumar Guru, A.S.P. Ayyar, S.K. Chettur and G.V. Desani are notable. During the 1950-85, the acknowledged Indo-Anglian like R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgaonkar, Shashthi Bratta, Ruth Praver Jhabwala, Arun Josi, Khuswant Singh, D.F. Faraka, Nirad C. Choudhari and a host of others try their art of fiction writing with unlimited and unrestricted themes. But the credit of bringing a name and reputation to Indo-Anglian fiction goes to a few contemporary writers such as, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja rao, R.K.Narayan and Nirad C. Chaudhuri. They are the four wheels of contemporary Indo-Anglian fiction. This paper focuses the family relationship discussed in the

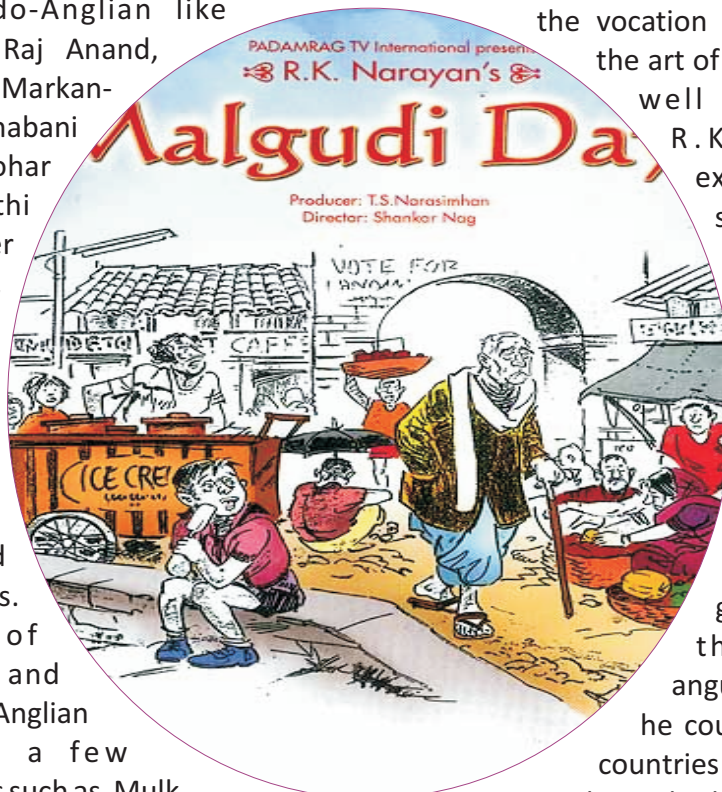
select novels of R.K. Narayan.

KEY WORDS: Family Relationship , Indo-Anglian fiction , Indo-Anglian Literature , political and social themes.

**INTRODUCTION:
INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION AND R.K. NARAYAN**

R.K. Narayan has succeeded to become a famous novelist today in India, though it is not easy to make a living in India as a writer. He has taken the vocation seriously to improve the art of fiction writing. It is a well known fact that R.K.Narayan is an excellent narrator of stories. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says that, "Narayan would like to be a detached observer, to concentrate on a narrow scene to sense the atmosphere of the place, to snap a small group of characters in their oddities and angularities; he would, if he could, explore the inner countries of the mind, heart and soul, catch the uniqueness in the ordinary, the tragic in the prosaic" (Iyengar, 360).

At the same time, what is not so well



known is the fact that R.K.Narayan is quite good at dealing with man-woman relationship. He shows that his versatility in revealing the humour, the pathos and the irony found in man-woman relationship. This way of dealing with the men and woman of his novels also forms part of his craft. Humour and irony are the hall marks of R.K. Narayan's novels. He never gives an impression that he is striving after a humorous effect. Humour comes to him naturally. He has an ironic vision of life and creates male and female characters possessing a sense of humour. He looks at everything keeping himself at a distance and transforms even the serious matter into a comical one.

PORTRAYAL OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

R.K. Narayan's contribution to the Indian English Novel has been exemplary. Narayan presents lively middle class mannerism and their tension between tradition and modernity of the urban middle class. He exposes the vanity, snobbery, sentimentality, pretentiousness, hypocrisy, corruption and evils of the middle class society. Thus in spite of diversity in themes and techniques, Narayan's fiction has some common features, namely the presentation of a personal narrative against the back ground of modern Indian history, the conflict of values between the family and the individual and the awareness of social change. By his choice of themes and a unique style of presentation, he has carved a niche for himself in the crowded literary scene. His protagonists are all ordinary middle class people and the family constitutes the hub of preoccupations. Commenting on the thematic concerns of Narayan's novels, William Walsh says, "The family, indeed, is the immediate context in which the novelists' sensibility operates, and his novels are remarkable for the subtlety with which family relationships are treated" (Walsh, 1983.74).

Thus Narayan with his depiction of socio-economic aspects of everyday life of ordinary people put together a wide panorama of life. The whole body of Indian English novels really does not anticipate the novels of the eighties. The content and the form of the novel of the Eighties are unique. An analysis of his novels reveals that R.K.Narayan deals neither with the aristocracy at the top nor the poor. He is practically like Jane Austen and identifies himself with the middle class people and their various involvements, their clashes and adjustments that constitute the main interest of his novels. Like E.M. Foster and D.H. Lawrence, he is a critic of contemporary society who ironically criticizes the follies and foibles of modern civilization reared on the material values of life. To speak generally, Narayan's novels are essentially Indian and he concentrates on orthodox family and incorporates numerous features of Indian life. Another aspect of Narayan's novels is they describe the middle class milieu in all his novels.

Narayan's range of subject matter is not very vast, and it is limited. He selects his themes and characters from a limited scope but describes them in full details and presents their realistic portrayal. In this respect he concerns himself only with that stratum of society with which he has complete intimacy – he derives his themes and characters for all his novels from this particular class of society. In all of his early novels he mostly deals with school boys, teachers, college boys and college teachers. His early novels include *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts*, *The Dark Room* and *The English Teacher*. Narayan's first novel *Swami and Friends*, presents socio-economic condition of pre-independence era, along with the different stages of school age which marks the life of its central figure, Swaminathan. Narayan appears to be critical of the motivated teaching and again in *The Guide*, the poor and inadequate teaching system of Indian village schools where the teacher's interest is in one rupee a month and anything in kind which the pupils brought him.

REFERENCE OF MALGUDI

The locality for many of his novels and short stories is Malgudi which is a wholly imaginary

suburban town. Narayan's significant achievement lies in the creation of a typical south Indian town Malgudi. The eminent success of his novels was due to the setting which was laid in the rich and colourful heritage of his fictional world, Malgudi. Narayan's Malgudi, so supremely and exclusively majestically and totally itself, is an everywhere in India.

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says, "Malgudi is Narayan's 'Cambridge' but the inhabitants of Malgudi although they may have recognizable local trappings are essentially human and hence. Have their kinship with all humanity. In this sense, 'Malgudi' is everywhere. (Iyengar, 360). The name 'Malgudi' may perhaps be a new name given by Narayan but the town does exist both physically and in the mind of the readers. The name 'Malgudi' and its location both certainly pertain to south India. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar adds.

Malgudi is the real 'hero' of the ten novels and the many short stories that underneath the seeming chance and the human drama, there is something the 'soul' of the place? That defies or embraces all change and is triumphantly and unalterably itself. All things pass and change, men and women try to live, and even as they are living they are called upon to die, names change, fashions change, but the old landmarks – the Sarayu, the Hills, the Jungles, the Grove – remain. The one remains, the many change and pass (Iyengar, 12).

P.S. Sundaram asserts, "Narayan's book springs from the mud and river of Malgudi, without any attempt to project a picture. Narayan takes one, in novel after novel and in every short story, to the men and women. The scene is Malgudi, but the play is a human not merely an Indian Drama" (Sundaram, 16). Talking about the Indo – Anglican fiction Meenakshi Mukherjee says, "Nothing could be more provincial and localized than the life of Malgudi town, yet R.K. Narayan successfully achieves a universal vision through it". (Mukerjee, 25).

In *My Days*, Narayan explains the origin of his fictional setting for the first time. Later, in an interview with Ved Mehta, Narayan reiterates what he wrote in his autobiography, giving of course, a fuller account of the inception of Malgudi "on a certain day in September, selected by my grandmother for its auspiciousness, I bought an exercise book and wrote the first line of a novel; I sat in a room nibbling my pen and wondering what to write, Malgudi with its little railway station swam into view, all readymade, with a character called Swaminathan running down the platform peering into the faces of passengers, and grimacing at a bearded face; this seemed to take me on the right track of writing..." (Mehta, 12).

CONCLUSION

There was a lively presentation of people's tendency in the novel. People rose against British and started Quit India Movement. The school boys like Swami and his friends, also joined the movement. Swami and other school boys took out procession in the wake of agitation. So the worst sufferer in our society is the middle class people. Dealing with the middle class society, Narayan is at his best when he stretches their struggle, their economic stringency and standard living. R.K. Narayan himself is a product of the south Indian middle class. He wants to show his readers through his novels and short stories, the way of the life of the middle class people, with whose psychology and manners, he is most familiar.

Malgudi, the imaginary township of R.K.Narayan can be compared to Hardy's Wessex and Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha country. In certain aspects Narayan is close to Thomas Hardy, who is a regional novelist and who has created his Wessex as a memorable country. Place in Narayan's novels is less formidable than it is in Hardy. Narayan does not lend symbolic significance to his landscape as Hardy does. Narayan's Malgudi is more human, it gains its importance in its contact with humanity. Just

as Hardy novels and called 'Wessex novels', Narayan's novels may rightly called 'Malgudi novels'. Most of the critics of Narayan's fiction tried to identify the location of the town Malgudi. Malgudi has a visible existence in the geography of Narayan's imagination.

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