

To Compare the Writings of RK Narayan and Anita Desai in Context of Modern Writings

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ABSTRACT

Several locations in Malgudi make cameos and sustained appearances throughout the magnificent *The Financial Expert*. The protagonist and financial specialist Margayya is the story's driving force. *The Financial Expert* is an extraordinary work of plot creation, according to H.M. Williams. In his highly esteemed work, *The Vendor of Sweets*, the famous Indian writer R K Narayan deftly examines the complex nature of disputes. As we explore the narrative of Jagan, a traditional Brahmin and businessman, and his son Mali, we will see that their divergent aspirations and values divide them and cause the novel's main conflict. R. K. Narayan, in his renowned work *The Darkroom*, vividly portrays the social reality of family life and its many societal ramifications as a realistic narrator of life-events via his huge method. Much of what happens in contemporary families is directly attributable to modernization in *The Darkroom*, a narrative of a family that feels its effects. Desai, an accomplished author, has contributed to the canon of English-language Indian novels. She became "a disturbing and demanding presence in Indo-Anglian fiction" due to her inventions. She is a master of her craft, and her works have great resonance because of her empathy for the human condition. She has a strong distaste for the way most modern novelists craft their works. In an essay titled "Woman Writers," she expresses her sentiments. An impoverished family in a little Indian town faces problems that are seen within the narrative. Millions of people have been moved by this brilliant and uplifting piece of literature. A family from the Indian town of Thul and their impoverished way of life are depicted in this novel, which takes place among the palm palms and the Indian Sea, their only means of subsistence.

Keyword: *Portrays, Brilliant, Resonance, Realistic, Empathy*

INTRODUCTION

Three names come to mind when one thinks of the early Indian English novel: Raja Rao (1908–2006), R.K. Narayan (1906–2001), and Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004). They all lived through the turn of the century and started writing in the 1930s. No one can dispute the impact they had on the Indian English novelists' world. The Indian English novel finally found its niche in the vast Indian literary canon with works like *Untouchable* by Anand, *Swami and Friends* by Narayan, and *Kanthapura* by Rao.

The early nineteenth century saw the introduction of English education to India. It is logical to assume that Indian writers started penning essays, articles, and sketches in English not long after, particularly with the advent of English newspapers and periodicals. It is hardly surprising that some Indians wrote in English even before then, given the long history of English presence in India.

The First Indian English Novel

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya (1838–1894) was a renowned Bengali author who actually wrote his first work in English. *The Indian Field*, a weekly publication in Calcutta, published *Rajmohan's Wife* in 1864 as *Wife*. A first printing occurred in the 1930s, and a second printing occurred in 1990. The works of English authors, especially Charles Dickens and Sir Walter Scott, had a significant impact on Bankim. *Wife*, like *Rajmohan's Bengali novels*, addresses contemporary socioeconomic themes. This first effort essentially established the primary goal of the Indian English novel. An unhappy marriage and its toll on a woman are the themes of *Rajmohan's Wife*. The story revolves on the hardships endured by Matangini, a middle-class housewife living in rural East Bengal, as a result of her husband *Rajmohan's* actions. It is hardly surprising that the first Indian English book is a social fiction, rather than a historical romance, given that this was a period of social transformation. Though

he never published another book in English, Bankim had a profound impact on the development of the novel in India via his works in Bengali.

Three Significant Novelists

When Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao first appeared on the scene in the 1930s, it was the watershed moment in Indian English fiction's history. Thirteen novels, twelve anthologies of short tales, almost twenty-five volumes on art and other broad topics, and a plethora of essays are Mulk Raj Anand's accomplishments. His novels reflected his dedication to social causes. Modern Indian language authors have a significant impact on him. The works of Prem Chand and Tagore are recalled in this regard. He was open to the ideas of many prominent western philosophers of his period because of his background in philosophy. Characters like sweepers, coolies, and plantation labourers often appear in Anand's writings, which demonstrate his admiration for the working class. Nothing like this has ever happened before in Indian literature. He depicts a realistic image of modern India via his characters, who are all victims of brutality and exploitation, such as the homeless Munoo in *Coolie*, the untouchable Bakha, and the indentured servant Gangu.

In 1935, the book *Untouchable* was released. It tells the story of Bakha, an outcaste who lives in a Cantonment town in northern India, and a day in his life. This one day not only brings him his miseries, but it also allows the reader understand the hard lives of the downtrodden, which ultimately leads to other answers for his difficulties. At the conclusion of the book, Bakha is left all alone, bewildered by his own thoughts. Anand also addresses a different group of disadvantaged people in his 1936 book *Coolie*. His 1937 theatrical work, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, takes place in an Assam plantation. *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942), *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1940), and *Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953) are among his other notable books.

R.K. Narayan was born in Madras in 1906 and lived his whole life as a writer. Though his novels were the primary source of his fame, he produced a diverse body of work that includes fifteen novels, five collections of short stories, two travel books, four essay collections, and a biography. He preferred to write about life as it is, with all its diversity and complexity, and he was primarily an apolitical author. His books have a nice mix of sympathetic characters and subtle sarcasm. The seeming simplicity of Narayan's works belies their inherent intricacy. While he mostly writes comedies, he does sometimes touch on serious themes. Since his writings primarily represent the Indian worldview, they also include a philosophical aspect. The majority of his works take place in Malgudi, an imagined village that serves as the setting for many of his novels and short tales. Like other communities in southern India, the little town of Malgudi reflects the many cultures, beliefs, and ways of life of Indian civilization.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kumar Madar (2020) R.K. Narayan. By compassionately depicting women's struggles, R.K. Narayan reminds readers of the vital responsibility's women play in society and the home. This study aims to provide a proper perspective on R K Narayan's female characters, beginning with Savitri in *The Dark Room*, by systematically analyzing his feminist concerns. Mythical comedies or modern fables are two possible labels for R.K. Narayan's works, which portray the incongruities and absurdities of contemporary Indian culture via fiction. His work has served as a vehicle for artistic expression, exposing the public to the societal ills that exist inside their society.

Robin C U et al (2022) R. K. Narayan, in his renowned work *The Darkroom*, vividly portrays the social reality of family life and the many societal repercussions of it as a realistic narrator of life-events via his colossal style. As a rule, postcolonial authors have shown and expressed the transitory diaspora, which draws attention to the unacknowledged effects of redefining society and family.

The breakdown of the nuclear family as a social unit has had far-reaching effects on people's daily lives since the advent of modern civilization, creating a vicious cycle. Much of what happens in contemporary families is directly attributable to modernization in *The Darkroom*, a narrative of a family that feels its effects.

Robin C. U. (2022) True friendship and love might face new challenges in this era of ubiquitous web-based entertainment and online staging. True love may be shown via virtual assistance, maintaining relationships despite physical distance, and using technology to stay connected and support one another. Online deceit, fraud, or duping may erode faith in a company. Building true love in fellowship calls for consistent and sincere communication, demonstrating reliability and integrity in the professional sphere. Indian author R.K. Narayan focused mostly on capturing the essence of Indian culture in his books

set in the made-up town of Malgudi. Although he refrained from directly examining contemporary patterns of relationships and friendships, his writings nevertheless provide insights on familial and social aspects of relationships.

Objective of Study

1. To explore the themes and techniques used by Indian writers in English Novels.
2. To compare the writings of RK Narayan and Anita Desai in context of modern writings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Anita Desai Novel's

'Cry, the peacock'

Cry, The Peacock, Anita Desai's first book, focuses on an Indian housewife. The female protagonist, Maya, is seen to be mentally playing the role of a subordinate. Simone de Beauvoir (1997:114) noted the predicament of women, and Maya's projection brings it to light: When she's a little girl, her father has complete control over her life. When she gets married, he gives her husband full authority. Since a woman is considered his property in the same way that a slave, a work animal, or chattel are,... According to her stated goal, Anita Desai aims to portray the reality of human existence via her books by delving into the tumultuous interior lives of those affected by the external world. She uses a wide range of hues to depict her characters' "Inner-landscapes," reflecting her fascination with the human mind. But her deep care for 'woman' and her plight causes her to touch on Maya's life both before and after marriage via themes of estrangement, broken communication, obsession on the father, unbalanced man-woman relationships, etc.

Toto's Death

How Maya's mental health was affected by the loss of her beloved pet dog, Toto, is explored in this episode. While Maya has a deep emotional connection to her dog, Gautama treats its death with careless indifference. As usual, he greets one of his pals and gets down to business. But Maya, who is already saddened by Toto's death, finds it irritating that Gautama doesn't seem to care. Although Maya is grieving, Gautama is not. Actually, he makes an effort to untangle Maya from it. In this way, Gautama shows little interest in Maya's most important matters. This leaves Maya feeling alone. Narrated in the beginning of the novel's first part is the aforementioned incident. The description of the item is withheld until the very end. The identity of the lady who is only addressed as "she" remains concealed.

Maya's Childhood Experiences

Episode details include Maya's recollections of the astrologer and the prophesy from her youth. Her relationship with her father as a youngster is also addressed. She reminisces on the few vivid memories she has of her youth. Throughout the narrative, her experiences are recounted in a disjointed fashion. We have examined a few of her experiences that have shaped her character's sensitivity.

The arrival of the crazed demon from Kathakali ballets sets the stage for Maya's meeting with the astrologer. Her ayah also shares her childhood memory of the astrologer. The astrologer's terrifying demeanour and behaviour are shown in the episode. The prophesy that Maya or Gautama will die after their marriage is fresh in Maya's mind.

The weight of her known "Fate" follows her around like a shadow. The albino astrologer's meeting with Maya is shown using the flashback method. Following Toto's passing, Maya has a "strange unease" accompanied by "a persistent sense of some disaster." She attempts to uncover the reality behind the melancholy via her train of thinking.

The Peacock Episode

A marital existence that left Maya feeling empty is the subject of this episode. The emotional need of Maya is unnoticed by Gautama because he is emotionally detached. Maya sobs for love and laments her unrealized longing. She cries out in a pitiful way, like peacocks.

Her own impending demise, prophesied by the prophet, dawns on her as the peacock becomes cognizant of death. Even after her marriage, Maya has no one to lean on for emotional support, and Gautama is her last hope. Gautama never shows Maya any affection since he is too busy working. His life is devoid of sentiment and emotion since he is a realistic guy.

R. K. Narayan's Novel

In R. K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends*, a ten-year-old kid named Swaminathan faces the transition from carefree childhood antics to a life of weighty decisions and growing responsibilities. This chapter sheds insight on his psychological vulnerabilities. It focuses on Swami's flaws as a character, his feelings of estrangement and self-alienation, and his struggles to find inner peace as he becomes manhood.

In terms of creative talent, R. K. Narayan is right up there with Hemingway, Chekhov, and Faulkner. The sheer creative genius and remarkable interest in people that R. K. Narayan displays in his literary works distinguish him from his contemporaries who depended on political and social themes in their books. While discussing his work with Stephen R. Graubard, Narayan confesses that he is interested in character development rather than discussing political suffering, economic growth plans, and people's hopes and dreams. That doesn't pique my attention. The histories and personalities of people fascinate me. To me, it is crucial. The interview takes place over the web.

Although Narayan's works mostly deal with social themes—with a hint of politics and religion—his humorous approach to these heavy subjects gives him a special position in the annals of Indian English literature. He maintains an objective authorial stance while making sarcastic remarks on societal ills. In spite of the fact that R. K. Narayan started writing while India was demanding its independence from the British, he avoided directly addressing the social and political turmoil of his time. In his eulogy for Narayan's genius, K. R. S. Iyengar uses the following words from his book *Indian Writing in English*:

As a comedic genius who is also acutely aware of the human condition, he is happy to poke fun at the little ironies, satirical twists, tragic comedies, and misdirection that make up Malgudi life. He is neither an intolerant critic of Indian ways and modes nor an ardent supporter of them. When he's at his finest (as in *The English Teacher*), he's able to show both joy and sorrow side by side, finding joy in the messiness of life while still catching a glimpse of its rainbow magnificence. (384 total)

His work deserves praise for accurately translating Indian sensibilities and experiences into a foreign language while also touching on universal topics via observations of everyday life in Malgudi. In his writings, Narayan shows little interest in the heavenly or cosmic aspects of the cosmos. The following remarks effectively express his perspective, similar to that of his character Mr. Sampath:

"If only one would acquire a complete View of all people, one would receive a correct View of the world.". Referenced in Srivastava 114.

In his comprehensive humanitarian view, Narayan immerses us in the lives of regular people who, while facing many challenges on a daily basis, have an innate resilience and the ability to learn and improve within the framework of their families and other social institutions. The characters and setting of Narayan's books are steeped in Indian culture and tradition, and the novels themselves portray Indian life. His protagonists and antagonists both want to escape stifling traditions and norms, yet they are ultimately unsuccessful. Because they can only find contentment by adhering to tradition, they are unable to develop as individuals. Biswal remarks on and investigates how Narayan deals with the social positioning of individuals in his works:

The focus of R. K. Narayan's works is consistently on the common man, whose modest aspirations and desires oscillate between the confines of an orthodox tradition into which he is born and the revelry of a free world, where his base impulses and desires propel him. Paradoxically, Narayan's comedic hero has been shaped by both his elemental nature and the religious rites and beliefs of an ancient tradition. Because of this contradiction, the form-harmonization in Narayan's books comes from a balancing act between the individual and the societal.

When applied to Swami, the protagonist of Narayan's writings, the aforementioned description may come off as arrogant due to his youth, however What happens next in this chapter will prove that the assertion is true in regards to Swami's situation.

This study makes an effort to examine Swami's growth by looking at how his family and other institutions shaped his worldview and sense of self. Through Swami and his companions' varied experiences, Narayan demonstrates a sincere

curiosity in the child's intellect in Swami and companions. "Reticence and modesty mark his treatment of characters," Kantak says in his commentary on Narayan's character painting.

CONCLUSION

When it comes to art, R. K. Narayan is unparalleled. His distinctive brilliance as a writer is on full display in his lucid narrative, insightful knowledge of human psychology, grounded approach to character development, seamless plotting, and, most importantly, his mastery of stylistic language. Novels are just a vehicle for Narayan to express himself creatively and provide aesthetic pleasure to his audience. Simply put, he is a writer who is also an artist. For decades to come, his fans will be enchanted by the wide array of characters he has created. In particular, Narayan's impartiality and dispassion have brought him praise.

Preaching, advising, and converting modern culture is not what he desires. The elements and story points that make up his stories are neither remarkable nor heroic. His books have a low, subtle tone. In his comedic style, he writes social novels. These books, unlike those of Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao, don't try to evoke profound human feelings or go to tragic extremes; instead, they have a lighter perspective to life. All of Narayan's works have the same calm tone. His settings are so realistic that they border on philosophical. On the other side, R. K. Narayan's readers get total aesthetic pleasure from his works, which is the key to his success and distinctiveness. The 'art for art's sake' perspective allows him to depict Indian life with total objectivity and impartiality.

The narratives of the tales and storylines written by Anita Desai make use of a wide range of inventive fictional approaches. Her books' approaches, in addition to their diverse subjects, are what make her a successful author. She mostly worries about the profound philosophical and cultural issues that may arise in modern society. On top of that, she is a master of cutting-edge narrative techniques. Indian and European history, philosophy, religion, social structure, ethos, and culture are the focal points of her narrative method.

Desai exposes the diverse range of thoughts, psychic perceptions, inner drives, and existential angst experienced by contemporary men and women. In tackling the social and moral problems faced by her characters, she completely succeeds in establishing new ground for her fictional work. Personality disorders, abnormalities, disruptions to the status quo, human irresponsibility, and evil motivations are some of the psychological themes explored in her novels. Not only that, but it also represents extreme cases of estrangement, identity crisis, maladjustment, and inconsistencies that seem to have been held onto as the finest parts of the two major traditions. Without a doubt, these elements broaden Desai's creative expression and give the Indian English book a new depth. Her ideas are presented in a way that makes you think.

The protagonists' internal struggles take center stage in Anita Desai's books. In the end, most of his characters' shocking and sometimes surprising confessions are the result of intense psychological turmoil. The Indian Virginiya Woolf moniker belonged to Anita Desai, who brought the stream-of-consciousness approach to India. Both Adit and Nanda Kaul, protagonists of *Bye Bye Blackbird* and *Fire on the Mountain*, experience profound emotional turmoil that leads to a crisis of self-identity. Neither of the protagonists is happy with where they are in life. This is due to the fact that they were coerced into doing so.

In Desai's works, the female protagonists remain motionless. They endure the nebulous lives while quietly moaning in agony and self-pity. An important theme in Desai's writings is the depiction of human relationships, particularly those between spouses and between parents and children. The marital dynamic is toxic and repulsive. The heroes in Desai's works flip the script on traditional notions of love.

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