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SELF REALIZATION IN THE NOVELS OF MANOHAR MALGONKAR AND R.K. NARAYAN

Mrs. Neeta Garudik¹ and Dr. Om Prakash Tiwari²

¹Research Scholar (English), Dr. C.V. Raman University, Kota, Bilaspur C.G.

² Associate Professor, Department of English, Dr. C.V. Raman University, Kota, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh.

ABSTRACT:

The naturalistic extension of "developing your potential" for realization of self is outlined as an ethical philosophy. The theory of self-realization is that a life of excellence is based on the actualization of human potentialities. In psychology, this is called "self-development." 'Self-realization' is the development and expression of characteristic attributes and potentials in a fashion which comprehensively discloses their subject's real nature. ... Its critics typically argue that human nature is such that any

equation of 'self-realization' and 'goodness' is implausible or undesirable.

KEYWORDS: Embodied, Hostility, Indomitable, Ferment, Wrenching, Rituals

INTRODUCTION:-

Self realization is as old as man himself. It is embodied in the psyche of human race from the time it acquired consciousness. In common literary parlance, the self is used variously and, as such, it has variable connotations. The thirst for self-realization is inborn, innate and deeply embedded in the human psyche since times primordial. It started with primitive man's progress to secure his existence against the hostility of nature. As man became aware of land, seas and frontiers, he was infused with a greater urge to explore the unknown frontiers. This led to heroic

deeds of the indomitable courage. The frontiers, therefore, became a symbol of the step outside the threshold and this step led to the larger quest of mankind in discovering the world and the universe. While explorers, sailors, adventurers and heroes embarked on their quest in the world outside their home, some plumed within the threshold to fathom the imponderables of life, living, death, etc. Such men became questers of the soul. The great sages like Madhava and Yagnyavalkya endeavored to solve the spiritual riddles such as man's existential exigencies, his ultimate abode, the nexus between life and death, and the various levels of consciousness culminating in the final effulgence of selfhood. Before explicating the approach itself, it is in the fitness of things to clarify what the self-realization signifies in literature. The self-

realization has been a central theme of many literary and non-literary forms. In mythologies, folk literature and religion it holds the centre of interest. It has brilliant pictorial representation in stone architecture and on canvas painting. The self-realization is, of course, not always a movement in the temporal and spatial world. It may be an inward movement in search of one's lost identity. In such a case the hero is forced to walk through his own self, confronting inner ghosts and saints, and the opposing impulses within.

This theory is also supported by Manohar Malgonkar's "Distant Drum" which illustrated that Distant Drum is not simply a documentation of army life, but a psychological probe into the development of its principal character Kiran Garud. From a shy, immature army officer he

transforms into a tough, dynamic, ideal army officer, because of his interaction with various historical, socio-political forces, and achievement of self-realization.

In R.K Narayan's novel "The Guide", through Raju, who is a central character? The novel begins and ends with him and the entire story is mostly a playback of Raju's past life. Raju does not seem to have any specific self-realization till he is forced to fast for twelve days, when he comes to realize that his fasting is enormously important to thousands of drought - stricken villagers, he resolves to fast in earnest. It is for the first time in his life that he transcends his petty self and begins to think about the lives of others. Raju's transformation is great and rapid because he has the zest of life.

INDIAN ENGLISH WRITINGS IN 20 TH CENTURY:

R. K. Narayan (Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami,, 1906-2001) belongs to the age of Indian Freedom Struggle of 20th century. The three bright stars, luminaries of Indian English literature, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao started writing their fiction, largely in this period of great ferment and excitement. Some of their early works truly reflect the conditions and the problems that characterize the early decades of the twentieth Century India and her people. All of them voiced the emotion of their age in their fiction directly or indirectly. R. K. Narayan wrote Fifteen Novels, Five Volumes of Short-Stories, a number of Travelogues and Collection of Non-fiction, English Translation of Indian Epics, and the Memoirs "My Days".

India has inherited a great legacy of her culture from ancient time. Civilization has constantly been passing through its sophisticated form. India has also kept her age old prevailing tradition in the society with some modification. India is such a country where Festival, cultural events, protocols of civilization, Religious occasions, National Day Celebration Programme and Traditional Rituals always take place. They are the inseparable parts of our society. They basically aimed to unite people with the feeling of togetherness, to make people enjoy life very closely with harmonious mutual understanding. But in course of time deformities, ugliness and evils of society have spoiled them.

In the fiction of R. K. Narayan, one can undoubtedly find the self-realization, representation of cultural incidence, patterns of civilization and traditional values but the uniqueness of Narayan is the faithful, real depiction of contemporary society, without any criticism, satire or comments. So in his literature we can visualize the contemporary society as it was with virtues and vices. Social customs and reality are vividly described with unbiased objectivity and complete detached observation.

R. K. Narayan is a man of moral consciousness. He points out that commercial instinct ruins the morals of man. But on the whole, Narayan remains a pure artist. He is for the social integration and order. As an artist he has dissected the social motives successfully with the help of realistic characterization. So he does it with help of his characters. Narayan's novels are the expression of various problems of middle class society in which he has been all involved. The balance between his characters and society is well maintained.

All the characters in R. K. Narayan's novels are live creation of artistic presentation. They are not heroes or heroines or of aristocrat or noble class but they belong to common lot of middle class. Their actions are obvious but they are puppet in the hands of God or Nature. They seem to perform their duties as an active agent who are put up into limelight or highlighted to some particular predicament in order to create normalcy. My effort in this research work is to show the gradual development of all the major characters of Narayan's novels in respect to their struggle, conflict, confrontation and adjustment or reconciliation at the end.

"In fact, the success of R. K. Narayan lies in attributing universality to his common place characters. The non-heroes finally evolve into heroes. This is done with the artistic impersonality and distinct objectivity. There is no didacticism, no philosophy, no propaganda involved in their creation. They are drawn with extra-ordinary delicacy and tenderness, admirable integrity and intelligence. The novelists does not control and govern them but lets them be free. The viewpoints expressed by them are the logical outcome of their personality. What is remarkable is that Narayan's characters remain committed to the quest for self self realization and true meaning in life".

“The Secret of R. K. Narayan’s great success and high distinction, on the other hand, lies in the complete aesthetic satisfaction he provides to his readers. He interprets Indian life purely from the ‘art for art’s sake’ points of view, maintaining complete objectivity and perfect impartiality”.

On the other hand, among many Indian writings, "Distant Drum" is famous. It is a creative debut of Malgonkar, which deals with all those devices which go into the making of a readable novel. The first novel of Malgonkar, Distant Drum, filling the atmosphere with adventures of Generals, Brigadiers, Colonels, Captains, Lieutenants and army men of other ranks; analyzes the thrilling aspect of Army life in India at the critical juncture in her history, when on account of the partition, the Hindus and Muslims were involved in communal frenzy and madness.

Distant Drum tells the story of that Army and yet it is far more than a war book. It is a sincere attempt to depict a generation of men against challenges, typical of the time stresses, greater than war itself: the partition of country and the breaking of this shining reborn Army and above all the sudden wrenching a way of life-long ties. Distant Drum is indeed a story about the Indian Army, and Perhaps, more a documentary of the 4th Satpuras, than history or fiction. Kipling and John Masters have all written and referred to life in Indian Army in their novels, but none has been able to give the spirit of Indian Army patterned on the British mode. Malgonkar is unique as he has been able to create the correct atmosphere of the Indian Army in his Distant Drum. Most critics have extolled the novel for this quality, but the most important thing is the presentation of transition from the British Army to Indian Army and the story of success and self-realization of a Satpura officer. Every experience in the battalion is calculated to bend and mould the character of an officer to an ideal man-the eighteen months of training, the life as a 'Burn-wart', regimental customs and mess etiquette, training at the military academy and devotion to duty are all meant to process a soldier into an ideal officer. This, together with his life in Burma and Kashmir campaigns and a desk job at Army Headquarters moulds him into successful officer.

SELF REALIZATION IN THE NOVELS OF R.K NARAYAN AND MALGONKAR:

R. K. Narayan is a leading figure among the Indian writers. The immense panorama of futility and anarchy shaped his literary personality. The usual pattern is that the self-realization begins with a departure from the ordinary, the common and the accepted order. What follows next is a long and deep retreat inwards, deep into the psyche leading to a chaotic series of encounters. These encounters may be terrifying to begin with, but lead to a new harmonizing personality with new courage. In a nutshell, the three fold mythic pattern is separation, initiation and then return. Joseph Campbell describes such a pattern in the following words: A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of a supernatural wonder. Fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from his mysterious adventure with the power to bestow hoofs on the fellow men.

In the novel *The Guide*, the self-realization is studied and interpreted through Raju, who is a central character. The novel begins and ends with him and the entire story is mostly a playback of Raju’s past life. Raju does not seem to have any specific quest till he is forced to fast for twelve days, when he comes to realize that his fasting is enormously important to thousands of drought – stricken villagers, he resolves to fast in earnest. It is for the first time in his life that he transcends his petty self and begins to think about the lives of others. At the very end of the novel, Raju utters these words, “Velan, it’s raining in the hills.” This utterance can be interpreted in two ways: it may be the obsession of a half conscious mind, or it may suggest some sort of clairvoyance. It is clear that Raju towards the end of the novel is a transformed person, although the nature of this transformation is not very clear.

Raju’s transformation from a railway guide to a transcendental ‘guru’ is worked out through a neatly woven pattern of ironic implications, but the irony is not as simple blend of the comic and tragic. It raises certain question about human nature, motives and actions, compelling us to ponder over the problems such as appearance and reality, ends and the means.

And it is at this point that the penance of purification through fasting is thrust upon him. Raju now realizes that he has worked in to a position from which, he cannot get out. He now sees the enormity of his creation; he has created with his puny self. Raju is called upon by the community to

undergo an act of various sufferings to purify the sins of the villagers. During the early days of the fast, Raju contemplates ribbing away from the whole drama. What keeps him back are not the practical considerations but very surprisingly the faith of the people. Raju is tremendously moved by the big crowd of women and children, big and small touching his feet. At last the collective faith of the people transforms Raju from what he really is, into a worthy object of its devotion. Towards the end, Raju loses the feeling of an actor performing an act; the act becomes the reality; the mask becomes the man, and Raju - the guide turns into a Guru. He seems closer to the fulfillment of his quest, as C.G. Jung has established in his theory of quest archetype:

CONCLUSION:

The self-realization of hero, as we have observed in the fictional world of, R. K. Narayan, Manohar Malgonkar, points out to the fact that the modern day hero is in self-created or imposed isolation. This isolation forces him to an inward or outward quest, the result of which is not always clear and tangible.

Whether the hero, Raju, an illiterate but highly argumentative Kiran Garud, a British Indian Army as a second lieutenant and C.O. of the 4th Satpuras battalion at Raniwada, he is destined to undertake this quest for a defined or undefined goal. On the quest-path he encounters various obstacles, problems and temptations in the forms of wicked and distracting persons or even ideas. It is significant that quest almost always involves a ritual. On the quest path, the hero is supported by a well-wisher, a psycho pomp in Jungian terms. The evil forces are confronted and almost overcome.

As such, the hero task-task in our world has shifted to self-awareness through the discovery of the self, and in certain cases to seeing its relation to the society. In these novels, the hero moves through arduous paths to new awareness about his self. In Malgonkar, the self is aggrandized, and is seen in its own autonomous world. In Narayan there are overt and covert suggestions that the self is to be related to the society at large.

At the end it may be said that the hero's self-realization is thus a process that never comes to a definite end. But it becomes clear that the modern quest-hero is mainly to contend with the negative forces of egoism. Compared to his mythical counterpart, he is in an unenviable position. His hero-deed looks trivial, though equally arduous; his quest banal, though not less adventurous; his end often ridiculously pathetic, though equally serious in implications for his own self and the society in which he lives and moves.

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Mrs. Neeta Garudik
Research Scholar (English)