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THE INDIAN TRIO: PIONEERING INDIAN ENGLISH WRITING WITH R. K. NARAYAN, RAJA RAO, AND MULK RAJ ANAND

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ABSTRACT

The pioneering Indian English Literature is dominated by the ground-breaking works of the Indian Trio- Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan. They have created the milestone in Indian English writing. The Big Three have dominated the newly built world of Indian English Fiction during pre-Independence and the post-independence eras of Indian English Literature. They mainly focus on the social and socio-political themes of the then contemporary Indian society. The impact of Gandhian movement in the society is a crucial topic in the novels. The great Indian Trio or the three pioneering figures of Indian English fiction – R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, and Mulk Raj Anand – have emerged during the 1930s as blessings in Indian English Literature. They have beautifully demonstrated the use of the Colonial language English as a medium of expression of Indian society, culture and Indian traditions and realities in this language during the British Raj. Mulk Raj Anand's bold and fearless voice exposing the harsh realities of marginalized people, class discrimination, labor exploitation and caste oppression of the pre-Independent and Post-Independent Indian Society; R. K. Narayan's writing on regional realism exposes the middleclass life style, moral conflict and the colonial effect on traditional Indian life and culture with simple and in a ironical way. The philosophical, mythical and nationalize dimensions of writing of Raja Rao enriched the Indian English writing.

KEY WORDS: *Indian English, Fictions, Social, Socio-Political, Simple, Town, Fictional, Gandhian Movement, Independence,*

METHODOLOGY

The study follows close reading of all the texts. The textual, analytical and interpretative study helps in the deeper understanding of the Indian English Writing in its primary stages. The theoretical approaches of Postcolonial theory, New Historicism, Subaltern Studies, Marxism and Narrative techniques provide this analytical methodological research a profound wisdom, clarity and detailed understanding of the foundational Indian English writing and the Indian culture and society of that time. The secondary sources, scholarly articles and writings have assisted in the enrichment and clarity of the texts.

The Indian Trio and their memorable Works

R. K. Narayan (1906-2001) - Narayan's works are distinctive literary pieces as these works are pervaded with simplicity, everyday life and gentle humor. He has gained wide popularity due to his use of simple and lucid language. He uses gentle humor. His works are mainly written in the fictional South Indian Town of Malgudi. His fictions deal with the ordinary people of the society. The literary works of Narayan focus the shifting influence of the modern British Colonized world in the traditional Indian society. Due to the simplicity of the themes and the writing style his novels are immediately accepted by the readers.

Swami and Friends (1935): The novel deals with the friendship of Swaminathan and his friends Samuel, Sankar, Somu, Mani and Rajam. Childhood and close friendships are the central themes of the novel. In a small town the children are taught about Christian religious themes. Swami comes from an Orthodox Brahamin family. His innocent questions about Christian religion enrage the teacher Mr. Ebenezar in their Albert Mission School. There is stark contrast between Swami and Rajam, the intelligent boy and the son of a Police superintendent. The prominent class difference is shown in the novel. Swami has participated in the Gandhian Non- Cooperation movement and destroys some properties of the School. After this incident and his participation in the Swadeshi movement cause his expulsion from the Albert Mission School and his enrolment in a stricter Board High School. There is a tension between the orthodox atmosphere in the home and the angelical and colonial impact of education. The children are torn between

and are experiencing the conflict between two cultures Orthodox and National identity and the Colonial influence of education.

The English Teacher (1945):- This novel has some quasi autobiographical elements in it. The protagonist is Krishna, an English professor of Albert Mission College. He leads a monotonous life there but tries his utmost to protect Indian Culture. Krishna has suffered from enormous grief for his wife Susila's sudden and untimely demise due to Typhoid. His life becomes miserable and he is not satisfied with his job. He happens to interact with the spirit of his diseased wife which causes his transformation. He becomes spiritually elevated and started a new job in a child –centric school. Leela is his daughter. And she reads in the pre-schools where moral values are taught seriously.

Malgudi Days (1943): This is a famous collection of 32 short stories. Malgudi is a South Indian fictional town. It contains childhood innocence, everyday life. There are several ordinary characters like Swami, Astrologer, and small vendors et.al. The literary collection contains childhood innocence, social change, superstition, age old tradition, colonial influence, transition etc. This is a classical Indian English Literary work with lucid language, gentle humor and everyday life with a universal appeal and is widely accepted by the readers.

Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004) –is a powerful and prominent Indian English writer. He is concerned for the poverty-ridden Indian people, class and caste discriminations, exploitation of labor as it is expressed in his literary works.

Untouchable (1935) - This is a poignant picture of the colonized Indian society and the then society where caste discrimination was at its peak. Bakha, an 18 year old untouchable boy is the protagonist of the novel. The novel deals with a single day of his life. The life of an untouchable sweeper is a veritable hell. The day of Bakha fills with utter humiliation. He is an inhabitant of Bulashah. Bakha's father Lakha is the head of the sweepers of the area and is disappointed for Bakha's idleness in his work. The untouchables use to clean the latrine and toilets of the higher class society. They use to eat the leftover of the dominant class people of the society. Charat Singh is a person who sometimes scolds Bakha for his negligence in work and sometimes gives him prizes. This very day Bakha was utterly humiliated by a person as he forgets to give the untouchable call and touches an upper-class person who has slapped him in front of several people. In the temple the pundit Kalinath has sexually assaulted Sohini, Bakha's sister and falsely alleged her for polluting him. After knowing the heinous act Bakha tries to attack the pundit but his sister restricted him from doing this. Bakha after being exhausted, thirsty and hungry after day's toil lies down in a place. The lady of the house humiliates him and instructs to sweep the place. Rejecting the upper caste leftover food Bakha attends Ramcharan's sister's wedding. Chota and distressed Bakha go to Charat Singh who offers him the Hockey stick. After playing a good game Bakha is accused by an upper class woman for injuring his son. Bakha is banished from his home by his father. He is treated well by Colonel Hutchinson. In the Railway Station Bakha comes to know about the Gandhian movement and the plight of the Untouchables in the contemporary society. He joins the conversation of Lawyer Bashir and the poet Shashar. The news of the arrival of flushing toilet and the consequent eradication of Untouchability delights Bakha.

Coolie (1936): It is a poignant picture of poverty in Indian society. Munoo, a 14 years old orphan, leaves his home and village in Sham Nagar of Kangra Hills to search for a livelihood. He works in several places in the pickle factory-as a factory worker, as a servant and a rickshaw puller. Everywhere he is maltreated and humiliated. He has travelled to Daulatpur, Bombay and lastly in Shimla. He is disgraced in every place. The novel is a vivid picture of the exploitation of the labor class by the Bourgeoisie class people in the pre-independence era. The oppressive and tyrannical colonial orders and class and caste discriminations are exposed in this novel vividly. The little boy due to the excessive and exploitation of labor dies of Tuberculosis in a very early age.

Raja Rao (1908-2006) - Raja Rao is a powerful Indian-American writer. He was inspired by the Hindu, Buddhist and Christian philosophies. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award in the year 1963

Kanthapura (1938) - This novel vividly portrays the socio-political condition of the contemporary Indian society. The massive impact of Gandhian Non-violence movement and his Swadeshi movements are described here. Moorthy is a Brahamin educated man, is a staunch Gandhi follower. He inspired the villagers to take part in the Indian Independence movement. Achakka, an old woman narrates the story or Sthala Purana of the Gandhian impact in a remote South Indian village, Kanthapura. The village is protected by the deity Kenchamma. The dominant class here

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is the Brahmins and Pariahs are the marginalized people. Moorthy inspires the village people of Gandhian philosophy. He himself has discarded all the Colonial British commodities and has embraced Swadeshi things like Khaddar and inspired the village people of the spinning wheel. He has studied in the city where he comes in contact with the Gandhian movements and Indian Independence. He started living with Rangama, a widow and an active supporter of Indian Independence movement. For spreading anti- British activities and violence he is imprisoned for 3 months. At that time Rangama influences the village women to form a volunteer corps. The British police assault the women .The women are brutally treated by the British cops and raped. The village is burnt down and most of the lands of the rural area are sold to the City dwellers of Bomabay. After his return from the imprisonment Moorthy visualize the patheic and irreparable condition of his beloved village and its residents. He has lost faith in Gandhian philosophy.

Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope (1960): Raja Rao was highly influenced by Hindu philosophy. This novel is profoundly inspired by Vedantic Philosophy and Advaita or Non-dualism of Adi Shankaracharya. The Serpent and the Rope achieved the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in the year 1964 for its enriched philosophy and grave subject matter. The novel is deeply influenced by the autobiographical elements of the author. Ramaswamy is the leading character of the novel. He is in constant search of his identity. The quest for identity inspired the storyline of this unique piece of literature. Albigensian Heresy is his research topic. He is terribly ill and suffering from Tuberculosis of the lungs. Not only his physical health is fragile but he is suffering from the vulnerable marital bond with his a French wife Madeleine. Both his children are died prematurely. As a son and a brother he is very responsible. He has attended his father's funeral in India and has executed all the necessary rituals. He has also attended his sister's wedding in India. His married life did not work and after several prominent mal adjustments and disagreements both of the couple parted their ways after severe heart break. Ramaswamy fell in love again with Savithri but does not express it to her. He gifted the toe ring of his mother to Savithri. His lung surgery is operated in London. Savithri converts to Buddhism . Both Ramaswami and Savithri parted their ways and feel contended for wishing the happiness for each other. All the events in Ramaswamy's life have enriched him and gives guides him for the path of spiritual enlightenment and self- realization. He realizes the necessity of a Guru for the proper progression in his spiritual journey. The novel reflects the enriched and profound spiritual culture of India.

***The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965)**- This is a metaphysical literary work. Setting is World War II in Trivandrum.. The philosophical clerk Govindan Nair has adopted the path of complete surrender like a kitten to Divine mother for his protection. Shakespeare refers to the Western logic. Nair's pragmatic neighbor, Ramakrishna Pai is influenced by Nair's transcendental philosophy and the divine grace.

Theoretical Approaches

Post-Colonial Theory- English writing, British colonialization, Traditional Indian culture and identity formation under British reign and English writing in the colonial setting all are the effect of colonial influence on Indian traditional culture.

Subaltern Studies: Representation of the voice of the marginalized people.

Marxism: Class discrimination, oppression, labor exploitation and economic condition come under the Marxist theory.

Nationalism and Imagined Communities: Nation as an imagined community and literary texts are the tools for National identity building.

Narrative Techniques: R. K. Narayan's simple and social realism, Mulk Raj Anand's social documentation and Raja Rao's grave mythic presentation enriched the pioneering Indian English Writing.

New Historicism: The texts are valuable assets of New Historicism. The texts help in the better understanding of the then contemporary social contexts.

CONCLUSION

Thus the famous Indian trio- Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan have enormously created the pioneering milestones of Indian English writing. Their powerful English writing has wonderfully demonstrated the socio-political and economic situation of the then Indian society. R. K. Narayan's simple writing style in English has given him

massive success and wide readers. The fictional Malgudi has got the real stature in the readers' imagination and his characters are very familiar to the readers. Raja Rao's mythical and serious expression of the socio-political issues enriched the reader's wisdom and historical knowledge. Mulk Raj Anand's vivid picturization of the marginalized people feel the readers' heart with profound empathy and the spirit of resilience.

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