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ijirset@gmail.com

www.ijirset.com

“The Society Versus the Outsiders” Theme in R.K.Narayan’s Two Novels, Talkative Man and the Man-eater of Malgudi.

PRASAD.N

Assistant Professor of English, Government First Grade College, K.R.Sagara, Mandya dist. Karnataka, India

ABSTRACT: The article tries to find a pattern in R.K.Narayan’s two novels, where he discusses how a strange occurrence disturbs the equilibrium of an established society and the way, society fights back. In Talkative Man, Dr.Rann meddles with the existence of Malgudi. While in The Man-eater of Malgudi, Vasu wrecks havoc with the social fabric with his aggression. When it is the question of saving the lives of poor souls, the protagonists take matter into their own hands, risking their reputation.

KEYWORDS : impulse, asylum, desertion, taxidermist, puranas, womanizer.

R.K.Narayan is a renowned Indian English writer who has told the tales of rural Indian society to the world in an entertaining fashion. Here we look at two novels of his, Talkative Man and The Man-eater of Malgudi, where we find the story is fascinating as well as, are inspired by Indian mythology. The common themes of these two novels can be deciphered from their similar story-line and treatment.

Talkative Man:

The protagonist Madhu, who was rightly called the 'talkative man.' He had earned this title because he could not contain himself and his impulse to share an experience with others, perhaps like sage Narada of our epics, felt pleased even if a few lines appeared in print as a space-filler. Talkative man was a very active and helpful person. He set aside all his business and set out to help Dr. Rann even in menial jobs as a house hunting. In his house he had offered him asylum as well, out of an impulse to help him, being only a journalist who performs a greater service to society. When he hears reports about Rann's moving round town with the old librarian's grand-daughter, Girija - at first he bottled up his uneasiness at these reports. But soon knowing him and his helping nature too well, he decided to tackle the issue - beginning by spying on Rann though he felt like a burglar in his own home, but felt excited and hard pressed for time. He was able to trace some letters from Rann's briefcase addressed to Rann - and the common feature he identified in each letter was the cry of desertion, each one being from women. He was shocked to see the smooth manner in which Rann was maneuvering to elope with the girl- as told to him by Gafur, the driver. Madhu would try to contribute his bit by offering help in any meeting or activity that took place in town, go round town distributing invitations and notices in connection with the meeting. Gafur's report given to him was invaluable and he had to base his future action on it, but he realized he was facing delicate situation: And then to take the situation under control without upsetting anyone's humour , he decides to send a telegram to the lady from Delhi who claimed to be Rann's wife and had come to Malgudi. searching for him. came out of her escapade unscathed. She resumed her studies and attended college regularly. Dr. Rann for his kind of karma got his due – a womanizer was now made to live as a domesticated husband. His state is such that even his wife hopes that he is caught for his fraud and made to spend the rest of his hellish hen-pecked life.

Talkative Man, in Narayan's own submission, in the postscript is only the story of a wife's attempt to reclaim her erratic, elusive husband who is a wanderer, a philanderer on a global scale, abandoning women right and left, a reminder of the Savitri, Satyavan legend. How Savitri persistently followed Yama, the God of Death, when he took away her husband’s life.

THE MAN-EATER OF MALGUDI : Natraj leads a perfect life as a printing press owner at Malgudi, working along with Sastri, The peaceful order, is disturbed with the advent of Vasu, a taxidermist by profession. Vasu resides in the attic, till the time a bungalow is allotted to him in the New Extension. Once Vasu takes Natraj to the Mempi village, to be stranded.alone, but Vasu is lost in the inquiry about the tiger. Somehow Natraj reaches home ,with the help of others,at night.

Vasu shows him the dead tiger he has hunted and killed bravely. Natraj now learns from where the foul smell comes. One day a Sanitary Inspector visits the press of Natraj with a complaint against him, signed by half a dozen neighbors, that it causes bad odor and diseases. Sastri, being a semi-scholar of Sanskrit, narrates the mythological demons like Ravan, Bhasmasur and Mahishasur who swelled with ego and talked of invincibility but were ultimately destroyed.

Later, a Forest Officer charges Vasu with hunting animals in the Mempi jungle. Ill-reputed girls like Rangî, visit the attic. Rangî tells Natraj that Vasu plans to kill the temple (Kumar) and requests him to save the elephant. Natraj requests Vasu, not to shoot the elephant. Vasu rejects his request out rightly and even insults him, He invokes Vishnu to save Kumar as he had saved Gajendra, the elephant in the Puranas.

The District Superintendent of Police. shows his helplessness, then Natraj tries to face Vasu, but in vain. The postman, Thanappa breaks the news that Vasu is dead and Sastri unravels the mystery of Vasu's death. When a few mosquitoes had settled on his forehead, he had brought the flat of his palm with all his might on top of them. Two mosquitoes were plastered on his brow.

He says that the demons appear in the world with the boon of indestructibility. But they have a tiny seed of self-destruction.

Thus RK Narayan takes inspiration to his novels from the mythical stories. Malgudi is a peaceful town, whose order is disturbed by the advent of strangers like Dr.Rann and Vasu. The protagonists and the other people suffer at the hands of these invaders to the fullest. People like Sarasa, Kumar, the elephant are the sufferers, until they fight back collectively, that is when the protagonists take the lead. In Talkative Man, Dr.Rann meddles with the existence of Malgudi. While in The Man-eater of Malgudi, Vasu wrecks havoc with the social fabric with his aggression. When it is the question of saving the lives of poor souls arise, the protagonists take things into their own hands and guide the fortunes of the town to safety, risking their reputation.

R.K.Narayan speaks about the society and its ways of tackling the above said kind of external threats and verifies if it is able to survive its basic structure. R.K.Narayan is a master story teller about the rural rustic South Indian society, which retains its social structure despite of challenges. This article is an attempt to find a pattern in R.K.Narayan's two novels, where he discusses how a strange occurrence disturbs the equilibrium of our society and the way, in which the society fights back, as seen in these novels.

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