CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION

i) THE LITERARY LANDSCAPE: A BRIEF SURVEY

Indo-Anglican literature, which forms almost an integral part of English literature, has now attained a distinct place in the literary landscape of India. 

*Indian writing in English fiction’ has been acclaimed around the world for its innovative and radical new approaches to storytelling.*

The multitude of such writing explores India in its various aspects. Even the Indian English novel has indeed literally grown from 1860’s till date. Expression of ‘self’ as an important part of human life and experience is the only expression one can share and enrich one’s knowledge and experience ideas, emotions and feelings in these writings. Analysis and portrayal of human relationship has also been of perennial interests for all who have contributed towards the growth and development of different genres of literature. It has become very essential to explore the essence of ‘India’ in Indian fiction and its various representations.

Indo-English fiction owes much to the historical phenomenon of juxtaposition of the two diametrically opposite cultures, namely the oriental and the occidental. It is natural that Indo-English writers should dwell on the problem of the cultural transplant’s quest for identity. What is remarkable is the psychological insight, the familiarity and the ease with which the problem is dealt by the Indian writers. Apart from the continued literary output by older generation of Indian English writers, we also have newer generation that explores the contemporary angst, alienation and existentialism felt by the ‘middle class liberal humanist’. The confrontation between East and West, man-woman relationship,, the father-son relationship, the cultural alienation, and the loss of identity faced by the protagonists are some of the aspects presented with a deep insight by the writers of the 20th century.
It was in the 1930s, the pioneers of the Indian fiction, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao gave Indian English novels its particular distinctiveness. The fiction writing reached its pinnacle with the writings of Kamala Markandaya, Salman Rusdie, Vikram Seth, Amitabh Ghosh, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Nayantara Sehgal, Anita Desai and Arun Joshi. Other diasporic writers have also had a permanent impact on the minds of the readers. The wide range of experience, manners, personalities, have enabled them to grasp the innate significance of humanity and all this finds expression in the characters of their novels and stories.

ii) **NARAYAN'S HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVES**

Out of all these, R.K.Narayan's art has the power to change the raw material from one form to another in the most ordinary commonplace, everyday experiences in to experiences of enduring artistic form and value. He does not distinguish between small and great happenings and has a penchant for truthful representation rather than experiment. Narayan's special powers of character portrayal, humour, comedy and absurdity are distinct in his novels. In Narayan's novels, action develops from character. As Prof. William Wash states:

*Character is action and action is plot and it is by means of action of his character that Narayan summons up the world in which he lives.*

What makes his characters charming is the insight and knowledge of Narayan. The predominant trait of narrating a story or a novel was very realistic, and remained in direct personal contact of the reader by representing life as it is actually lived. The greatness of Narayan lie in his marvellous representation of human relationship and human experience in their creative writings.

Prof. William Walsh also observes that Narayan can *fix the authentic individuality of a character and simultaneously establish it solidly in a social world.* All his characters are deeply rooted in all walks of life.
Narayan himself claims: *To be a good writer anywhere, one must have roots—both in religion and in his family.*

The humanistic psychology often referred to as the “Third Force psychology” or as “existential positive psychology” also sheds significant light on the characters’ dilemma.

The theme in many of his stories and novels centre around a crisis in the life of a protagonist. This crisis is created because of the conflict faced by the individual at three levels. First, the conflict is at the level of the individual. In search for his identity, the character comes in conflict with his own conscience. Second, the conflict is at the level of the society. In his attempt to fulfill his desire and aspirations, the protagonist experiences a clash with his society. Third, the conflict is at the level of the environment or circumstance. In the process of adjusting to his surroundings, the protagonist strikes a note of discord with the world around him, which results in a crisis.

In this context, Dr. Paul Wong’s statement holds true:

> *The discovery of new ways of perceiving life and negative events can lead to better adjustments.*

It will motivate Narayan’s characters and help them overcome all the anxieties they come across in life.

In the history of Indian English literature, R.K.Narayan reigns supreme with his portrayal of humanistic perspectives. Narayan's greatest achievement was in making India globally popular through his literature. Many of his characters control their behaviour and have a natural capacity to make decisions about their lives.

Some of his stories and novels delineate existential predicament of its prominent characters and face identity crisis. This happens when there is a clash between their aspirations and achievements, between their dreams and reality. A sense of alienation, loneliness, depression is felt by his characters.
They depict the existential dilemmas of the characters in the hostile world. Achieving liberation in their everyday life through their activities does not turn out as an escape but a realization of the human potential and the ability to live in harmony by making their own choices. Narayan ‘humanism discovers’ the ‘ordinary’ in the most extraordinary aspect of civilized living.

His novels verbalize down the life of the common ordinary individuals thriving to intermix tradition with modernization. Often depicting the Hindu tales of traditional Indian folklore, his novels are essentially rooted in the events from the everyday life. Through his novels and short stories he made a thorough psychological probing of the individuals in the society. Throughout his work Narayan focuses on the experiences which were so significant that it could change the vision of life. Though he restricts himself to the canvas of Malgudi, Narayan’s existentialistic view is founded on the realities of life.

A.Hariprasanna aptly remarks:

_The individual’s innate compulsion to find a meaning of life and to assert his identity to realize the absurd ambitions which he does not recognize as such at the time are taken up by Narayan._

R.K.Narayan believes only in one religion- Humanity. His faith is evolved out of his profound study of the East and the West and his close affinity with the Indian culture and life. His humanism is not political, social like the Marxist nor mystical like that of the saints. It is purely humane. He is an acute and comprehensive observer of mankind. He puts faith in creative vision and unconquerable spirit of man.

S.Nagarajan has stated:

_All his novels in varying degrees convey the sense of unhappy frustration._

His critics frankly admit that even if he had not written his novels, his short stories were enough to immortalize him. R.K.Narayan is the sirius of the Indo-Anglian literature galaxy. This dissertation challenges the popular scholarly
notion of Narayan as a non-philosopher writer by showing subtly and carefully how he has developed the theme in his stories and novels without preaching or propagating to the readers the lessons of life. He conveys that they are learning experiences, which come naturally and have to accept it as it comes.

iii) R.K.NARAYAN AND HIS LITERARY CONTRIBUTION:

R.K. Narayan’s birth place was Chennai. He was born on October 10, 1906. Most of his childhood days were spent in the company of his maternal grandmother, Parvathi in Chennai and he spent the summer with his parents and siblings. When his father was appointed as the headmaster of the Maharaja’s High School in Mysore, he decided to go back to Mysore. He obtained his bachelor’s degree from the University of Mysore. He had an access to his father’s library and thus got acquainted with all English writers through The Strand Magazine and other books. It was here that he cultivated the habit of reading and writing.

He chose writing as his career and his first novel was Swami and Friends in 1935. He created the imaginary town of Malgudi which has its own unique identity. His writings were simple, lucid and had subtle humour. He narrated stories of ordinary people adjusting themselves in the changing world.

Narayan wrote sixteen novels, eighty two stories in eight volumes and several essays and articles. He won numerous awards and was honoured for his works, which include: Sahitya Akademi Award, Padma Bhushan and was elected as an honorary member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He was also conferred honorary doctorates by the University of Mysore, Delhi University and the University of Leeds. R.K. Narayan belonged to both, the old and the new world. His life spanned the twentieth century and witnessed a whole lot of things. He was highly influenced by the writings of Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Marie Corelli, Moliere, Thomas Hardy, Tolstoy and Shakespeare.

MALGUDI LANDSCAPE:
Narayan’s fictional world is different and smaller. He takes us into the heart of India. In his autobiography he mentions how this fictitious place evolved in his mind: He says that in September on a particular day his grandmother selected it auspicious and decided to get him a note book and wrote the first line of a novel. He was nibbling a pen and wondering what he would write. He imagined a railway station named Malgudi picturing some characters calling Swaminathan running on the railway platform, staring into the faces of the passengers and soon he wrote pages after pages which linked to each other. Thus a writer was born.

Thus emerged Malgudi, the fictional world of Narayan with its railway station, cinema theatres, fruit and sweet vendors, sandy beaches along the river Sarayu, bus stops, temples, ponds and hotels. Though it is a typical South Indian town, it shows progress and reveals change with the passage of time. It is peopled with traditional views and also modern outlook.

Malgudi is both old and new, reverberating with its past and surging towards its future. Its people are traditional and modern. They are basically friendly, sensitive and human. It pulsates with life and its atmosphere is charged with human activity. Hence, Malgudi is not only a ‘character’ in the sense Virginia Woolf describes it as a literary convention of character. It is just like every other Narayan hero who signals a continuity of his existence in to the beyond, the future, Malgudi remains potential. Malgudi is more of a mind accommodating varieties within itself. C.D. Narasimhaiah observes: Malgudi is the microcosm of traditional Indian society. What happens in Malgudi, happens all over India with regional nuances and shifts. The psychic awareness and social experience of the Malgudians reflect in his novels.

Various critics have attempted to identify the originality of this mythical town. Just like Faulkner or Hardy for their Yoknapatawpha and Wessex respectively did not draw a map, Narayan too did not have any in his mind. Others did it for him. Nirmal Mukherjee has appended a map of Malgudi to her doctoral dissertation, The World of Malgudi. Srinivas Iyengar has described Malgudi
and his environs. The point to note is that Narayan’s delineation of Malgudi reflects the changes according to the scenario. The setting comes alive in every novel of Narayan whether it is the beauty of the river Sarayu in the evening in *The Dark Room* or the carefree atmosphere of Albert Mission College in *The Bachelor of Arts* or awesome silence around Mempi Guest House in *The Guide*. Indeed Iyengar suggests that Malgudi might be called the real hero of Narayan’s novels.

Malgudi is an imaginative town where the imaginary characters created by this genius writer come alive. He does not turn a blind eye to the evil existing in the day to day life. He says that characters of Malgudi seem to him universal. Malgudi is Narayan’s greatest invention where he is able to portray real people, real places living in a congenial atmosphere with its day-day to existence and eccentricity. Graham Greene aptly describes ‘*Malgudi is a real place with which we have been as familiar as with our own birth place.*’ Malgudi represents the whole of India. In an interview Narayan states: *I like to walk four or five miles every day- a pedestrian sees life at close quarters.* This remark indicates his conscious effort to have a close, realistic view of life.

Narayan is often appreciated for his realistic portrayal of his character’s joy, sorrows, aspirations, frustrations, achievement, failures, feelings and above all human foibles. In Narayan’s works, one notices that the ‘individual’ has his own identity and is a public entity. This concept is an innovation that can be called one of its kind. His works provides his western readers the first works in English to be infused with an eastern and Hindu existential perspective. As he explores the psychological implications of human behaviour, we are able to grasp his philosophical stance.

According to him, the matter available to a story writer is limitless. Every individual has his own individuality. Their perceptions, outlook, habits and life’s philosophy differ from every other individual. Narayan understood that the society is given the freedom and no monotony has set in. The writer has to just look out of the window and pick up one character.
He presents life with diversified individuals in all his stories and novels in a simplified style. He is a creative writer who has assimilated his ethos, his philosophy which co-incidentally happens to identify self-consciously the Hindu view and the way of life. His visionary town Malgudi permeates through all his stories and novels. His technique of sensational story-telling provides enough charm and enchants the readers in a magical manner. His ironic details and dramatic situations are so live that his novels become a true account of life in each and every circumstance. Like Jane Austen, Narayan is content with his 'little bit of ivory'. All the characters of his novels have immortal existence in Malgudi and in his presentation of human relationship, the values inculcated by them and their way of living their life. We find the importance of everyday happenings as Meenakshi Mukherjee comments:

\textit{Since the novelist’s subject is man-in-society, his subject matter must also be the texture of manners and conventions by which social man defines his own identity.}^{xi}

Malgudi, Narayan’s fictional town has inhabitants who are essentially human and have their affinity with humanity. All the characters of his novels find their immortal existence as ‘Malgudi men and women.’ His authentic exploration and straightforward approach is teemed with consciousness in human relationship. His minute observation, subtle irony, and perfect harmony are the basic ingredients to portray realistically the relationships between Mother and son, the father and son, the husband and wife, lover and the beloved, one man and other man and one woman and other woman.

**HUMAN LANDSCAPE:**

Human relationships form the warp and woof of all the literature and it is their depiction in depth and variety that proves to be the mark of a great writer. Human relations have been and can be depicted on a more comprehensive scale in an epic or in a novel which also has been described as epic in prose or the epic of modern times than in any other literature form. A writer’s greatness is revealed to a considerable extent from his treatment of human
relations. He does not deal with mere externalities but shows his capacity for a deeper probing of the human mind.

In one of the interviews by Mr. Suresh Kohli for Indian Literary Review (ILR) in 1978, when Narayan was questioned about what things in life are important and how far he has expressed them in his works, He replies:

*I value human relationship very much, very intensely. It makes one’s existence worthwhile---- human relationship in any and every form whether at home or outside. I think I have expressed this philosophy in my work successfully.*

The treatment of human relationship in Indian English fiction has a specialty, a distinctiveness of its own. Apart from the continued literary output by older generation of Indian English writers, there are quite a few recognizably Indian themes and these stand in sharp contrast with the English fiction in England, the U.S. and elsewhere. We also have newer generation that explores the contemporary angst, alienation and existentialism felt by the ‘middle class liberal humanist’. Analysis and portrayal of human relationship has been of perennial interest for all who have contributed towards the growth and development of different genres of literature. It has become very essential to explore the essence of ‘India’ in Indian fiction and its various representations.

Meenakshi Mukherjee has explained how some of the typical Indian themes appear in the Indian English fiction in spite of the regional diversity. *The Indian English novelist has sometimes attempted to solve the problem of heterogeneous audience by choosing themes and situations that have more or less the same validity all over the country. The themes are not many in number because there is a great deal of regional variation in social structure, values, customs and problems in different parts of India.*

The treatment of human relationships in the Indian English novels brings out a clear cut distinction between the western social systems and values. The
difference between the English and European fiction can be easily perceived and understood by keeping in mind the treatment of family in them.

Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan, Manohar Malgonkar, Kamala Markandaya and Bhabani Bhattacharya are some of the leading Indian English novelists who have shown an unending interest in presenting several kinds of human relationships.

Human Relationship is the relationship between two human beings attached to each other intimately, emotionally, sentimentally, spiritually and intellectually. Without human relationship there is no question of the continuity of human existence in this world. Both human relationship and human existence are reciprocal to each other. In the world where there is rapid advancement, human beings do not get an opportunity to give some quality time to their near and dear ones, which are quite necessary for improving human relationships.

Indo-English writers have aroused considerable interest in India and abroad particularly for their excellent contribution in the presentation of human relationship. Toru Dutt’s emotionalism, Sri Aurobindo’s spiritualism, Tagore’s intellectualism and Sarojini Naidu’s patriotism have contributed much in the presentation of human relationship in the past. These writers have presented the relationships with spiritual, intellectual and religious leanings. They have not reflected the suppressing and diffusing features of modernity. Their presentation of human relationship is not marred by complexity and confusion.

I would like to present the different views and visions of the contemporary writers of Narayan’s time. Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao in the presentation of the human relationship. Anand is a novelist of social leanings while Raja Rao has intellectual and spiritual concerns in the great Indian tradition. His novels *Coolie, Untouchable, The Village, Across the Black Waters* and *The Sword and the Sickle*, show on one hand Anand’s commitment to the eradication of the evils, which infect the modern society and on other hand reveals his sharp reaction to the traditional values of the society. His ‘electic’
humanism is a clear and bold protest against the systems of an orthodox, traditional and conventional society as he has done in his *Coolie* and *Untouchable*. He found ample opportunity to present the pathetic relationship between rich and the poor in a violent manner.

On the other hand, Raja Rao presents intellectual and spiritual journey of an individual in this mortal world in his great novel *The Serpent and the Rope*. In the novel, the novelist would establish an intellectual kind of human relationship with his kinsmen while living abroad. M.K. Naik rightly remarks in this direction:

‘Anand is a novelist of social leanings and longing while Rao is a novelist of spiritual fervour.’

Narayan hails from the South India, exactly opposite to where Anand’s place of birth is. His mother tongue is Tamil. He settled down in Mysore, where the regional language is Kannada and he writes in English. He is very much an Indian and hence his presentation of human relationship is within tradition. One important feature of the post independence novels that distinguishes from the pre-independence novel is the recurrent use of situations and characters that are global, Although M.R.Anand and R.K. Narayan visited many western countries and even lived abroad for a long time, their main concern remained confined mostly to the Indian characters and situations. Being a thorough observer of human intentions and motives, R.K.Narayan is interested in presenting a simple as well as complicated human relationships in all his works. All his novels have a remarkable unity and a sense of tradition in the portrayal of the human relationship. *Swami and Friends, The Bachelor Of Arts, The Dark Room, The English Teacher, Mr. Sampath, The Financial Expert, Waiting for the Mahatma, The Guide, The Painter of Signs, A Tiger of Malgudi, The Talkative Man, The Vendor of Sweets and The World of Nagraj*, deal with a variety of human relationships endowed with his creative and Indian sensibilities.

Alexander McCall Smith introduces Narayan as A novelist of all Humanity and rightly points out the authenticity and strength in his writing: He states that
when one reads about Malgudi one feels that the characters come alive and this impression is created by themselves and not merely by descriptions. The voice of the Malgudians is very prominent and is rooted which the world views it from a different angle. It is totally different from what one encounters in North America or Western Europe.

Narayans’ presentation of his characters and their relationships touch upon the psychological as well as the philosophical aspect of human behaviour. He is well versed with Bhagvad Gita and thus one can note that he presents his characters who in their journey of their life learn the lessons and have a learning experience and face all the challenges and changes in life. His rare psychological insight to human behaviour and motives provides him with ample opportunity to dive deep into human emotions.

His vision as expressed in his novels does not advocate the idea of renunciation or detachment to transcend the problematic nature of existence but considers facing the challenges of life positively as the best way of surviving in the world. According to him living in a society and maintaining one’s individual identity are challenging tasks by facing which the individual reveals his potential for growth. Responding to change and disillusionment with openness and mental resilience is essential for surviving.

Narayan’s narratives underline these concerns in diverse ways and demonstrate his philosophical approach to life and living. The identity of the protagonist and their consciousness are of prime importance. Narayan deals explicitly with the problems of loneliness, isolation from one’s fellow being, quest for identity, existential anxiety, guilt, lack of communication that every human being faces throughout his life.

Though Narayan’s fiction has been analysed from various angles, his characters facing existential predicament during their journey of life has only been expressed in a lighter vein. He elaborates the point that by giving in to delusions, negativism, depression does not help. Human relationships will go a long way in maintaining a true balance if they believe in themselves and the
society at large. It is the inner contentment, peace, simplicity and positivity which leads to a harmonious and fulfilling life.

It is rightly said by Ralph Emerson Waldo,

\[ Man \text{ is a bundle of relation, a knot of roots whose flower and fruitage is the world. } \]

Narayan’s delineates the various nuances of his characters’ frustrated existence and is in search for a more authentic way of life than the one available to them. However, all of them have a limited understanding of their situation and predicaments and are partly responsible for their unhappy existence. During the course of their quests, some of them reach a point when self-realization enables them to see the limitations and unrealistic nature of their desires and understanding of the world. The journey towards the moment of understanding and self-realization during the crisis in the works of R.K.Narayan is highlighted.

(iv) **NARAYAN’S EXISTENTIAL HUMANISM**

The novelist as well the characters face what psychologists call identity crisis. The crisis of identity is experienced by the characters when they alienate from themselves, from the society and from the environment. Struggle, survival, resignation and acceptance rejection and rebellion or renunciation are few variations on the sub-theme ‘man in a crisis’ where the main theme is existentialism. Whenever there is a conflict between the aspirations and achievement of the protagonist, it creates a crisis in their life. Narayan had witnessed both the World Wars during his life time and many a times was a victim to the existential themes to a certain degree. In his autobiography, *My Days*, he writes that when his father did not permit him to marry the one he loved only because of the mismatch of the horoscopes, he sulked, avoided going out, did not speak to anyone and was totally wrapped in gloomy reflections. He also fell into an existential vacuum after his wife Rajam’s death. Many times human struggle is itself Narayan’s existential hero. R.K. Narayan endeavours through his literary and philosophical writings to erect a
new kind of humanism, which can be characterized as “Existential Humanism”.

Existential Humanism is a concept understood differently by different philosophers. It redisCOVERS the richness of lived experience and expresses the power of human beings to make choices, take responsibility and lead a meaningful life. In a B.B.C. interview with William Walsh in February 1968, Narayan states:

“Our main concern is with human character – a character from whose point of the world is seen and who tries to get over a difficult situation or succumbs to it or fights it in his own setting.”

His works project man in conflict with himself, his society and the world. His works imply and is a synthesis of psychological and philosophical aspect of human existence and human behaviour. In order to understand the various emotions and the existential anxieties of the characters in the works R.K. Narayan, I have chosen six stories and six novels for my study. The protagonist in all the novels confronts the six existential anxieties, which reflect on Paul Wong’s theory in his Handbook The Human Quest for Meaning.


Narayan’s greatness lies in his objectivity. P.P. Mehta highly compliments Narayan for his objectivity in the following words as:

The great besetting sin of the Indian novelists in regional languages as well as English has been a desire to preach, to advise, to convert. Very few novelists can claim freedom from this didacticism or propaganda motive. Mulk Raj Anand has always an axe to grind in his novels. D.F.Karaka, Raja Rao and others are not free from this charge. Narayan stands aloof in objectivity and detachment.
Narayan knows that human life is imperfect. It is a mixture of good and evil but derives hope from it. His optimism was founded on imperfections of man and proved that life is constantly progressing to higher and higher levels and there is lot of scope for improvement. However, one must note that while a remarkable degree of existential alienation is presented, it also differs from its common European counterpart. My views are at par with Tabish Khair. He says:

*Narayan’s characters are alienated but they are seldom completely rootless and are never left in a void of meaninglessness. They manage to make some meaning of their lives. For him alienation and estrangement seem to be natural consequences of man’s existence and do not rule the possibility of finding meaning in life. We find that the meaning is often found in small things and not in momentous happenings.*

R. K. Narayan envisions and proposes a milieu where his men realize the significance of using the freedom to choose, making responsible decisions on facing any predicaments and making their lives happy, joyful and meaningful.

But C.D. Narasimhaiah finds it difficult to accept Narayan as a serious writer and he points out the synthesis of the tragic and comic in Narayan’s fictional world as his singularity. He says:

*It is the stuff of tragedy that Narayan handles in terms of comedy and there in consists his unique achievement in Indian fiction.*

But Narayan never aims at highlighting tragic or comedy implicitly in life as both types of experiences form the integral part of life. His tremendous psychological insight and ironic vision of life is commendable. His stories and novels do reflect his awareness about the disharmonies and the absurdities of our life. He accepts the realities of life and this attitude helps him to form a balanced view of life and situations. His writings bring about a harmonious effect which interlinks the West and East and makes way for Indian sensibility. In *My Days*, he has mentioned that his novels have an element of sadness
suffused with comedy along with a glint of mockery of both self and others. The naïveté of being human is the main subject of Narayan's art. E.M. Forester calls his art *the primitive power of keeping the reader in suspense and playing on his curiosity.*

While browsing through his works, one can easily identify oneself with his characters. He delineates his characters interestingly in his small fictional town. He appreciates the objectivity, distance, detachment as well as discipline for his existential treatment of his experiences. This enables him to bring out the various paradoxes of life like appearances and reality, free will and determinism, individual and society, hope and despair, tears and smiles..... These paradoxes are inseparably woven.

Narayan in his autobiographical novel, *My Days* reveal that he does not like to write for the sake of writing that is being deliberate in writing and he is not impressed by authors who try to be so. He says that he uses narrative techniques which are understatements which a casual reader may overlook.

(v) **PSYCHO-PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS**

Psychological aspect of the technique of fiction places basic emphasis on the exploration of the levels of consciousness and reveals everything through the characters. The crisis in his fiction is due to misunderstanding and conflicts in human relationships. In a stream of consciousness novel, action takes place and the plot develops through the mind of the principal character, the stream of consciousness is reflected through the forces playing upon him and the drama takes place in the mind. Philosophical aspect of the technique of the fiction is based on the reality and existence. Narayan’s critics’ general consensus is that the author’s forte is to pay close attention to the realistic details which is attributable to their closeness to his own life or to real life events. His vision of life is combined with his humorous, comic or ironic way of presentation proves his rootedness in profound Hindu conviction or instinct for the fundamental oneness of existence. Shiv Gilra opines: *Narayan is much more a philosopher than a reformer* and his view is shared by Jayant Biswal...
who considers the predicament of Narayan’s heroes from an existentialist angle and discovers a grotesque element in their struggle against ‘unknown, uncontrollable drives of the self…. in a strange hostile land.’

It is an attempt to study and understand Life, its mysteries and the concepts of existence and reality. It helps us in finding out the essence of everything, thus giving the significance and relevance of the various dimensions of man’s life. It also examines the relationship between humanity and nature, individual and society. Dr. Geeta Mohan has rightly stated: Philosophical thinking enables us to determine values and beliefs that are found to be significant. Such values are found to be right, good, true and real, thus giving direction and order to life.

According to M.K.Naik, this trio, R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand are the harbingers of a new age in Indian English fiction. Raja Raos’ India is philosophical and Anands’ social and Narayans’ is essentially naturalistic.

In this context, Narayan shares the belief of Chekov. The Russian master Anton Chekov in his letter to M.V. Kisilev says that human nature is imperfect. Hence it is strange to find only the righteous people on the earth. A writer should be more objective than subjective, he should know that the dung heaps play an important role in a landscape and therefore good and evil both must exists in life to know their importance.

The story land of Narayan is crowded with earthly people who commit blunders and suffer the consequences of their actions. Some realize their mistakes and correct them. Others feel trapped and are helpless. A few try to make good of a bad situation. In Narayan’s presentation of characters, we find a particular aspect similar. Even K.R.S.Iyengar observes this similarity. He comments on the pattern. Its generally a flight, one gets uprooted, the order gets disturbed which is followed by the return, renewal and restoration to normal life. However, even if Narayan is the novelist of individual man, he has natural affinity with humanity and all its inhabitants have immortal existence stated by M.K.Naik.
Even S.A. Singh agrees and points to a particular feature in all his novels. He observes that Narayan fiction can be understood well in terms of the Hegelian dialectic where the order attained at the end is different from what the outcome could have been. In the beginning there is discontent in the protagonist and gradually he accepts the situation in life positively and flows with it.

Meenakshi Mukherjee concludes:

*The repetition of the pattern is so regular in Narayan that we may surmise that it operates unconsciously because it is part of his world view.*

(vi) **NARAYAN’S EXISTENTIAL VISION**

The aims, the research and objectives of this research is to throw light on the existential vision of R.K. Narayan.

1. To find out how literature is inextricably linked to philosophy and psychology and how they complement, supplement and differ from thoughts or the meaning or purpose of life.
2. To show the use of post modernistic stylistic devices used in R.K. Narayan’s novels.
3. To highlight the ‘ordinary’ characters in R.K. Narayan’s novels who encounter unpredictable situations and are distressed that are quite extraordinary. They ultimately learn to live with them or manage to come out of it themselves in their own ways. They manage to make some meaning in their lives. The characters face the existential crisis with fortitude and overcome them. This is highlighted through a study of the six existential anxieties in each of his novels and the human emotions playing on the minds of his protagonists.
4. To show that existentialism as a strategy to connect to the universal problems faced by mankind and help individuals to take more responsibility for their lives through the selected novels and characters of R.K. Narayan.
To help individuals identify their uniqueness so that they can make decisions and bring out their importance in life.

5. To make individuals aware of their freedom and their duty in life thereby influence them positively. To help individuals to become conscious and realize their potential. The dictum of Shri S.Radhakrishnan, our late President and a philosopher in his book ‘Indian Philosophy’ stating that each one’s life is a road to himself, to self-realization will be understood thoroughly.

6. To understand ‘Humanistic psychology’ often referred to as the Third Force psychology emphasizes conscious experience. It’s not the just the study of ‘human being’ but the commitment of human becoming.

7. To understand the significant and positive change in one’s self and identity from an existential philosophical and psychological perspective.

8. To understand thoroughly Narayan’s fiction in the existential conceptual framework through an expanded vision of positive psychology. The positive approach adopted by his characters to deal with the predicaments faced during the life has been portrayed very effectively.

R.K. Narayan’s novels echo the existential dilemmas of human condition. He is an existentialist. His writings reflect the existential humanistic paradigm of psychology as well as the philosophy.

Through the literary archives, like the novels and short stories chosen for study, I intent to throw light on the existential conditions of man and how to come out of it and make life meaningful and worth living.

This research will be very helpful to one and all i.e. to both, the younger and older generation. R.K.Narayan gives his readers a world view and they look forward to with Malgudi and its residents. His novels provided an insight to know that human life is a mixture of imperfections in life.

His novels portray the ‘ordinary’ with a humanitarian outlook and prompt readers all around the world to identify themselves with his characters. Through his novels and stories, I attempt to explore the existential issues
which have developed an existential vacuum due to the loss of values and dehumanization of individuals. The meaning and hope can be found by the protagonist who has a positive outlook and approach towards the predicaments. The key ingredients to be followed are: acceptance, affirmation, courage, faith, and self-transcendence. I want to prove that we are the creators of our life’s experiences.

I strongly believe that the sum of the experiences and action comprising the person’s existence can be re-established by bringing man back to his senses. We can do that by restoring his freedom and permitting him a chance to choose and decide like a responsible individual. If it’s done then the maladies of modern society can be cured.

Victor Frankl rightly says:

“The meaning of life always changes but it never ceases to be.” xxvii

And his belief that even under the most difficult circumstances, to cope with the uncertainties in life, choice and action of each individual has a significant impact in their life and thereby in the society.

He also believes that values guide our search for meaning and simplify decision-making. But values are threatened by modernization. In spite of it, according to Frankl even if all universal values disappear, life would remain untouched by the loss of traditions.

Values may lie latent and need to be awakened and discovered. Thus, the Malgudians situation and Viktor’s Frankl’s point of view is similar. Many people at some point of life feel that life has no purpose, no challenge, no obligation and they try to fill their existential vacuum with material things, power or work which triggers for a quest for meaning in life, their self-identity, self-awareness and self-fulfillment.

By reviewing the literature and the analysis of the critics, we can firmly with conviction state that existentialism indeed echoes in the works of Narayan.
Walter Kaufmann has analysed Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre highlighting each one’s viewpoint on existentialism. He has spoken about the man from Dostoevsky’s “Notes from the Underground”. It was written in 1864 and portrays depravity and the uncompromising concentration on the dark side of man’s inner life.

Frederick Patka has delved into the historical and cultural background of the existential thinking and has provided a deeper insight into the themes of existentialism in order to understand the five outstanding existentialists viz. Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Jean Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel. They are also called philosophers of life. The study draws their mode of thinking and that of moderate realism which represents the fortunate synthesis of both ‘Logos’, the ideas and ‘Bios’ life and existence respectively.

The basic approach of existentialism developed directly out of Kierkegaard’s thought is *Each man must make himself*. It is an act of the will. Martin Heidegger was well-known for his phenomenological investigation of ‘being’ and for his concept of Dasein—the Being for whom being is a concern. Karl Jaspers emphasizes the importance of decision making and freedom in defining the individual. There are limits to our freedom and these limitations exist as ‘boundary situations’ including death, suffering, guilt, chance and conflict. He also states that the ascent to Transcendence is prepared, remembered and in exalted moments achieved. For Jean Paul Sartre, freedom and the human reality are synonymous— to be human is to be free and his basic thesis in his thinking is that *existence precedes essence*—we are or exist before we have any specific perfection or nature. We are thrust in to being and make ourselves through our actions. For Marcel, philosophy and religion were both concerned with the means by which individuals could overcome alienation and the absurdity of life in order to live an authentic meaningful existence.
F.H.Heinemann in the collection of essays deals with alternative modes of philosophizing and the problems that are real and urgent. He states that we are faced with the central problem of finding a new mode of philosophical expression adequate to the present condition of man and therefore a new starting point. His own existential experiences and sufferings are revealed. He has dealt with the major problem of self-estrangement, the century of technological revolution, the loneliness of the transcendental ego discussed by various thinkers, the philosophy of detachment, the heroic defiance, the philosophy of commitment, the mysterious empiricist, Gabriel Marcel’s point of view, alienation and beyond. Exploring various thoughts of Kierkegaard, Jasper, Sartre, Marcel, and endless discussion on metaphysics, Heinemann concludes that the problems of existentialism are alive because they are metaphysical. He also states that we cannot expect at our journey’s end to sketch a new metaphysics; but point out a direction in which a fruitful advance may be made that is useful. What is needed is to overcome the human trait ‘To be against oneself’. One’s aim should be to go on stage of Man with himself i.e. Man with man, Man with the World and Man with God.

Viktor Frankl called his approach to treatment logotherapy- a therapy through meaning. It seeks to help people face the painful uncertainties of life, take responsibility for their choices and create meaning in their lives.

Rollo May, a psychoanalyst focuses on the anxiety and his conviction was that people do face difficulties of growth and change, being alone in the world, the fear about death and the courage required to focus on the goals set to achieve which thereby brings about independence and growth. His book ‘Love and Will’ greatly increased general awareness of the existential concepts that May believed were relevant to all our lives and he stated that he does not believe that there should be a separate school of therapy to put in a category of ‘existential’ as the indication is towards an attitude towards human beings and a set of presuppositions about these human beings.
Karen Horney, a German psychoanalyst view of human nature is positive and optimistic. Self-realization involved developing one's innate capacities, emotions and interests. She believed that people who achieve self-realization are self-aware and responsible and able to make sound judgement and decisions. They seek healthy relationships and care about the welfare of others while maintaining their own integrity. According to her our potential for growth and self actualization is present at birth. Children whose environment is nurturing and harmonious, promoting their constructive and healthy development will move towards self-realization. Her greatest contribution was and remains her wonderful optimism as regards the human condition.

Harry Stack Sullivan, an American born psychoanalyst valued the contributions of Freud but disagreed with him in fundamental ways. He had a positive view about human nature and emphasized on strong relationships. He felt the stages of development will give the people the tool to form relationships that will reduce anxiety and increase security. Anxiety, Tension, Security and Euphoria are the emotions faced by the individual during the journey of his life. He believes that anxiety is caused due to some disturbances in relationship, creates tension, disrupts equilibrium and if your anxiety is reduced you can experience euphoria, a state of total well-being and equilibrium.

Carl Rogers, an American counsellor, perceived people as being strong and capable and trusted their ability to handle their difficulties, grow, develop and realize their potential. He believed that the goal of treatment was to affirm and empower people so that they have enough trust and confidence in themselves to make use of their innate resources. For him, understanding, appreciating and relating to others in a positive ways were the ultimate goals. His own words capture well the sort of life he held and his optimism “I do not know when I will die but I do know that I will have lived a full and exciting eighty five years”

Frederick Perls, a middle class jew, a doctor by profession and a psychoanalyst, was also a humanist who had an optimistic and empowering
view of people. He believed Every individual, every plant, every animal, has only one inborn goal—to actualize itself as it is." He believed that the people have the capacities to cope with their lives successfully and if they know what their problems are, they can bring all abilities in to action to solve them.

Monk G. Winsland’s phenomenological approach the ‘narrative therapy’ takes the stand that people’s views of themselves and the world come from the stories about their lives that they have made a part of themselves. People are interpretive beings who make meaning of their world through the language of their own stories and their understanding of those stories. (Gottleib and Gottleib, 1996) It is believed that through exploration, deconstruction and revision of these stories people can shift their perception leading to greater empowerment and the ability to successfully manage their lives.

Paul Tillich expresses Jean Paul Sartre’s famous doctrine ‘Existence precedes essence.’ He says that this doctrine the whole problem of essentialism and existentialism comes in to the open. The meaning of this sentence is that man is a being of whom no essence can be affirmed for such an essence would introduce a permanent element contradictory to a man’s power to create himself.

Human beings through their own consciousness create their own values and determine a meaning to their life. Although it was Sartre who explicitly coined the phrase, similar notions can be found in the thought of existentialist philosophers such as Heidegger and Kierkegaard.

Albert Maslow’s definition on existentialism is that it deepens on the concepts that define human condition. It paves a way for a psychology of mankind. He has called Humanistic Psychology, ‘the third force’. Third Force Psychology is not a new branch of psychology. It comprises a group of Neo-Freudians, Neo-Jungians, Gestalt therapists, Existential and Humanistic psychologists. What they have in common is their belief that man is not a conditioned animal, but he has in him a third force which is "evolutionary constructive." Every human being has an intrinsic nature. It is neither wholly
good, nor wholly bad, is rather natural and weak. It can be pressurized by habit, cultural and social forces, but it cannot dominate altogether. It remains with man forever and struggles for self-actualization. If this "inner nature" is suppressed one gets sick, if it is encouraged, it leads to a healthy personality. Thus, Third Force psychologists give us clues to self-actualization and self-alienation.

Gavin Rae’s analysis is different in which George Friedrich Hegel and Jean Paul Sartre understand that the human being can be alienated, it will have to identify how each thinker conceptualizes the authentic self. Hegel has been called the Godfather of Alienation. Engaging with Hegel’s analysis the concept of will and Sartre’s focus on radical alienation from ourselves and our world.

Jean-Paul Sartre explains existentialism precedes essence by saying that first of all man exists, turns up, appears on the scene and only afterwards defines himself. He says that man should himself shoulder the responsibility for what he is and make himself aware of his existence. His responsibility is not restricted to only himself or his own individuality but that he is responsible for all men.

Viktor Frankl states that self-actualisation is the process by which we fully develop and realize the blueprint of our potentialities and endowment. But even if a person could actualize her potentialities to the fullest, she may not have fulfilled the meaning of her life. This meaning is located as it was not within ourselves but in the outside world. In other words we must get out of our skins and listen to the challenge which has been placed out there for us and only for us to fulfill.

Weisskopf-Joelson states that being identified with something which transcends one’s life span gives man a kind of immortality. He also observes that if man searches for guidance regarding his choices he does not find emptiness instead he detects the meaning of his life in a world outside himself or above himself.
Nordemeyer\textsuperscript{xli} says that existentialism is an approach to life while literature at its best is a symbolism of life.

Jean –Paul Sartre\textsuperscript{xlv} says that Existentialism is not a dogmatic philosophy- rather it is particular way of thinking about the world we live in. He coined the term ‘existential’ and popularized the movement through his fiction Nausea and No exit.

Bugenatal\textsuperscript{xlii} puts it this way: Estrangement is the experience of being imprisoned in a glass, seeing the world in which others move but forever blocked from joining them, pantomiming communication but never really speaking with another person.

Rollo May\textsuperscript{xlvii} defines anxiety as the threat to our existence or to the values we identify with our existence. Anxiety arises from our personal need to survive to preserve our being and to assert our being.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SOURCES**

Saundra K. Ciccarelli and Glenn E Meyer\textsuperscript{xlviii} looks at psychological concepts in various fields and its relevance in different areas of life. Sigmund Freud, one of the brilliant creative geniuses in the modern era, significantly contributed to modern psychology. He studied the unconscious mind scientifically and evolved a new theory called psychoanalysis which deals with the hidden element of the human psyche. Most of our actions, according to Freud are motivated by psychological forces over which we have very limited control. He divided the mind in to three parts - preconscious, conscious and unconscious. The preconscious is where all information, events and thoughts that a person is not aware of at the moment are kept. The conscious is aware of immediate surroundings and perceptions. The unconscious mind is in which thoughts, feelings, memories are not easily or voluntarily brought into consciousness. This is the most important determining factor in human behaviour and personality.
Carl Gustav Jung's theory, known as analytical psychology, rests on the concept of the psyche. His concept of psychotherapy focuses on helping people integrate and make conscious aspects of the psyche or personality. According to him, the components of the psyche are the Conscious mind, The Unconscious mind, and The Collective Mind. His theory of development is an optimistic one, emphasizing growth that can accelerate throughout the life span. He sought to help people find knowledge, meaning, and fulfillment as well as individuation and realization by developing and accessing awareness of their psyches.

**LITERARY SOURCES**

Dr. S.K. Biswal examines the struggle of Narayan's characters against social restrictions and their struggle for something other than social destiny. Various critics have termed Narayan's character as round, flat, unchanging, underdeveloped, and some of them remain inadequate due to the disparate nature. The typological study is designed to analyze the characteristics of the so-called flat characters and underlines the four major types of his characters - innocent, rebel, eccentric, and sanyasi. Dr. Biswal also focuses on some of the themes like order-disorder pattern, about life and death, and the conflict between West and East. Dr. Biswal also throws light on Narayan's novels which had one familiar theme - The process of exploration, challenge, and finally reconciliation. Narayan was a visionary. It reflects on his own life as a man whose vision and understanding brought a sea change in himself. The rigid beliefs and practices of his society are subtly put forth in his novels with a hint of mockery to make people realize the futility of it. But this transformation never took him away from that society. Dr. Biswal stresses that his protagonist imbibes the spirit of the creator as the faithful follower of the sacrosanct tradition, realizes and accepts the norms and the codes of the society. They invariably withdraw from the rebellion and return to the world of the ordinary life of sanity. These characters remain flat as Albert Camus points out that as a Hindu, he may find the futility of rebellion and get the answers to his problems in the myths. Significantly, Narayan has used the motif of journey to underline the illusory nature of life. The *typology has also noted Narayan's*
reiterative employment of the strategy of rite de passage to mark the maturity and growth in the protagonist.

Geoffrey Kain examines the essays which contain new interpretations of Narayan’s work that are drawn from the latest developments. Author Graham Greene had named Narayan in the company of writers like Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekov, Joseph Conrad, Ivan Turgenev and was strongly impressed by the quality of the narratives - a hopeful endeavour deteriorates into an individual crisis, a frustration of the individual and then a series of events unfolds that in the end suggests the reassuringly inevitable. Several essays offer new readings or encourage re-readings of familiar material. Kain intends to review one of the contemporary critical essays by Sr. Mary Beatina Rayen O.S.M. She has stated that though many critics have commended Narayan’s characters as realistic; realism has rushed further into the psychological realm by attempting to reproduce the underlying process of thought. Narayan’s realism however, portrays the reality of the inner vision which transcends and transforms the mundane to realize the sacramentality of life. Raju, in *The Guide* dreads it when it concerns his own liberation from his deep rooted “self-deception”. His life as Narayan has explicitly indicated had lost its personal limitations. During the period of loneliness, alienation, anxiety, of the characters, mundane-transcendent interaction is intense and during the same time the characters contemplate and evaluate their past. Thus they are able to work out their own transcendence in a realistic, convincing way.

Meenakshi Mukherjee comments: R.K.Narayan once pointed out in an article that *Western Society is based on a totally different conception of man-woman relationship from ours’* and it *can certainly be demonstrated that marital bliss is a more frequent subject in Indian novels than romantic love.*

R.S.Pathak observes that Indo-English novelists reiterative treatment of alienation is his persistent delineation of rootless characters and awareness of his predicament seems to be symptomatic of his own uprootedness.
Shiv K Gilra\textsuperscript{lv} claims that Narayan’s creative vision steeped in the Indian tradition of detachment views the eternal human predicament in terms of comedy of affirmation.

Srinivas K Iyengar’s\textsuperscript{lvi} says that Narayan’s works seems to see the world as a complicated system of checks and counterchecks, the net result being the enthronement of the Absurd.

P.S. Sundaram\textsuperscript{lvii} says that it is the sense of humour, his capacity to see his essential sanity and moderation which makes the great writer he is.

K. Chellapan\textsuperscript{lviii} critically assesses the conflict between man and nature in the stories of Narayan by stating that the towering ego of the puny individual seems to be incongruously juxtaposed with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The onslaught of nature creates fear and anxiety in the protagonist of Narayan.

Anita Desai\textsuperscript{lix} observes Narayan’s world and states that Malgudi may be an appealing town but it had enough blind beggars, starving dogs, unscrupulous landlords and open gutters to ward off the most malevolent of evil eyes. Nor has Narayan any illusions about residents….. Apart from the compassionate realism with which Narayan observes life in this teeming microcosm, it is sense of humour- fresh, sharp and wryly ironic--- that prevent Malgudi Days from crumbling in to the sugar crystals of sentimentality…. Yet Narayan never belittles his subjects: he conveys the full measure of their dignity.

William Walsh\textsuperscript{lx} says that tracts of human experience are looked at with an affectionately ridiculing eye, and with that kind of humour in which jokes are also a species of moral insight. Such treatment brings out the note of bizarre, of human queerness in the activities of many sorts of people.

D.C.Muecke\textsuperscript{li} explains the Irony of Events as the victim more or less explicitly expresses reliance of the future, but some unforeseen turn of events reverses and frustrates his plans, expectations, hopes , fears and desires.
Tabish Khair asserts that one can begin off by claiming that the development of a majority of the main protagonist in Narayan’s novels especially correspond at least outwardly to the existential concept of self-estrangement. This appears to contradict the conventional wisdom regarding Narayan.

Srinivasa Iyengar is eloquent in Narayan’s praise and states that the story of their wedded life is a prose lyric on which Narayan has lavished his best gifts as a writer. Spring is no hard material substance: it is a presence, it is an unfolding, it is effable becoming that strains after Being. A thousand little occurrences leaps of light, bubbles of sound, a thousand smiles revealing their rainbow magnificence through the film of tearful of happiness or fulfillment, a thousand murmurs of ecstasy, meaningless worries, tremendous trifles, a thousand stabs of pain that are somehow transcended, a thousand shared anxieties, excitements and adorations: it is out of these that the texture of wedded happiness is wrought and Narayan is adept at giving form and meaning to this glory of holy wedded love. Quotation is difficult because the perfume is nowhere concentrated but fills the entire atmosphere.

C.Paul Verghese points out that Narayan posits a delicate balance of power in human relations. He does not however sit in judgement or call the rightness or wrongness of the heroine’s action in question. Through his heroines he shows us that the old stereotypes of women’s roles are certainly crumbling around the edges that the modern Indian woman tries the Herculean task of connecting tradition with modernity, education and career with domesticity. There aren’t any simple resolutions for her predicament anymore. Cinderella and her prince have vanished forever.

Arlene Babst sums up the potential of Narayan’s radical women Daisy and Rosie leading bravely their lonely lives: “There might also be for the women without men the chance at last to pursue worlds other than those populated by men, worlds of art, invention, spiritual quest, adventure, achievement, all of which demand the passion women once reserved only for men. Pursuing
such newer realms, a woman might discover a creature just as fascinating and challenging as men: woman herself.

Meenakshi Mukherjee\textsuperscript{lxvi} has opined that alienation and the search of one’s identity has become ‘common and recurrent’ themes in Indian literature.

Meenakshi Mukherjee\textsuperscript{lxvi} observes that the most recurrent technique in Indo-Anglian fiction has been that of the first person narrative. Moreover, a larger number of recent novels are autobiographical in method, if not in substance. Choosing the central character as the narrator solves the problem of ‘the point of view’ a problem which Henry James discussed variously in terms of the ‘large lucid reflector’ and the ‘central consciousness.’ Since the theme of some of the most suitable and has been applied in widely diverse situations by Indo-Anglian novelists.

Mary Beatina,\textsuperscript{lxvii} an eminent critic thinks that today India may be sluggish in remembering or living up to such a spiritual heritage in its headlong process of westernization, in which case Narayan’s works may well serve to revive the ancient culture in the modern context.

David Scott Phillip\textsuperscript{lxviii} comments that Narayan works towards the fulfillment of one of the intellectual’s primary responsibilities- the establishment of a truly universal culture.

Surendra Narayan\textsuperscript{lxix} remarks that Narayan’s moral vision and profound humanism are not consciously or explicitly cultivated in his writing. They are incidentally and inherently part of his art of storytelling and of the cultural environment, which is in the background for all his stories.

Ron Shepherd\textsuperscript{lxxi} says that for him the ending is typical of Narayan's work where criticism and protest dissolve and vanish in to the larger philosophical acceptance of life as it is.
Narayan R.K. says that everything is inter-related, stories, scriptures, ethics, philosophy, grammar, astrology, astronomy, semantics, mysticism and moral codes—each forms a part and parcel of a total life and is indispensable for the attainment of four square understanding of existence.

Jayant Biswal opines that R.K.Narayan views life’s lapses not with any missionary benevolence or zeal but with the understanding and wisdom of an artist who acknowledges various compulsions, complexities of life behind his chimeric modes. Thus, his comic mode shields his philosophy. Behind the narrative façade of his novels, Narayan attempts at a vision of life……a life of opposing dualities, of appearance and reality, beliefs and betrayals.

Sinha, U.P, says that the mind of Malgudi has the potential. It registers the vibration of changes it experiences in the process of the changing facets of industrialization but its interior remains steadily unruffled and uncorrugated. This uncorrugated inner being of Malgudi is a mirror to the hero of a Narayan novel. As every Narayan hero remains exposed to himself, he accepts no defeat or demoralization; so does this Malgudi come to us as one that registers multiple physical changes but remains basically unchanged with regard to the situation of the river Sarayu and the temple. And herein lies Malgudi’s mythic quality, its steady undoubted indestructibility.

Paul Verghese states: “Narayan’s fiction is mostly prose fiction. He narrates the stories in succession of events. There is no hiatus between character and plot; both are inseparably linked together. The qualities attributed to these characters determine the action and the action, in turn, progressively changes the character and thus ends the story. Narayan being a good story-teller sees to it that his story has a beginning, a middle and an end. The end of the novel is a solution to the problem which sets the events moving; the end achieves that completeness towards which the action has been moving and beyond which the action cannot progress. This end very often consists either in a balance of forces and counter forces or in death or both.
Bala Shanmuga Devi in her article, published in the journal *tje*, presents Arun Joshi as a novelist of great merit, a writer of Post Colonial Era of the Indian Literary arena. His five novels reveal his instinctive ability to articulate the feelings of the post Independence Indians trapped between Indian ethos and western influences. It also reveals his psychological insight and understanding of the inner lives of the beleaguered protagonists. Though his writings are to a certain extent similar to the western existentialist writers whose thoughts reflect negativity and futility in life and existence, his writings bring out the essence of the Indian ethos whose role is inevitable in all facets of life. They are applicable to young and old, to all generation. The source of existential thoughts can be traced back to the pre-philosophical era. We can find deep existential insights in Ecclesiastes in the *Old Testament of the Holy Bible*, Buddhism, Upanishads and many oriental concepts. Through her paper, Shanmuga Devi states that the modern concept of Existentialism is nothing but a new name for an ancient method of Buddhism and Upanishads that insist only in the knowledge of self.

The aim of religion is spiritual, inspite of their individual belief system, is to discover ones’ ‘real self’. Hinduism deals with the process of the realization of self, one’s identity after which, Joshi’s protagonists and main characters run after with anguish. A. Parthasarthy in *The Symbolism of Hindu Gods and Rituals* and J. Krishnamurti in *Talks and Dialogues* state that Joshi has handled all the esoteric nuances in his masterpieces. Joshi in his maiden novel *The Foreigner* relates the psycho aberration of Surinder Oberoi’s loneliness, feelings of anguish and anxiety. In his other novel *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, the protagonist suffers from the crisis of self, problems of identity and quest for fulfillment. Jesse Stearn, the famous psychoanalyst has mentioned in his book *Matter of Immortality* that ancient *rishis* stress that planet is like a school, a learning place and here we suffer and grow. He also states that consciousness does not depend on the existence of bodily tissues and death does not end consciousness. According to Joshi, a person who is honestly oriented in the spiritual path gets well placed in a life of contentment and prosperity. There is one duty and that is the duty of happiness and good work. This is the reason for our being here.
B Chitra in her article published in the journal *Language in India*, has critically reviewed six anthologies based on Anita Desai’s *Cry, The Peacock*. They are *The New Woman in Indian English Women Writers since the 1970’s* by Vijaylakshmi Seshadri, *Critical essays on Anita Desai’s Fiction* by Jaydipsingh Dodiya, *Indian Women Writing in English: New Perspectives* by Prasanna Sree, *Three Women Novelists: Essays in Criticism* by Sujit Bose and Ravi Nandan Sinha, *Anita Desai’s Female Protagonists* by Sudhakar T. Sali and *Indian English Literature Since Independence* by Pankier K. Ayyappa. These collections convey different views and various aspects of the novels that have been examined. Desai’s study reveals the psychological exploration of her women characters and externalizes their passive reaction. Maya, the protagonist is obsessed by a childhood prediction of disaster and is filled with neurotic anxiety. *Cry, the peacock* is a brilliant study of the abnormal psychology where Maya’s fears, loneliness, sufferings indicate Anita Desai as a novelist of existential concerns.

Nedra Lander and Danielle Nahon in their article, published in the *Journal of psychology*, focuses on the search for a meaningful life as based on honouring our values and whether one is willing to pay the price for ranking one’s values. This paper provides a vehicle for individuals to make their way in and out of the existential abyss by choosing in accordance with their values. The paper presents the Integrity model perspective in addressing the theme of a universal quest for meaning and purpose with issues of a) men’s workplace stress b) post traumatic stress a meaningful death. This model is based on the work of the psychologist O. Hobart Mowrer. The overall theme will be the unifying principle of living well and dying well with integrity. Integrity is defined as a three legged stool of honesty, responsibility and community. According to them ‘Anxiety’ arises due to the apprehensions and the consequences one has because of their past derogatory behaviour. Guilt arises from the violation of one’s values and the discrepancies between the values and actual deeds done. Self-esteem is earned for and by the self by living with Integrity and in accordance with one’s values. Ironically, the willingness to enter into the existential abyss to meaningfully suffer in order to
grow becomes the conduit for finding one’s way out - whether the context is workplace stress, the horrors of the concentration camp, the last leg in the journey of life. Integrity should be viewed as a path towards resiliency, recovery from all sorts of anguish and angst. Suffering is a part of life and so is choice of making one’s suffering meaningful, independent of context. The poet Lovelace quotes. Stone walls do not prison make /nor iron bars a cage. We are free to choose whether or not to be true to ourselves and to choose our attitude towards life and its circumstances.

Sujit Kumar Rath, Md. Sharifulla and Dr. Mantri Raghuram in their article, The Criterion: An International Journal in English, throws light on the women characters, who are caught in the crossroads of a cultural shift. This paper delves in to the incongruity involved in the lives of the women characters and the forces and factors that bring about cataclysmic changes in their lives. Both the stories offer ample scope to bring out the paradoxical elements involved in the convoluted and often paradoxical existence of women characters. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has delved into the experiences of an immigrant wriggling out in American landscapes through her novels. The novel The Mistress of Spices, is the story of the protagonist Tilo a mysterious figure who makes use of her knowledge about spices to help her overcome the obstacles. She is quick to make peace with the difficult choices that the circumstances have forced upon them. The discovery of her innate powers and the constant juggle to realize her identity, gained recognition. Even minor characters of the novel represent the theme of alienation. However Chitra B.D. offers solution to her women characters by suggesting practical ways of finding emancipation and financial assurance often through vocational work. Divakaruni represents the psychological struggle often bordering on the duality in women. She makes use of mythological metaphors to accentuate the liveliness of experiences her characters undergo.

Dr. Arvind Nawale in his article, published in The Criterion: An International journal in English throws light on the theme of existentialism in the writings of one of the Indian English writers Mr. Arun Joshi. His novels are strongly influenced by the existential philosophy of Sartre, Alber Camus’ and
Kierkegaard. His novel *The City and the River*, is a study of the existential predicament of his prominent characters. It depicts the struggle between the Grandmaster and the Boatmen. The Grandmaster, who rules the City by the river, is determined to become its unchallenged king. He demands allegiance from the Boatmen. They insist on giving allegiance to the river alone as the river is a symbol of the Divine Mother. They regarded themselves as the children of the great river. But both represent the urge to dominate and the desire to assert one’s identity respectively. The city depicted in the novel is itself rootless and alien to the natural atmosphere. The maths teacher Bhumiputra felt alone crushed by the weight of human misery, but found the meaning of his life not in escape but in action. He decides to fight with the Grand Master. The delay in the fulfillment of the prophecy and the growing anger of the people makes the headstrong Grand Master impatient. Thus, the characters suffer from existential crisis for various reasons. They suffer from alienation, rootlessness, boredom etc. They are tormented by their hollow existence. Joshi is obsessively occupied with the individual quest for meaning and value, freedom and truth that provide spiritual nourishment to the estranged self in a seemingly chaotic and meaningless world.

Mathew Scarano and Jennifer Krause in the article published in the e-journals.lib has analysed this novel published in 2000 through an existential lens specifically utilizing the ideas of Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus to examine the psyche of one of the characters Johnny Truant. Mark Danielwski employs multiple layers of perception in order to blur the line between perception and reality and even challenge the relevance of objective reality to the human experience. ‘In House of Leaves’, Johnny’s impossible paradox between obliteration and creation by his past becomes an Absurdist struggle in its own right when he needs not only to discover a meaning but also affirm his own existence. Essentially his identity is threatened by Sartre’s reflective consciousness which leads to Camus’ crisis.

Yanjuan Chen’s article appears in the *Journal of Language of teaching and Research*. It throws light on the absurdity of the world in which the protagonist of Thomas Hardy’s novel ‘*The Woodlanders*’ Giles Winterborne is living.
Witnessing so many changes and contradictions of the 20th century, the protagonist Giles Winterborne is in face of the predicament of existence. In the novel, the characters live in the woodland - Little Hintcock, which is closely related to their life. With all the manners of people living in it, the Little Hintcock can be regarded as an epitome of the world. Hardy establishes the completely unsentimental world in which his characters exist. He portrays his protagonist as a victim of alienation. The alienated person loses his belief and feels that he is left alone in this world and refuses to confront the reality. An existential analysis of the character will give insight to the three elements that was the cause of his tragic death, namely absurd, alienation and bad faith. Through Winterborne, Hardy explores the predicament of existence of people living in the 20th century.

Laurie Jo Moore and Mila Goldner Vukov in their article, published in *Psychiatria Danubina, 2009*, articles explores the essential features of recovery and the need for an existential approach in psychiatry. They have reviewed the major principles of recovery and the philosophical and psychological principles of existentialism. They state that existentialism is important in recovery because of the strong emphasis it places on the individual. In psychiatry, clinicians should pay attention to each individual's unique existential experiences. They also state that when ultimate existential concerns are recognized, patients have an opportunity to understand their life on a deeper level that is not defined as a medical disorder but as a part of human existence. An existential approach is a humanistic way towards recovery. Recovery can be seen as a journey of healing and transformation that enables a person with a mental health problem to live a meaningful life and achieve his or her potential. The essential elements of recovery revolve around the individual reclaiming and redefining their identity and defining the values important to their retaining ownership of their own lives. Restoration of hope helps in alleviating many deep issues of sufferings that people encounter in life. Laurie Moore and Mila Vukov have explored, analysed different areas, and understood the various thinkers and existential concerns to address the issues better. Existential conflicts and defenses become an important part of the therapeutic process of making what is unconscious,
conscious so that the individuals can achieve a greater sense of mastery and control of their lives.

According to Yalom\textsuperscript{\textsubscript{xxxiv}}, a psychoanalyst freedom gives human beings the ability to modify destiny. Being responsible for life at the deepest level establishes the foundation for an individual’s existence. From the perspective of existential thinkers the individual is entirely responsible for creating his/her self, destiny, life predicaments, feelings, choices, sufferings and actions. It is only through the authentic and unique true self that human beings can discover the meaning of their lives. If individuals accept their lives and give themselves to life absolutely and utterly without restraint, they can find the key to their freedom and the path to recovery.

Saeid Rahimpoor\textsuperscript{\textsubscript{xxxv}} in his article, published in the journal, *Theory and Practice language studies* has explored Samuel Beckett’s research. Two main doctrines assert that there is no fixed human essence structuring our lives and that our choices are never determined by anything except our free will. The origin dates to Plato’s famous idea, “\textit{ Essence precedes existence.}” Beckett has dealt with, introduced and manifested one of the existential obsession of modern man regarding self and philosophy of existence through his theatre. His play illustrates the sheer awareness of the audience to come to their own understanding of their own perceived and stabilized sense of their selves.

Cagri Tugrul Mart\textsuperscript{\textsubscript{xxxvi}} in the article, published in the *Journal of English and Literature*, has tried to define what existentialism is and stresses the themes of existentialism. Cagri Mart has pointed out the themes through Jean-Paul Sartre’s plays *The Flies* and *Dirty Hands*. *The Flies*, was written by Sartre in 1943. It’s a call to people to recognize their freedom. Once freedom lights its beacon in a man’s heart, the gods are powerless against him. Sartre shows that people have the ability to create their own freedom, make a choice and act according to that choice. He has portrayed these through the protagonist of the play *Orestos*. He is free to make decisions about future but his sister Electra who always thinks of the past to get her revenge is not free. So she cannot look ahead and have freedom.
Another issue in the play is nothingness. The protagonist Orestos who has absolute freedom in the play notices vacancy around him and he states that God is alone and he too is alone to make decisions. He does not require God to teach him. The other play Dirty Hands written in 1948, is about an assassination of a politician. The play throws light on the protagonist Hugo who feels empty in his life. For him life is meaningless and he experiences nothingness. In conclusion, Sartre states that although life is absurd, human beings have to make it sense. i.e. to have meaning and purpose. Alienation. Anxiety and Forlornness will make one realize that no one can help you make sense of your existence but you yourself only. Everybody should bear the responsibility for making their lives through it.

H.M. Williams, studies in modern fiction in English, Calcutta writer’s workshop on Chekov: like Maupassant he presents a piece of real life as seen with the intensity of a single but perceptive vision at one objective and yet deeply sympathetic.

The above critical reviews written by various writers about existentialism, its amalgamation with the branch of psychology, R.K.Narayan’s way of presentation provides a balanced existentialistic view of human condition by recognizing the conflicts arising between positive issues and the negative issues. By thoroughly analyzing the views of the critics, Narayan seems to suggest the disintegrating effect of the West on the Indian sensibility and throws light on the distortion of the values due to modernization.

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