INTRODUCTION
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R K Narayan all through his fictional career maintained a unique personal temper of temperament, that can be comprehended in the manner of a child looking around the world and acquiring for himself the momentary thrills and exasperations on perceiving ‘the doubts, difficulties and mysteries of the world around him’. According to Susmita Bhattacharya: “The children are happy, playful, and all nature rejoices in their merriment”(2)

There is a significant difference between a child perceiving the world around him and an elder experiencing the objective contours of the world. An elder, by virtue of his experiences, comprehends the world in a temporal manner that is by way of dividing and distributing the life-span between the past, the present and the future. This is to say, that personal experiences happen to him as a matter of historical process. Past experiences influence the present condition with a possible definite course of operation of life in the future.

Broadly speaking, the grown-up man’s phenomenal manner of acting and thinking is broadly representative of this historical process. But the child’s manner of thinking and performing for himself is absolutely different. In a way, he gets totally and completely absorbed in the given moment of life, without ever stretching his imaginations, either to the past or to the future. This is what the existentialists call ‘living in the here and now’

Categorically speaking, R K Narayan’s life work can be called a process of ‘living in the here and now’ the far searching negative forces of historicism, particularly of the western sort, are capable of enhancing in man, a kind of self-centered, self-emuncting and
self-satisfying pursuit of life, which ultimately bring forth that strange heroic species, who invariably overacts and brings destruction on himself, as well as on all others around him.

The childlike manner of living in the 'here and now', in spite of the fact that it is seemingly placed, and even unbecoming of the human race, is the aim at effecting ultimate perfectability through the inventing and innovative ideas of progress. A child on the other hand, acts and performs himself as the most satisfied species within the precincts of his surroundings, without ever breeding or inculcating in himself a false hope of creating a better world in the future than what is available for him in his present, as an objective material fact.

R.K. Narayan, in fictionally inventing his Malgudi, made a categorical attempt of evaluating the relative merits of the childlike manner of living in the here and now, in comparison to the growing vampirish aspirations of man hastening himself towards the false idea of acquiring for himself a better progressive world than what he has around himself. There is a tension between the childlike aspirations of surviving like well-contained humans and the materialistic aspiring manner of man greedily coveting for material progress.

Narayan's Malgudi is a quite unassuming childlike human habitat, in some unnameable far southern part of India. In its original, primieval animistic context, it was a pleasantly self-satisfied human entity, fictionally represented through the childlike antics of Swami and Friends. But, the world process of globalisation would not leave Malgudi and its inhabitants in their blessed happiness, in spite of poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. Narayan gradually all through his ten important novels and numerous short stories, aims at tracing the so-called materialistic growth and development of Malgudi, starting...
not satisfied primitivist dispositions of the aborigins of Malgudi. In bringing this relative picture of Malgudi in its original naturalistic traits, and Malgudi gradually adopting for itself the modernistic manner of material progress, Narayan has a great implicit message. That message is compounded by him, by way of looking at Malgudi and its growth from the unassuming angle of a child looking at the world, with all his primal, instinctive sense of wonders, which S Krishnan considers as: “Exceptional in its treatment of theme and in its usage of the English language” (vii). While the thematic ground-swell concerns itself with the vindication of Swami’s innocence, the handling of English language itself came to R.K. Narayan as a matter of divine gift. In this context, as a fiction writer, R.K. Narayan carved for himself an enviable niche in the colonial contribution for the English language.

R.K. Narayan, whether he is taking up the representative delineation of the lives and adventures of children as in his Swami and Friends, or presenting a possible edification of life, in which the characters are grown-up men and women, always comprehend the immediate ‘here and now’, as his unique fictional mode of comprehension. In a way, it is important to note, while R.K. Narayan’s themes and structural patterns are broadly representative of human life, anywhere and everywhere in the world, his chief fictional contributions lies in the fact that he created such unique characters who can be divided into the children and the children of mind. Even his grown-up characters, while involving themselves into the intriguing intricacies of everyday life, quite often slip off their childlike innocence and fragility of childhood. It is, therefore, convincing to argue that R.K. Narayan quite successfully presented a child’s eye-view of life.

Thereby, he offers a fictional alternative manner of graphing with the doubts, difficulties and mysteries of life, almost in a manner of a straddled child...
the vissicitudes of human life. For this purpose, he has meticulously created an imaginary geographical region called Malgudi, and all his fictional characters carry with them a typical distinguished flair and flavour of this Malgudi region. Thereby, the characters of R.K. Narayan stand as distinguishable and identifiable parodies and parallels to the ordinary common folk, anywhere and everywhere in the world. R.K. Narayan quite painstakingly created a world of his own, as it happens in the traditional fairytales and folklore, and thereby improvise a unique world of his own, which stands as a profound legator to the everyday world around us. In this context, the words of S. Krishnan are worth quoting. Says Krishnan "Narayan's clarity of style, his straight forward story telling, his fully realized characters, and his unforced humour provided a clear new direction to Indian fiction." (ix). It is out of this attitude, R.K. Narayan creates what can be called the 'Child's Eye-view of Life'