A. K. Narayan is the most accomplished and most widely read Indian novelist writing in English to-day. His contribution to Indo-Anglian literature is remarkable. Much has been said about his thought and technique and much still is yet to be said. Harayan was not a prolific writer but he was a novelist in search of a unity in the diversity of life and civilisation. He did not turn his back on the social realities of his time but carved man's image in his art with his social awareness and insight into life which is the fundamental characteristic of a true social novelist. In my thesis I have tried to show how successfully he projects the image of India in his novels by his meticulous care in re-creating Indian landscape and his realistic portrayal of Indian life and characters. He writes with complete objectivity, with a strange mixture of humour and irony, and an underlying sense of beauty and sadness. He follows the tradition of story-telling as it existed in ancient India, but adopts his form and style from the West. Narayan keeps very close to surface reality, for his aim is to reveal the tragi-comedy implicit in ordinary life. As the instruments of his critical strategy are comedy and irony, he excludes from his picture such aspects of reality as are not susceptible to comic treatment. His picture of life is always true to facts, but to those facts only at which a reasonable being can be expected to smile.
An in-depth study of the problems of the Indian writer in English is closely bound up with the historicity of the development of English first as the official language of the country and then as the vehicle of creative expression for the prominent Indo-Anglian writers. In the Introduction I have tried to establish the point that English has affected the Indian cultural, religious and literary traditions in such a way that there has been a great awakening transforming Indian ways and traditions. This awakening has yielded beneficial results in the realm of literature; for there was a rejuvenation of Indian literatures through the adoption of new literary forms and genres from the West. Apart from the rejuvenation, there was also the beginning of Indian creative effort in English. The Indian nationality received the blessings of this language and began to speak and write in English in order to project Indian cultural heritage and its immense literary potentialities on the world. Thus emerged in India a new prose style in English. The Nineteenth Century Indian National leaders and cultural teachers turned to creative writing but their style was mainly conditioned by the rhetoric and imaginative fervour of contemporary English prose. The Twentieth Century Indian writers in English inherited much from the Nineteenth Century writers. Twentieth Century prose writing took the language to a further stage of development when it came to be used in creative writing.
in a simpler and richer way than before. I have also analysed the main problems of the Indian writer, which are those of mastering the language and achieving an idiom that is at once 'good English' and an adequate rendering of the Indian sensibility that the novelist has at the back of his mind, and even more of expressing "the inwardness" of his own culture. My thesis 'A.K.Narayan as an Indo-Anglian novelist' is an attempt to assess the strength and weakness of the English novels produced by the novelist.

In the Second Chapter I have analysed the importance of Malgudi, a small imaginary South Indian town, as a setting for A.K. Narayan's novels. The town is not a mere geographical entity. It has a distinct personality of its own and gives the novels their unity. The people of Malgudi with all their local habits and manners are essentially Indians. To read all the novels of Harayan in their chronological order is not only to become acquainted with the landmarks and features of this hypothetical town but also to know about the improvement that has come over this town in course of time. But beneath all the external changes there lies the soul of the place that defies all changes and remains eternally the same old thing. Narayan maintains the timeless quality of Malgudi. His novels inspite of their intimate sense of place are not in any way
regional; they acquire a representativeness by concentration. It is Narayan's triumph as an artist that he makes us have complete faith in the eternal reality of Malgudi.

The third Chapter contains an analysis of Narayan's use of myth mostly as part of his technique. Narayan's work develops technically towards a characteristic pattern. It is the design of order - dislocation of order - restoration of order, reiterated by references to the Puranic conflict between Sura and Asura, good and evil. The cyclical construction of Narayan's novels as well as the world view contained in his writings are profoundly affected by the concept of cyclical time. This is the most pervading influence of the classical mythology upon his work. I have discussed mainly three of his novels in (full) detail to show how archetypal pattern of myth unconsciously operates in a work of art and how such use of myth has been more successful technically than thematically. Each of his novels when closely analysed reveals the repetition of the same cyclical construction because it is part of his world-view.

The theme of the traditional Indian asceticism or sainthood which is the subject of the Fourth Chapter of the dissertation has thematic relevance to the previous chapter. As an offshoot of Indian mythology asceticism
has always been an Indian ideal of life inherent in the culture of the Sub-Continent. I have made an attempt to point out that in A. K. Narayan's novels it is possible to trace this ideal unobtrusively operating behind certain situations and characterisations. And this is also a part of his world view. The spirit of traditional Indian asceticism or the institution of the Sanyasa strikes the keynote of theme of Narayan's novels. It is a deep-seated motive - a long cherished ideal which constitutes the very setting of his form - the cycle of events of his stories. First explaining the term 'asceticism' in fuller detail I have later on examined how this theme has been carried out in the texture of Narayan's novels. The ascetic is a ready-made symbol in Indian literature and in the comic use of this symbol, Narayan, like other novelists reveals a great deal of himself and of his art.

The fifth Chapter contains an elaborate discussion of Narayan's constant experimentation with stylistic patterns. I described in my first Chapter, the development of English prose style in India, its use as a vehicle for the exchange of ideas on politics, social and religious reform, and the models which influenced prose style in fiction at the turn of the century. The age of experiment begins around 1930, when authors attempted to forge a new style for their own needs. Experimenting with diction and syntax is usually
a conscious process and reveals the author's natural mode of awareness. It is a challenge before the Indo-Anglian novelist to use the English language in a way that will be distinctively Indian and still remain English. I have made an attempt to show how successfully Narayan meets the challenge in all his experiments with language. These experiments can be classified under three heads:

i) Experiment in diction;

ii) Experiment in syntax, that is changing the structure of sentences and

iii) Imagery.

A.K. Narayan's experiments with diction and syntax are normally a conscious process but his language is simple, his sentences are straightforward in syntax and unobstrusive in diction. Narayan constantly underwrites, never emphasizing, never caricaturing and hardly ever passing moral and aesthetic judgements.

Narayan is conscious of his stylistic patterns. He never deliberately attempts to be Indian, but because he deals with convincing human beings in authentic situations and records their responses honestly, and because these human beings happen to be Indians, he succeeds in achieving that difficult task of writing in a genuinely Indian way
without being self-conscious about it. His themes, characters and dialogues carry the feel and sound of Malgudi; and he feels no need to resort to unusual structures of Anglo-Indian idioms.

In the concluding section I have analysed how Narayan's attitude to comedy grows out of a whole view of man's condition in the universe. For Narayan, society is not man-made by choices but existing as part of a universal order with which it is continuous. Thus for us to appreciate his work, we must understand his view of man's life in a universal order which is cyclical, of a man's relation to this cyclical order and attachment to the wheel of existence. I have examined this at three levels:

i) his own philosophical and metaphysical beliefs;
ii) the beliefs he puts into the minds of his characters and from which Narayan as the author detaches himself; and
iii) the conscious use he makes of this view as a comic and literary device.

Narayan states his view of the cyclically ordered universe simply and objectively, in this differing from other Indian novelists such as Raju Rao and others who are mainly concerned to justify their views. What is particularly
important in his work as I have found, is the exploration of the single experience in such an ordered universe and his constant consciousness of the balance between continuity and mortality. These two things constitute the genre of his comic philosophy of life.

Lastly, I must add that the present work, I am uncomfortably aware, is not as comprehensive as it could have been. Any errors or omissions that might have crept into the dissertation are mine own.

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