

**Aspects of Self Expression in R. K. Narayan's *The English Teacher*****Chandni Rani**

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**DOI: 10.53032/tcl.2020.4.6.13****Abstract**

R. K. Narayan is considered to be one of the outstanding writers of Indian writing in English whose contributions to novel writing and story writing is noteworthy. The present work depicts the aspects of self expression in his autobiographical novel 'The English Teacher'. The novel consists of a story of a happily living couple Krishna and Susila who ultimately met unfortunate days when the female partner Susila leaves the world in an early age. Krishna finds himself amidst grief and pain after his beloved wife is dead and he tries contacting her soul. The complete study of the novel brings out the result that the story is of no one else but Narayan's own.

**Keywords-** Autobiographical, Spiritual Communion, Existential, Irony, Death

Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Narayana who is known as R. K. Narayan amidst the people of English literature, is a significant English novelist in India. Like Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao, Narayan does not seem to be devoted to any particular theme or philosophy or any literary techniques like 'existentialism', 'expressionism', or 'the stream of consciousness' technique. He may better be called an actual observer of human life and the common issues that occur in the life of a common man. He depicts life as it actually is and as he looks at life and understands it in true sense. Narayan's approach towards life is limited to the people of middle class. An artist becomes famous for what he serves as the form of art; and in this context, Narayan can be compared to Jane Austen and his matters may be called to be dominated by orthodox Brahmin families and this culture is described well in the novel. Narayan himself belongs to a middle-class family and so he is well conversant with their psychology and the nature of the vicissitudes they pass through. And so his characters are true to life. And this novel was dedicated to his late better half, Rajam who died prematurely of typhoid in 1939. The sudden, untimely demise of his most beloved wife, Rajam, now a mother of a little baby-daughter, left him in inconsolable sorrow and despair. And it took a far longer time to pass through this traumatic shock; and Narayan's busy pen had been frozen into silence for concerning six long years. The original title of this novel as given by Narayan was "Grateful to Life and Death" however the Yankee publisher, not pleased with the

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original title, suggested the present title of *The English Teacher*. Narayan was most taken with Rajam that he married her despite the actual fact that their horoscopes failed to match. There can't be a larger misfortune within the lifetime of a young man than to possess lost his most beloved better half. It was at now that Narayan self-addressed a letter to Henry Graham Greene, stating that he had found it troublesome even to put in writing a letter and questioned how long this state would last! Narayan, in his machine biographic account, *My Days* describes; "'The English Teacher', as autobiographical in content, very little part of it being fiction saying that "the dedication of the book to the memory of my better half ought to be some extent offer the reader a clue that the book might not be all fiction." (*My days*, 134-135) [4]

To a fanatical or important reader the novel in question seems to be a sort of sequel to *The Bachelor of Arts*. The protagonist of that novel was Chandran, a young bachelor of romantic disposition. *The English Teacher* takes completely different direction in its second half; Narayan starts narrating his own unhappy story when the death of his beloved mate Rajam, impersonating himself Krishnan and tries to ascertain contact along with his departed mate; therefore the second a part of the novel to the tip of it describes Narayan's own religious expertise of holding communion with the spirit of his departed wife. The six year-gap in Narayan's career as a writer will fairly be attributed to Rajam's death that devastatingly shattered the terribly core of his being, each as a person and as an author. Time hurts and time heals; such an extended time it had taken for Narayan to return to terms thereupon shattering traumatic expertise that found profound expression within the most autobiographical novel *The English Teacher*. The depth of his grief and sorrow is nakedly and deeply and movingly mirrored within the final part of the primary section, through describing Krishna's response to Susila's death. Narayan needed to determine the novel as a trial to realize a philosophical understanding. (*My Days*, 135)

To an informal reader *The English Teacher* would possibly seem to be a sequel to *The Bachelor of Arts*. There's a logical linear-wise development in Narayan's idea of the pattern of life as envisaged in *Manusmriti* (which involves the four-fold progression). The Varnasramadharma is centrally necessary in Hinduism and therefore the four castes area unit absolute to perform completely different duties in society as prescribed by *The Manusmriti*.

It absolutely was devised on the principle of division of labour and therefore the supreme caste-Brahmanism is commanded within the highest esteem-they are a unit, the depositories of the religious text, mental object and intrinsically they're the foremost enlightened of the four Varnas. Consistent with the Manusmriti, the Brahmins area unit enjoined to go through four stages severally called first- The Brahmacharya, second, the Grihastya, third, the Vanaprastha, the third stage once the house- holder becomes a forest inhabitant or hermit before the ultimate renunciation and therefore the fourth and last one is Sanyasa. Initially *The English Teacher* looks to be a sequel to *The Bachelor of Arts* since

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Chandran, the hero of *The Bachelor of Arts* could be a bachelor and the novel that follows *The English Teacher* Krishna has currently entered the Grihasthrama. However within the last half, the story takes a special flip. Krishna is therefore possessed by the thoughts of his departed mate, Susila, he, through the medium of a religious master, learns to carry communion with the spirit of his departed wife; truly, this is often strictly autobiographical and therefore the agony that Narayan face over the untimely death of his mate Rajam, Krishna (like Narayan) for someday was in a different world. A way of complete detachment from this mundane life marks this era of his life. Krishna grew philosophical and mirrored on which means of existence on this aspect of the grave and life on the far side the grave. The bulk of critics and readers felt that the second part of the novel may hardly sustain interest, since, gentle irony and mild humour is completely absent there; and regarded this one as “a broken-backed novel”. The anonymous reviewer of *The London Times* saw it as ever-changing, “for the more serious when Susila's death and felt there was a weak and dissatisfactory conclusion to a tale of unaffectedly lightweight and delicate texture.” (*The London Times*, 7) No less eminent critic than K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar observes: “The tries at communication as introducing an arbitrary or fantastical part into a story that has ciao been transparently faithful life, with the consequence that it's troublesome to feel that the primary and second halves of *The English Teacher* mix naturally and create an inventive whole.” (IWE-369-370) [3] John Thieme Commenting on this observes; “Despite its bipartite structure, amendment in tone and movement from domestic life to the spiritual *The English Teacher* is that the most thematically unified novel of Narayan's period of play.” (6) Narayan terribly realistically presents the factors ultimately resulting in the death of Susila by infectious disease. Whereas visiting the recently made homes within the Extension, Susila happens to enter a bathroom that was most insanitary and he or she came out with a profound sense of disgust; and consequently, she fell sick and died of infectious disease.

It's no marvel that such a factor has happened; since an orthodox Brahmin is extremely sensitive to hygienically conditions and uncleanliness affect them adversely. Here mention of Krishna's colleague, one Sastri, should be there. He had the spirit of a pioneer, a marvelous man--an energetic extender. And Sastri owns the terribly initial flat to the New Extensions. It's obvious that Sastri and Krishna belong to the new generation of Malgudi and, as such, they will instinctively feel that they need to move to the New Extensions from the old Malgudi; and incidentally, this sudden, domestic tragedy within the lifetime of Krishna have taken place! Currently there's a sharp vacuum in Krishna's life; it's underneath such circumstances. Weak hearted folk's area unit tempted to kill though suicide isn't the resolution of the matter. Moreover, Krishna contains a baby-daughter, the terribly reproduction of her mother; yes; it's a minimum of for the sake of the kid, he should live. Typically speaking, culturally capable ones survive any crisis that's ever trying; the death of his mate, therefore excruciating and unendurable, has opened so far unknown, unknown

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avenues; Krishna discovers a replacement dimension in him, the religious side; currently he's physically detached; currently he would have religious union along with her. Krishna is on his religious voyage currently, experiencing a weird thrill of holding communion with the spirit of his departed mate through para-psychoapproach he learned from an English mystic-Paul Brunton; Krishna, whereas slippy by slow degrees into the traditional life, Leela, his baby girl, the unfailing reminder, of his mate, Susila, lends him a replacement lease of religious life. In this context, Harish Raizada comments:

This new and strange style of contact along with his dead mate, introduces a contemporary charm in his life and his interest in these occult conferences will increase a lot of and a lot of. He currently goes regarding his work with a light-weight heart and feels as if a burden has been raised from his mind. The day currently looks filled with prospects of surprise and joy to him. (36, 2)

Aside from what the critics say regarding the novel *The English Teacher* one should see what Narayan himself sums up the amendment of direction in his autobiography *My Days*, "That book (*The English Teacher*) falls in 2 parts-one is domestic life and therefore the spouse is religious. Several readers have more established the primary give up interest and therefore the second give up befuddlement and even enmity, perhaps, feeling that they need been baited with the domestic image into tragedy, death, and nebulous, not possible speculations." (My Days, 135, 4) Why Susila was sick and was declining towards death, Krishna was seriously reflective on the causes of unhealthful condition of the place and believes they were due to the New Extension, John Thieme here remarks: "the strange combination that it represents--the challenge described by the approaching of modernism to Malgudi is that the reason behind the tragedy." (John Thieme, 59, 6) The sharp, premature death of Susila leaves Krishna during a state of void and vacuum; fortuitously for Krishna, his late adult {female|spouse|partner|married person|mate|better half} has left behind a female child---Leela---who becomes the only supply of comfort and consolation to him. Leela, who is a toddler, exerts her influence on her father, Krishna, by entertaining and fascinating his attention aloof from the adult world towards the globe of childhood. This beneficial influence helps reconstruct Krishna's disintegrated temperament because of the untimely death of his beloved mate, Susila; the presence of Leela, who, along with her redemptive power, helps her father Krishna overcome his sense of existential uselessness. And Krishna realizes when he resigns from school the actual fact that, inner peace should be earned through withdrawal from the adult world into the globe of kids. It should be observed the presence of Leela the terribly reproduction of her mother, Susila, is extremely important since it's, she who acts like elixir and to an outsized extent brings him back to his traditional self and it's mainly, she who finally brings the disparate strands of the novel into a unified whole. True knowledge, it seems, is biological of sorrow and suffering; joys and pleasures area unit mere shadows, what man thinks is his forever, is simply an illusion. Krishna realizes that man's ton within the

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journey of his life within the final analysis, is his unaccountable deep sense of loneliness and separation that haunts him throughout his life. This, he believes, is that the truth regarding man's life. Krishna is very obsessive about the thought of the untimely death of his mate and he needs to own communion with the spirit of his departed mate. And he succeeds in achieving it through the self- obligatory rigorous religious discipline and through the agency of a British oculist named Paul Brunton, who was resident in Mysore at that point. (*My Days*, 148-50) Narayan is hundred percent correct once he confesses that *The English Teacher* is his autobiographical novel. The terribly facts of his life are recorded with nice fidelity; there's very little fiction within the novel. Narayan dramatically presents the full tragedy of the untimely death of his young mate.

He writes with a deep sense of poignancy in a paragraph in his book, *My Days*: inside hundred days of her arrival, Rajam (his wife) had departed from this world; she caught infectious disease in early could and folded within the initial week of Gregorian calendar month 1939. Wanting back, it looks as if she had a premonition of her end; she had needed to remain back along with her oldsters and sister. "I have delineate this a part of my expertise of her illness and death in *The English Teacher* therefore totally that I don't, perhaps, cannot (go over |re-evaluate| reconsider| re-examine| reassess| check| think once more) he experiences profound sorrow; he realizes that a world of innocence and purity to realize inner peace; so withdraws from the adult world and adult work into the globe of kids. No one may account for this sharp, sudden illness of hers; and it absolutely was initially incorrectly diagnosed as some otherl infection and after it absolutely was confirmed as typhoid; however Susila's mother had thought that the rationale for the mysterious health problem of her girl was because of "Evil- eye"--for she may hardly believe that her girl World Health who was therefore hale and healthy, ought to ever fall a victim to such a fatal illness as typhoid! In little cities like Malgudi, folks simply attribute any sharp health problem to an individual to "Evil-eye" though science labels it as belief. No doubt, it was, to Narayan, an unrecoverable loss. All the efforts of all the exorcists are of very little avail. The doctor, out of modesty, says "no, do not belittle these people" "there could be a ton in him too, we have a tendency to don't know" maybe there's a delicate suggestion here that even the doctor trained in science, views the exorcist sympathetically! As long as man believes in God, he should believe Satan! And therefore the "Evil-eye" is attributed to Satan--- universally folks believe with deep conviction, that there's what's referred to as an "Evil-eye". Trendy science could dismiss it downrightly as belief, randomly, the assumption in evil spirits and "Evil-eye" is universal; there are films in contemporary world like the renowned Japanese Production, *The House* wherever All Christians believe evil spirits, ever since Christ had exorcised the disembodied spirit from a herd of swine! There are a unit sure things that are a unit on the far side the sphere of science; and it's unwise to believe that each one that's outside the range of science, is fantasy or belief.



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The prophecies created by the oracle of Delphi came true, though by a mysterious, indirect means. Let's leave it at that, since its moot. However Narayan himself confesses that he did have communion with the spirit of his dead mate. Krishna, in search of the final word truth or reality of life, within the method, passes through an inferno of complexities and confusions; Literature and philosophy fail him in search of the final word reality. He embraces spirituality as a final resort and succeeds in holding psychic communion with the spirit of his dead mate, Susila. Narayan voices forth his opinions relating to the English system of education in our country as being unhealthy and he provides vent to his feeling of edification with the faculty, in a his letter of resignation. Krishna airs his opinion within the letter and asserts that he's against the system, the full methodology and approach of a system of education that creates Indians cultural morons, however economical Clarks for all their business and body offices. The opposite necessary character within the novel is that the master through whom Narayan mediates his views on matters of importance likes the prevailing system of education and private cleanliness! Krishna referred to within the colonial system of education, and presently teaching within the same system as English teacher, feels repulsive or detestable to the present system.

"Morons, be economical clerks for all of your business and body offices." (The English Teacher, 206, 5) Within the final chapter, Krishna resigns from his job as English teacher, then operating to a preschool and learning psychically human action with the spirit of his dead mate, Susila. And when the untimely death of the protagonists mate, the religious quest to contact psychical contact or communion with the spirit of his dead mate, has been handled during a virtuoso means. This is often the most effective of his four novels of the primary section of his literary career. Narayan's description of the moments of Krishna-Susila's married walking on air, be they ever brief--shows the couple throughout a mood of lyrical felicity and as being transported into the cloud nine of delight—but all of a sharp, Krishna has been unrelentingly tormented from the topless heights of his marital status joy to the abysmal depths of disconsolate grief. However within the thick of the darkness of his distress, there's a flicker lightweight of hope, the sec of his joy that lends him the strength in-tuned all this sorrow--his very little daughter--Leela---the terribly reproduction of her mother who is not any a lot of currently however a mere memory of the past! K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar terribly capably observes in this context, "The story of their married life could be a prose lyric on that Narayan has lavished his gifts as an author." (*Indian Writing in English*, 367, 3) During the lifetime of the English Teacher that's, Krishna, Narayan relives matrimonial life with Susila. Narayan confesses that this novel, *The English Teacher* has been his most autobiographical one and therefore the dedication of this novel to his departed mate, confirms it. In his terribly initial novelette *Swami and Friends*, Narayan's own experiences as a college boy to a bigger extent are incorporated. . The autobiographical part is extremely thinly appeared and in his second novel *The Bachelor of Arts*, all over again, one can notice a

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tendency to see Narayan in concert at the tip of his adolescence and therefore the threshold of his adulthood; and like Chandran, in *The Bachelor of Arts*, falls head over ears with a young maiden, virtually initially right, as Narayan did with Rajam and in each the horoscopes that don't match, stand as an insuperable hurdle.

However within the case of----for marriages, particularly in South Indians Brahmin families, horoscopes should match to travel while not a hitch. Narayan, in spite of the actual fact that horoscopes don't match in his case, has overcome the hurdle by an artless trick devised by him. And, if one keeps aside *The Dark Room* his third novel for a long time, the novel that follows *The English Teacher* that deals with the married lifetime of an English Teacher. Therefore one circle or amount of life is complete with *The English Teacher* and Narayan's initial section of his career as a writer has been over and The Headmaster's philosophy of "Leave Them Alone" serves two functions within the novel; first of, it announces the teacher's speech act of the system of education, particularly for kids, where, so as to bring kids underneath discipline, retributive measures are unit obligatory and, secondly, the stainless company of kids in their pure innocence acts sort of a balm to a mind in deep distress; therefore Krishna, the English teacher, resigns from his job and presently joins the children's faculty whose shibboleth is "Leave Them Alone". Currently Krishna feels a bigger peace of mind and he says to himself: "I am seeking a bigger inner peace I realize I can't attain it unless I withdraw from the adult world and adult work into the globe of the kids." (*The English Teacher*, 211, 5)

Finally, Krishna is passing through the journey of life, experiencing each joy and sorrow and finally realizing inner peace enjoying the blessings of each the worlds. Towards the shut, the disparate strands of the story begin to return along into a harmonious whole. Krishna's final gain matters a lot since the absence of the same had annoyed his life and he was in search of that peace suffering throughout. Nothing could be more pleasurable to him than this kind of peace and harmony.

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