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**COUNTRYWIDE ACUITY IN R.K. NARAYAN'S *THE VENDOR OF SWEETS***

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Abstract

The place where human life plays a vital role in their life. Here the place not only refers to the geographical landscape of a particular region, but it also denotes the cultural consciousness of that particular arena. Each and every individual has its own identity. This identity has its base from the geographical background. These geographical backgrounds, has an artificial setup and boundaries in the name of nations, state, districts, and others. The culture and traditional follow in each and every region will differ. While the person migrates from one place to another, it makes an impact on that particular people's custom and tradition.

R.K. Narayan is a pioneer of the Indian literature in English. In his work *The Vendor of Sweets*, he portraits the national consciousness and impact of multinationals through the characters of Jagan and Grace. Jagan is an Orthodox Indian sweet vendor where-else Grace is the half American and half Korean girl who assumes to be the daughter-in-law of Jagan since the couple leads a life in the name of living together relationship. This article clearly pictures the thoughts and emotions of the traditional man who gets panic and uncomforted due to the impact of other cultural interference in his own family that crosses beyond the national borders.

Keywords: geographical landscape, backgrounds, traditional man, .etc

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Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayan is one of the pioneers of Indian writer in English. He had written various short stories, novels, fiction and retelling of the great Indian Epics. His famous work *Malgudi Days*, a collection of short stories which has the background of the Indian rural setting, can be considered as his masterpiece. He was honored by several awards including Padma Vibhushan Award and Sahitya Akademi Award. He was nominated for Noble Prize numerously, still yet tasted it.

R.K. Narayan's contemporary writers are Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. Scholars and Critics used to describe that Mulk Raj Anand as a suppressed class writer, Raja Rao as a writer of freedom thoughts and R.K. Narayan as a Middle-class writer. In this work *The Vendor of Sweets*,

R.K. Narayan portrait about a sweet vendor who belongs to a middle-class family. The protagonist of the novel is Jagan, a fifty-five-year old-man who follows the Gandhian thoughts and principles in his life. He belongs to an orthodox Hindu family. He is a successful sweet vendor who leads the life peacefully still his son returns from abroad.

He draped his shoulders in a khaddar shawl with gaudy, yellow patterns on it, and he shod his feet with thick sandals made out of the leather of an animal which had died of old age. Being a follower of Gandhi, he explained, 'I do not like to think that a living creature should have its throat cut for the comfort of my feet,' and this occasionally involved him in excursions to remote villages where a cow or calf was reported to be dying (Narayan 3).

Jagan lost his wife, Ambika in his earlier stage itself. She suffered from a brain tumor and lost her life. The couple had a son, named Mali. Mali had an assumption that the cause of his mother's death is, his own father. Since Jagan followed Naturopathy method for the treatment of his wife Ambika. While growing up Mali doesn't have that much affectionate with his father. He always considers his father, Jagan as a good for nothing. But Jagan is quite undifferentiated with his son. Mali is somewhat disenchanted with the Indian Education System. Hence he would like to do his higher studies on Creative Writing in America, he arranged all the formalities such as visa, passport everything, without the knowledge of his father.

While Mali is in America, Jagan feels pride for it and he considers the letters that are posted by Mali as a precious thing. He shows the letters to his relatives and neighbors with proud and leads a happy life. After passing certain days Mali returned back to his native land with a girl named Grace. She is a half-American and half-Korean girl. Now she adopts another one more culture by having a relationship with Mali, in her multi-cultural life. Jagan has a thought that Mali gets married to Grace. But later he comes to know that Grace and Mali are not yet married. And they are leading a life in a new trend relationship, namely 'living together'.

Jagan belongs to the typical orthodox Hindu family. He used to read Bhagavad Gita regularly and had an ideology of Gandhi's Philosophical thoughts and preaching. He couldn't recognize his son's attitude and his way of behaviorism. On the other hand, he couldn't scold him. Though he is ready to advise Mali, the young generation is not at all ready to hear even a single word from the matured old aged person. Anyhow Jagan accepts Grace as his daughter-in-law and pays attention for her, but Mali refused it so.

In the meanwhile, Mali had an interest in starting a flamboyant business that embraces machine factory. He seeks his father to help him by providing the premium deposit. This time Jagan denied and this makes the father-son relationship into a bitter experience. The highly disappointed son has some alcoholic beverages to forget his bitter incidents. Unfortunately, he met an accident and sentenced to the prison for driving under the influence of alcohol and deserts his wife. On hearing all these things Jagan doesn't wish to live in the fictional town Malgudi. So

that he would like to quit the place and wish to have a pilgrimage trip that the seniors of the Hindu orthodox family usually have.

Jagan's cousin brother, who reacts like a bridge between Jagan and Mali, is a man of good-natured and helping tendency. Through him, only Jagan comes to know that Mali is imprisoned. Jagan wishes that Mali should be in Jail because he can be acquainted with his mistakes and asked him to get a ticket for Grace to her hometown that will be a safer place for her. According to Jagan's word, Mali did it so. He is the man who can understand the pain of a traditional common father and a modern activist son.

Through this fictional work, R.K. Narayan expresses various ideologies to his readers. Though the number of characters in this fiction is few, it carries valuable background knowledge in it. For instance: the character of Jagan has demonstrated as an orthodox Hindu family man, which reveals the cultural identity of Jagan and he is psychologically depressed by his own son. This reflects the Psychoanalytic theory of human nature or tendency.

On the other hand, the character of Grace reconciles the tri-cultural inheritance in it. Usually, there occurs a dilemma in our day to day life. Here the particular character has confusion on following three different customs and traditions in the name of the culture. As in the late nineties,' the female are subjugated and it is clearly pictured through Grace. Though she is willingly like to have a living together relationship with Mali, she is not much considered by his beloved while comparing to his father Jagan. Mali doesn't give that much importance to her. This shows the suppression of the woman not only in the Eastern Culture or Indian culture, even though the culture of Western or American or Korean or whatever she might be. Grace is the representation of the woman in the whole world.

The term 'nation' is derived from the Latin word '*nation*' that gives the meaning "a race of people an aggregation of persons of the same ethnic family and speaking the same language". In Old French, it refers to "a race of people, a large group of people with common ancestry and language" (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/nation>). Literature is a part of human life. Critics had criticized literature as a mirror since it reflects human life in many aspects. In this work, R.K. Narayan has a comparing and contrasting nature between the two isolated characters Jagan and Grace.

According to the political science 'nation' is a place which has its administrative or political boundary. In general, it is considered as a geographical landscape. On the point of view of literature, it is dissimilar. Each and every nation has its own set up of culture, customs, traditions, beliefs, religious, mannerism, behaviorism, etc. All these various phenomena are lies according to the weather and climate condition of the particular region. Apart from all these it also varies according to the occupations of the group of people.

Here Jagan is a typical senior citizen in the family and at the same time, he is a widower too. According to his cultural religious metaphorical belief, he should visit the temples and try to

have peace that which leads him to heaven once he passes away from this eternal earth life. He is highly disappointed with his son when he brings a half-American and half-Korean woman as his daughter-in-law. After a short span of time having a conversation with her, once again he felt sad because his son didn't get married to her and leading a life of living together relationship. All these kind of activities are not yet followed in his country.

Jagan has thought that his son spoils the ancient custom and tradition that they had followed for a long time. He just thinks about his own side only. Initially, he never thinks about the situation and the negotiation of the mind of Grace. Already Grace lost her national consciousness since she was a mixture combination of American and Korean parents. Now once again she is going to adapt herself in a new nation that which makes her in a position of loss of identity.

Each and everyone in the world has an individual identity and an identity along with the nation where they live. Probably in general according to their nation they are called Indians, American, Korean, Pakistani, Japanese, Chinese, etc. It also bases on their regional language or mother tongue of their own particular state or region. For example Malayali, Tamizhian, Kannadian, etc.

According to Benedict Anderson, a nation is a group of individuals that are constraints together by a social construction group. In his critical work titled under "Imagined Community" he pictures that a nation is a form of many individuals united together. He also includes that "the idiosyncratic method and preoccupations of Imagined Communities seem to me still on the margins of the newer scholarship on nationalism – in that sense, at least, not fully superseded" (8). As per Anderson's word Jagan is an individual and Grace is an individual. While both of them connected to a particular term 'nation' it is contradictory and both of the individuals lose their own self-identity.

The spread of capitalism brought the demand for constant retraining and Gellner thought that as a result, this demand was met by creating a common past, common culture, and language, which lead to the birth of nations" (78).

According to Gellner, two men who have the same kind of attitude and thoughts are considered as men from the same country. Here Grace, a girl from America who also has a mixed culture with Korean, is now ready to adapt to the culture of India with his beloved Mali and his family. Jagan an orthodox Hindu spiritual man doesn't like his daughter-in-law since she belongs to another nation, is ready to accept her as his daughter-in-law. Though both of them have a different attitude they are showing their willingness to have a good relationship than that of their country or cultural ideologies. The national consciousness proves their patriotism and traditional devotions. Apart from that, they have humanism.

Work Cited

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