

# Use of Humor in R.K. Narayan's Novel

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## Abstract

Humour is a state of mind that has the ability to make people laugh. Humor and wit identify the comic species. Wit is the mental faculty of intelligence. In his novels, Narayan employs wit to produce humour. It is possible to understand the sociological interpretations of humour in R. K. Narayan's works for his ideas are based on in-depth research and offer several viewpoints on literary interpretations. He uses critical analysis to build social order, acceptance, and transformation through making fun of human conditions, interactions, and cultures. Humor is a sort of art, and people's acceptance of humour depends on a variety of sociological circumstances. Humor improves a person's physical and psychological health. It is an amusing intellectual experience that makes people laugh. Narayan's writings, which are fictionalized, portray the peculiarities and foibles of modern Indian life. They have a genuinely sarcastic quality. Comedy is a sort of art that helps people understand the evil that exists in their society. R. K. Narayan uses the genre of comedy to combat corruption in society. To demonstrate to his viewers the contradiction present in Indian culture, he uses regular people from the community as his protagonists. Indian philosophy is heavily infused in his writings. A discussion of the sociological interpretations of humour that may be found in many contexts, descriptions, narratives, and dialogues that enhance and advance human life is attempted.

**Keywords:** Humour • Perception • Sociological evolution • Cognitive experience • Irony

## Introduction

R.K. Narayan is one of the most well-known and popular Indian novelists. His tales emphasised the humour and vitality of everyday life and were based on a caring humanism. Using the English literary idiom, Narayan conjures diction of exceptional freshness and rare creativity. He was a vivid and dynamic author who uses humour and simplicity to explain human behavior [1].

RK Narayan stood shortened to R. K. Narayan, on Graham Greene's advice. Narayan published works up until the age of eighty-seven, wrote for more than fifty years, and lived to be ninety-five. He wrote fifteen novels, five collections of short stories, a number of travelogues and non-fiction collections, English translations of Indian epics, and the memoirs "My Days ". However, it is not Narayan's prolific output, nor the currency of his content or the lack of either-that places him among the finest storytellers of modern English [2].

## Literature Review

R. K. Narayan was born on 10 Oct, 1906 in Madras, South India. He got his education at Maharaja's college in Mysore where his father was a teacher. He did not become a successful writer right away, like many successful people. His father was a teacher at

Maharaja's college, now known as collegiate high school, in Mysore, where RK Narayan received his schooling education. He did not become a successful writer right away, like many successful people. With the little money he received from writing tales and essays for several newspapers, he struggled to make a life. But all changed when renowned British author Graham Greene read the first draught of his Malgudi-set novel *Swami and friends* [3]. With the imaginary help of Graham Greene, it was published, and the author never looked back, enthraling millions of readers all over the world. Together, he produced 29 novels based on Malgudi and a large number of short stories. His novel 'The Guide' won him the prestigious Sahitya Academi Award first time given to a book in English. R. K. Narayan created an imaginary world that doesn't exist yet resonates with folks who read English because it is so perfectly genuine. His books have endured in popularity for many years because of their subdued, comforting appeal. Additionally, numerous American universities include his writing in their literature curricula [4].

The list of Narayan's achievements is never ending. He won many awards during the course of his literary career. His first major award was the Sahitya Academi Award (1958) for 'The Guide'. He won the Film fare award for best story when the book was adapted into a movie. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1964 as part of the republic day honors. He received the AC Benson Medal in 1980 from

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the (British) royal society of literature, where he had an honorary membership. He received the honorary membership in the American academy of arts and letters in 1982. Despite numerous nominations, he never won the Nobel prize for literature.

Honorary doctorates were also awarded by Delhi university, the university of Mysore, and the university of Leeds in 1967, 1976, and 1977, respectively (1973). In recognition of his contributions to English literature, Narayan received a nomination at the end of his career to serve in the upper chamber of the Indian parliament for a six-years term beginning in 1989. He received the Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian honour, in 2000, a year before his passing.

Through his writing, Narayan was most successful in opening up India to the outside world. Along with Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, he is regarded as one of the three top writers of Indian literature in the English language. One of the greatest novels India has ever produced; he gave his readers something to look forward to with *Malgudi* and its inhabitants. He did a convincing and experimental job of bringing small town India to his viewers. *Malgudi* was not simply a made-up Indian village; it was also alive with people, every one of whom had their own quirks and personalities, making the situation feel as familiar to the reader as if it were their own neighborhood regarding him [5].

## Discussion

A sociological perspective on the humorist R.K. Narayan: "It was Monday morning, and Swaminathan was reluctant to open his eyes. In the calendar, he thought Monday was particularly terrible. (1944, p. 1) the reluctance of a school boy to attend school brings out the humor in Narayan's writings. His creative mind uses life's truths to reveal humour. Characters are quite humorous with the intention of painting a fun picture with their language. All of the characters have witty, humorous personalities that give readers a lot of enjoyment. Narayan's comedy is honourable, knowledgeable, and mature because of his in-depth research, broad knowledge, and minute perceptions of ephemeral life [6].

Narayan writes in his 1935 first book *Swami and Friends*, "and yet you are roving about the home like an unbound donkey". Swami's exams were about to start from next day. He makes a list of things to buy for the examination and gives it to his father. His father gets very angry and scolds him for wandering like a donkey in the house and not being serious about studies.

The word "donkey" used by Narayan as a metaphor makes the reader laugh as we all know the qualities of a donkey. Swami is being compared to a lazy donkey that has no work to perform. Narayan's humor provides an important ingredient in his otherwise strong indictment and criticism of the contemporary society and its many facets, oddities in characters. His mild satire provokes people, to think and change towards the betterment of life. His stories like 'Swami and friends' have humorous details which provoke emotion and enlighten experience.

Father of Swami reads an article about a brave young man who confronts a tiger. He tells Swami to learn something from the article which leads to an argument between them. Father challenges Swami

to demonstrate his bravery by spending the night alone in his workplace [7].

When Swami was sleeping at his father's office, he felt lonely. His imagination of ghosts and devils grew, and his heart beat faster. He had a night. The psychological effect of an imagination of tiger and trauma faced by Swami tickles the funny bone of the reader. Narayan has the innate quality of going in-depth of the childhood experience and puts in with a touch of humor.

Swami ducks beneath the bench after spotting a shadow in the space. He bites into the flesh of the thief and thus becomes a hero over night; he is praised by the police and teachers. "You saw how beastly our headmaster was. You would have punched him in the face if you had been in my position. When Rajan attended Board High School, he came to see Swami. Swami receives a spanking from the headmistress for smashing the ventilator window in his office. Everyone who was wearing a headgear made of foreign fabric took it off and burned it. Swami pursues them on their hartal and throws stones through the school's windows. The following day, the Headmaster summoned Swami and reprimanded him. He quickly leaves the structure, muttering that it is filthy. Swami states that if he had been in Rajam's shoes during this encounter, Rajam would have struck him in the face [8].

The situation reflects the strong nationalism among the people of *Malgudi*, and they are united to protest against the British Rule in India by boycotting wearing caps made up of foreign cloth. Swami wants to gain sympathy from his friend Rajam. Amusement arises from false claims upon our sympathy which ends in laughter. Because of his harsh ways, Swami refers to his Headmaster as a beast. Swami's character is full of the innocence of a child. It is natural for any human being to revolt on being punished, but Swami being a student had to suppress his anger.

In the novel the painter of signs Narayan tells us about a painter. Raman was a voracious reader of books. He delves into Menaster's reading philosophy, calling him a beast for his rigid conduct. Readers laugh at the various bookworm characters. "It's not like folks are terrified of kids these days. In those days, the house was full "added Aunt. At that time, according to Aunt, the house was packed.

The reference to the past by Raman's aunt refers to a time when the house was crowded with kids who were respectful to their elders. Nowadays, a young child would intimidate their parents and demand money from them. The reader giggles at the role-reversal between children and their parents. The reader laughs along with the population control message. Raman believes that bachelors should receive a bonus since by staying single; they help to reduce population growth.

The irony with which Narayan presents the issue of population expansion makes the reader chuckle. Where long lines of people may be seen battling for food, clothing, and shelter. Narayan, Narayan uses animal characters to create humour in his books, such as "a tiger for *malgudi*." In this book, the tiger speaks for itself. "The Head Masters' room was the scene. I was convinced and saw a very respectable man leaping upon his table and climbing into an attic".

In order to rest, the tiger goes into the head master's room. The tiger saw a man climbing up a table to get to the attic, where he felt safe. According to Narayan, head master is a respectable man in a

position of authorities who does absurd things like leap on the table and hides in the attic to save his life. The comic character of a chatty man is used by Narayan to amuse the reader in the 1986 book "The Talkative Man." The wife of Dr. Rann was looking for her husband. When she arrives in Malgudi, she encounters a chatty fellow and tells him everything. The chatty man worries that Mrs. Rann would strip him of his title. In this novel 'The World of Nagaraj' Narayan says that misunderstanding between Gopu and his son Tim. The technique of using absurdity in the character of Nagaraj, when he is talking to himself loudly produces amusement.

## Conclusion

Narayan details his grandma's life in the 1992 book "the grandmothers tale." Bala and Viswa were wed while they were young. When Viswa visited his wife, his neighbor would make fun of him. Readers are amused by Viswa's desire to see his wife.

R.K. Narayan collected his hilarious articles into the 1956 book next Sunday. Article 'radio license': Narayan was passing through the last grace period allowed for renewing his radio license. To renew his radio license, he had to complete a form. The author says that it always happens when one has to write slowly in block letters. He ruined the form as a result, and he was too afraid to ask the officer for another one. In his 1974 book "The Reluctant Guru," Narayan wrote a few amusing essays. The fundamental human instinct of fear is constantly present in "The Reluctant Guru." This essay makes me giggle because of Narayan's dread as an emotion. The subject of a reporter's interview with Narayan was afterlife, which also happened to be the subject of his book "The English teacher." He asked Narayan if he believed in an afterlife and if he could converse with spirits, see ghosts, or practice spirituality.

Narayan responded by stating that he writes fiction. The book "a writer's dream" contains some humorous sections. Narayan chose

unusual topics for his articles and attempts to make them humorous in the essay "pick pockets." He respects burglars because they are good, peaceful, and harmless.

The struggle between quietist renunciation and social action that Narayan's novel seems to address has precedents in traditional Hindu storytelling. After revisiting Narayan's works several years later, Naipaul explains how he initially mistook them for holy texts and only afterwards realized that they were more than just social comedy.

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