



Research Paper

## Self-Realization in R.K Narayan's The Man-Eater of Malgudi

Dr.Sindhu C.R

Department of English

Vidyavardhak First Grade College

Sheshadriyer Road ,Myosre. Karnataka 570001

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### Abstract:

R.K Narayan in his fiction *The Man- Eater of Malgudi* has portrayed the miniature of Indian-ness in terms of physical topography, Devadasi devastation and the disastrous ending of Vasu. Critics have compared Vasu to the mythical character of religious tales and many other tools to overview Narayan's usage of religious atmosphere by identifying them through their names and their controversial associations of synonyms, acts according to the identical perseverance. Whereas this article highlights the realization and its inculcation endows in two of the characters presented by the author. They were posturized in two opposite essence by critics, like Vasu a negative character and Sastri being a minor character, his story was untold. In this paper both good and evil will be placed in the balancing bars as scientific/ spiritual.

**Key-words:** Devadasi-Prostitution, Controversial-Conflicts, Realization-Understanding the Truth, Scientific-Study of Objects, Spiritual-Consciousness

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### Literature Review:

An article "Environmental (in) Justice: An Eco-critical study of R.K Narayan's *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*" discuss an urged necessity of today's world called, "Environmental Catastrophe." The article elaborates an impact of Indian mitigated environment with its influence on other socio-cultural issues, social justice and equality. Profound criticisms on *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* streams Mythical Usage, Devadasi Defiance, Postcolonial Strategies, Theme and Forms, portrayal of negative (asura) qualities and their comparison with Rakshas of Hindu Mythology. Critics have intense opinion that R.K Narayan's writing exhibit an entire India-ness through the names borrowed from religious base and the characters were projected as they inherit the natural behaviors of said identical personalities. Even different waves of feminist ideologies have been paid way for through research on *The Man Eater of Malgudi*.

### I. Introduction:

How distinguished is this article by analyzing the characters on the parameter of already implied thoughts by commentators. To describe Feminism, it has the antecedents going way back to ancient Greece, feminism in literature surfaces from Chaucer to Virginia Woolf. In all their writing women were not only deprived of education and independence but also depicted as slaves to the then men. Whereas, in literature written by men on women were viewed as goddess and prominent matchmakers, business personalities but, not free of slavery. Obedient wives, and mother figures are integral means of perpetuating these ideologies of gender. As M.A.R Habib tends to focus on how feminists have often rejected these diverse ways of viewing the world stressing instead the various shades between binaries like "female and male, between black and white, and indeed urging a vision of unity rather than opposition. In this processes, such categories are recognized to be founded on no essence or natural distinction" (214, *Literary Criticism*) but are viewed as popular culture and ideological constructions and performance. Hence, another fundamental feminist concern has been the "rejection of theory as such, since in its very nature it houses these masculine presuppositions." (214. *Literary criticism*) therefore this research paper falls into the rejection genre.

The physical body of women becomes a powerful metaphor of such specificity and concreteness, which rejects the male Cartesian tradition that thinking can somehow occur on a plane of disembodied

feminism. Many feminist thinkers opine that the body that we inhabit will shape our thinking at the profoundest levels. If our body happened to be born into a rich family with political ties, our political, religious, and social affiliations will inevitably reflect this. Whether "my body is male or female will initially determine my thought and experience at a far deeper level than which books I read." (214 *Literary Criticism*). Hence Rangī a prostitute belongs to poor class with hereditary profession should not be blamed for her discharge of duties towards mongers of flush trade. As she stresses that she is only a public woman, following what is "my dharma." She may be a sinner to Natraj and other deformed men pretends to be a virgin but "I do nothing worse than what some of the so-called family women are doing." Visa-vies multiple illegal affairs, unreliable disloyal to their wife's and husband's but Rangī observes her rules. Whatever she "may do, I don't take opium." (156. *The Man Eater of Malgudi*).

This is where the freedom of women was carnage. Essence of humanity was slaughtered by men to procure their interest in seduce women in public by tying her destiny to be entitled under social system called "Devadasi" made to be entertained. Even the humblest men like Natraj, having highly respectable status with caste mark, becomes prey to the devil present in him "the lust" his aroused, confined and most confidential mind of Ravana was ready to concourse desire secretly. He whispers "my mind was busy following the fleshy image of Rangī and perhaps I resented the intrusion." (109 *The Man Eater of Malgudi*).

He wanted to attract her attention, but Shastri the Conqueror of good values like Rama, his nature always threatens Natraj for being lustful towards Rangī "if Shastri came to know of it, he would denounce me and leave my service." (178). Narayan has all sorts of women in his depiction a mother figure, a goddess Radha, a wife is nameless typically an Indian obedient wife always afraid to be defiled. But the journey of realization in his characters to merge with wisdom was not accurately followed by any of them but hints to be deformed. Whoever penetrates into the life style of Natraj is bound to flow with culminating force with their essence of sustenance. At the beginning His press in Kabir lane parted into two different worlds one for the trespassers parlor, illustrates all evil thoughts and its origin, an absolute market for thoughts, anybody can orally excel on any topic. Another for the only employ Shastri an absolute sanctity with central consciousness with one thought and one duty, plays a major role, despite of being an employee his nature of exuberance is like an owner, very much effortful, dedicated and highly professional. He exiles with his attitude, maintains the dignity and status of his press, his punctuality and the wisdom he acquired to be 'silent', spiritual and patience are never been easy to acquire, but controlled and adopted marvelously by Shastri

Author gives hint of 'Asuras' tales told by spiritual figure Shastri on 'Bhasmasura', and 'Mahisasura', have invented their own destiny on 'ego', collaborates an anti-climax in their own existence, compared Vasu's style of living, is saturated law of realization by bifurcating the deeds of karma stored not with the physical body but with the soul. Wisdom of Shastri, being a scholar and a learned man contributes his understanding of existence a true world, actually maintains equally balancing force in the novel. Consistency in his conversation facilitates him to be out of Vasu's case. He establishes his relationship with poet as a customer but not even once he encountered with Vasu nor with his demonic targets. He enhanced his art of living by keeping away from all the torment. Insults and treatments being received from Vasu like complaining against Natraj to the rent controller, inspection from the forester and health department, were untoward to Natraj. But Shastri's discourse on all being reaped of karma and Natraj is held responsible for any cause. Entry of multiple characters to Natraj's life is a reason for an entire course of their distinguished deed to be fulfilled and whatever happens that would be a result of successful engagement being discharged by all the partners. Hence Shastri compares Vasu to the typical demonic characters of myths which his soul refines solutions to transform his essence from evil thoughts into pure by inviting destruction of resolution in him therefore Shastri expresses "every demon carries within him, unknown to himself, a tiny seed of self destruction, and goes up in thin air at the most unexpected moment." (240 *The Man Eater of Malgudi*).

Shastri realizes that devastation is not the act of a body but by the reserved duties of birth secrets. Though Natraj was a pivotal character to be portrayed as the center of the narrative he fails to prove that he is the hero, because he invites his own room of absolute darkness as he cannot say no to anybody from taxidermist to prostitute Rangī.

Whereas Vasu's self-realization could be viewed from technical point or scientific views a gentleman in terms of love and affair with Rangī. Though he knew she was a prominent prostitute of Malgudi and body is her investment, irrespective of all her poor status and life style he had promised her to take her to Mumbai, accepts food prepared by her and prizes her cooking skills, he cares her very much, although sometimes "he is completely mad and picks up all kinds of women and expects Rangī to quarrel with them- but not" Rangī. Her selfless attitude and peaceful world of understanding her dharma, duty of her present birth is challenging. Confidence in her resolutions and expects some respect and freedom of her existence is unmatched to any of the characters who always expects sympathy and help. Though, physically betrayed but mentally virgin. Salute to Narayan for upbringing an art of encouragement, a ray of hope in living the future discourse. Rangī is ready to take up challenges. Considers her duty is only a part of life not an entire life is dedicated to continue

prostitution . She still thinks of her eligibility to live in the society according to her wish. She says, "Let any man do what he fancies. I don't care what anyone does, so long as he doesn't dictate to me what I should do."(158*The Man Eater of Malgudi*).

Vasu's life is an open book. He was open in valuing the prostitutes, never tried to demurral the interest of Rangi. He discusses his plan of killing Kumar with Rangi that shows his reliability on her as a lover more than a seduction. His scientific thinking and his view of life were completely different from all other characters. His rebellious nature made him to be involved in all the freedom fighting and had been to jail many a times. His extremist nature of not considering relations through emotions and attachments in all their affairs are highly appreciable. At the other hand critics found him as a demonic images of the bookendowed tough behavior and true logic as Natraja once told that "he was not such a bad fellow after all. He would listen to me."(212).

Despite of Vasu being viewed as a negative role even the same credits evaluate Natraja too through his secret lust for seduction is irresistible when he met Rangi in the midnight at his press while working for poet. He provoked to get seduce sinful lust arouses in him when he secretly watches through the hole in the screen as a telescope, through which he can see the galaxy of prostitutes arrival and departure he was mistake that "Rangi was the only woman"(109) who visits vasu but "sometimes a slim girl went by, sometimes a fair one, sometimes an in-between type, sometimes a fuzzy-haired woman, sometimes a fashionable one who had taken the trouble to tidy herself up before coming out"(109*The Man Eater of Malgudi*) only Natraja knew the hole. Before he take any move he gets confirmed that Shastri was not there. He reacts when the illuminated face of Rangi at a midnight in his press and his first reaction was that "Shastri was on the other side of the curtain, facing the wall" and "awful fleshy creature whom Shastri considered it a sin to look at" although Rangi was "black as cinders and looked rugged", according to Natraja she had an "irresistible physical attraction" and he was afraid that he might succumb to her charms.(154) Natraja always in illusion, acts like a forecaster, lost in his dreams and even his thoughts are far from his reality, frequently controlled by nature of deformity enjoys when he saw her nearer "she wasn't so rugged" when The light touched her thigh cheek-bones and he found himself saying to himself, "not bad, not bad. Her breasts are billowy, like those one sees in temple sculptures. Her hips are also classical."(155) Natraja never accompanied any Devadasi's so far but having an unconscious partaker of his own resolutions, which are not meant to be successful "my blood tingled with an unholy thrill. Let my mind slide into a wild fantasy of seduction and passion. I was no longer a married man with a child and a home, I was an adolescent lost in dreams over nude photograph"(156) again returns to his body consciousness, being awakened to avoid and escape the realization.

He was relieved to see "Shastri continuing his sleep, his position unchanged"(156). Shastri sustains his entity throughout the journey, remain auspicious and highly philosophical. Whereas Natraja disturbed by one are the other issues fails to act as an owner and a hero. His reaction would be altered depending on the priority like Rangi's position in Darkness was a mistress but during sun light "her place would be right between the decorated chariot and the group of pipers and drummers.(157). Hence Shastri is the true navigator of philosophical and spiritual journey. He is unchanged, accounts everything in respect, enjoys family trip to holy places, though he knew that the story of Rangi's birth "Who is Rangi?" And "that he knew who fathered her into this world" (107) leads him to disregard her but much against to his principles, he called her inside the house, seated her on a mat, gave her coffee and betel leaves to chew, and induced her to speak. "My wife understood why I was asking this woman in and treated her handsomely on the whole."(238). Shastri knew that only through love and harmony one can achieve the proposed law of life. In return Rangi's loyalty shifts from the master Natraja to Shastri because she reveals the secret of Vasu's death not to Natraja but to Shastri

## II. Conclusion:

This article demonstrates how the targets of science and philosophies are interacting with the existence of this world and their destiny are the same. Applying any critical theory is not sufficient to elaborate the remedies which are present in the text. Hence this should be a moral to any men of this society. I recommend that the system of education should inculcate more value based syllabus to celebrate the wisdom achieved through understanding various professions and their ethics.

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