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A Comparison of the Study of the Regional Novels of Thomas Hardy and R. K. Narayan in the Life Style of the Society

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Abstract:

Reading stories is a good habit. It conveys much useful information to the readers. The next development in story writing resulted novel presenting. The definition of the novel can be classified as something totally different presentation as that of a story. The main theme of a novel is to take unexpected but delightful turns justifying the act. Novels further reached a stage of better presentation. Novelists started presenting the sequences linking much with the area they live and are called the regional novelists. The novels of Thomas Hardy [England] and R. K. Narayan [India] are studied in depth on the topic the life style of the society.

Thomas Hardy and R.K. Narayan have made distinct mark as regional novelists in English literature. Though there are other novelists who have tried hands in this genre, it is Hardy and R.K. Narayan who have perfected this genre. They have created a special place for regional novels by creation of a particular region for their novels. Through their memorable novels they have established themselves regional novelists for excellence.

Thomas Hardy has written about twenty-four novels. In all these novels Wessex is the background, a province that consisting of six villages. People get an intimate knowledge about the topography, the social life and other physical, geographical details about the Wessex. Thus Wessex became a memorable place.

Like Thomas Hardy, R.K. Narayan has created memorable place called Malgudi in his novels. Malgudi is a town and it has its own special features. R.K. Narayan has made Malgudi, the background of all his novels and short stories. What is Wessex to Thomas Hardy is the same to Malgudi to R.K. Narayan.

The life style of the ladies in the novels of Thomas Hardy is something an act of welcome. They had full discretion of doing all things in their life of their own accord. R.K. Narayan described the lady characters as a noble one and was under the control of their superiors.

The weather conditions of the country have a direct impact over two parameters. The food and dressing are the factors. The London is a cold country and the people have their food to get more warmth, accustomed to have intoxication liberally and take corn and wheat for their daily life. The dresses are designed with wool and fur to maintain the warmth, people used to have frequent get together. India is basically a hot country and the food habits differ as that of London and people dress themselves in a grand manner.

The formation of the villages in the English country was matching to population and the traffic there. The mud roads were popular. The village atmosphere was much conducive to the inhabitants. There were certain developments in the status of the villages during the period of R.K. Narayan. The site had a facelift, tar roads were existing and motor cars were operated. The railway services also came into use.

The authors' dedication was so high that they visualized their thoughts in a crystal clear manner and presented in their novel stage by stage. This brought a close bondage between the reader and the author.

Wessex had an important but incalculable effect upon Thomas Hardy's personality, his conception of the novel and his style. The author's use of the regional characteristics of Wessex in the development of the theme, plot, characters and getting is, vital to the

success of his novels and is one of the chief attractions. Hardy could not write convincingly about the high society and continental journey of life of London. In fact, his range was restricted to rural Wessex and those characters that had a direct connection to the novel.

Thomas Hardy's Wessex characters are truly regional because, their livelihood depends on the soil. There is a definite correlation between the traits and experiences of Hardy's characters and their connection to the region. Those who visit Wessex, lack vitality and universality because they lay outside the author's sympathy. Thomas Hardy pictures his rustics as the regional characters with their superstitions, folk-love, and their dependence on the Thomas earth and their dialect. The major regional characters give, a stranger a regional flavor to Thomas Hardy's novels.

R.K. Narayan is such a novelist, whose novels, though they primarily centre round narrowly demarcated place such as Malgudi, rise above the regional framework and become novels of greater significance and broader vision. As Thomas Hardy's novels called Wessex novels, R.K. Narayan's novels called Malgudi novels. In this way Narayan's Malgudi had the analogical relationship with Hardy's Wessex.

A close observation of the vivid spectrum of the life of Malgudi presents the life of the Indians in general and reflects the life of a larger world, the Indian sub-continent. The little words of Malgudi with its socio-political changes and economics, as well as industrial development stands for the wider world of Indian and the fast changing nature of characters in all the walks of life, ever since India became independent.

Referring to Thomas Hardy, who is an English writer, has done much work to impress the fate, love, marriage, and superstitious in novels. His ideas spread to the radius of, say fifty miles in and around imaginary Wessex, confirming him a regional novelist. Incidentally Thomas Hardy do not believe in superstitious but supports fate. Thomas Hardy was brought up by, in a religious environment. He totally deviates from that culture. His parents visit church regularly and Hardy has no belief in church. This is a point for reference to socio-culture since he drastically changed his behavior. Most of his novels are classical sense of tragedy brought in a religious atmosphere. He declares that actions are one for man and the other for woman, which means men are justified in an action and women are not for it. Purity is not in body but in the mind, is an important theme as per Hardy.

He described the Wessex with good population, living under the Queen Victoria, the modern Wessex was with railways, the penny post, mowing and reaping machines, union ware houses, Lucifer matches, and labourers could read. The development of Science and technology had a great leap and in all the novels of R.K. Narayan get a reference on this concept. R.K. Narayan was the chief architect of the imaginary Malgudi and in a phased manner, had illustrated the technical development of the city such as the railway station, banks, churches, posh bungalows, hospital and so on.

The question of fate doesn't find a place in all the novels of R.K. Narayan. However, another theme, the superstitions gets a major place in the novels. The study of socio-culture in the novels of Thomas Hardy makes us to know the real life pattern of the people of those days.

R.K. Narayan describes that the discipline in the society had a high concentration. The elders of the family and the society were highly regarded; their suggestions and opinions were considered to the core. Ultimately the senior person of the family is to anchor the situation. The concept of joint family was in practice in the total society.

Adoption of alcoholic stuff is common on those days in western countries, probably due to extreme cold weather conditions. However, this may not be applicable in hot countries like India. Due to this analogy R.K. Narayan had not paid deep concentration in this issue, in his novels.

The role of fate played in the life of human being, is well explained by Thomas Hardy. He feels that it is a major role occupying in almost all the persons. The fate sometime does good deeds and in some occasion it does all things in the reverse way. The author impresses that, this is much due to their good and bad deeds and thoughts.

Thomas Hardy is in the habit of expressing the women characters in a deep sense. Their physical structure is well described, to understand such ladies are always of great demand. The role of a woman is made praise worthy by R.K. Narayan in his novels. However, he is very careful in making any comments over the behaviour and the physical appearance of any woman-folk.

R. K. Narayan's Malgudi was very compact one with limited area. The inmates of the village were cordial and had good relations with each other. There were no instances cited such as quarrel or fight. The period in which R.K. Narayan was presenting his novels was under the influence of British colony. This may be the one reason that no internal conflicts were developed. People were totally united for a common struggle.

The culture of certain people was in a low profile and they used harsh and rude languages. This has necessitated the elite people to part from them and has their own group. This information is available in the Thomas Hardy's novel.

Thomas Hardy loved his novels to be concluded with a tragic end. It may be, most probably he wanted to convey that right act will bring good and vice-versa.

R.K. Narayan impresses the audience in all his novels with a start of things to move in a jovial way, making the feeling in the light way. However, he changes the track gradually and takes to a miserable situation and end the story in a tragedy. This may be due to the personal experience of the author.

Thomas Hardy in most of his novels explains the characters of women in an elaborate manner. He exposes the ladies of the individuality, thoughts. He gives full freedom in the society, as they long. Sometimes the deal ends in the opportunity of selecting their life partners.

R.K. Narayan, due to lack of education in India on those days, the women folk much depend upon their family members all the issues. It is also another fact that, though certain ladies were well educated, still was under the control of the elders. This is considered a good discipline in the family. In a nut shell it is declared that teen age girls were under the strict control of the family members.

Thomas Hardy has a greater knowledge on the topography of his land. The life pattern of the inmates is more linked with this concept. Basically the weather conditions of the universe can be classified as cold and hot. The author praises the cool and cold country, just because Dorset or the Imaginary town Wessex is in the cold location of the England. The familiarities of the cold country are use of liquors, wearing warm clothes. Even the houses are constructed in a different manner to prevent the snow fall.

R.K. Narayan also broadly discusses the weather conditions in his novels. Incidentally India falls on the equatorial region. Description of the weather is based on this parameter - the hot country. The Malgudians used to meet their friends at the river bank of Sarayu, where a clear evening breeze is welcomed, because of the huge mountains. The rivers and mountains are a point of focus by the authors in their novels.

In the days of Thomas Hardy, the development of engineering technology was highly limited. The concept of electricity and its appliances were not projected in any of the novels. In fact, the electricity had come into existence in London during the period 1925.

R.K. Narayan is lucky person to enjoy the benefit of the electricity, since it was in existence during his period. The street lights are figured in his novels. There is a mention about the use of the fans and some other electrical appliances in the houses of the South India.

Thomas Hardy in his regional novels never had an opportunity to mention the details of the education of the society. His basic interest was to dissect the concept of love and fate. In fact, both the topics, he had interleaved very often.

R.K. Narayan took the pains of appreciating the educational level conducted by the British. It is a happy note to mention that the schools and colleges had the regular board meeting to review the standards of the teaching in their institutions. If necessary, instructions were given by the top level management for the correction and remedy. Celebrations of festivals were an important task by the society almost in all the countries. The celebration of festivals brings happiness and harmony despite financial burdens. One of the major festivals in western countries is grand celebrations of the great Christmas. The celebration may go for a month. The activities are preparation of finest cakes and sweets, purchase of clothes for the whole family, offering prayers at the church on the birth day of Jesus Christ. Apart from these activities there are many other projects executed for the uplift of the down trended society. India being a secular country their different kinds of festivals celebrated throughout the year. R.K. Narayan did not pay attention on this concept in his novels.

The road conditions on those days of Thomas Hardy were up to the mark for vehicular traffic. The roads were laid with the strengthened mud. The minus point of the mud road is the cluster of dust spread during movement. In the period of Thomas Hardy, the general public had good health. May be due to the least disturbances on pollution and environment.

R. K. Narayan's period is a little developed when compared to Thomas Hardy. There were better improvements in the field of medical, much due to the induction of British colony. The life style of human being is subjected to the continuous change. The motive and policies also getting reflected in response to the socio-culture and the environment thrust. The change can be felt by a decade.

The following parameters are very clearly narrated by Thomas Hardy the life style of men and women, free movement of the women folk with men and deep affection to religion affairs. Thomas Hardy was born in a family observing the true Christian formalities. In

fact, his father was in a leading post in a church. Unfortunately, Thomas Hardy deviated from this concept. He had a strong belief that a life of a person is much more based upon his deeds. This philosophy he had represented in the novels in a great thrust.

R.K. Narayan was born in an orthodox family and was brought up under strict discipline, much pertaining to religious obligations. But it is something hard to mention that he had a strange feeling and belief that superstition is a strong tool in the life of a human being. Most of his novels go in the track of joyous mood for a long time but the author will wait for an opportunity to present the superstition as one of the important parameter for any bad and good deeds. This sort of action, the author believed that will bring an idea of the topic mentioned.

R.K. Narayan was in the writing field for more than sixty years. The Royal Society of London gave him an award. The government of India made him as a Member of Parliament to Rajya Sabha. R.K. Narayan popularity became wide when Graham Green in 1935 took the pains of publishing the novel *Swami and Friends* in London.

Both the novelists had a peaceful and respectful life. They were in good discipline and the society regarded them as the good novelist of their time. Both were bold enough to present the subjects in an aggressive way.

The authors had a broad vision and under the banner of a regional novelist, presented the themes, in a grand fitting manner. This was the cause for their popularity in the field of presentation of regional novels. Even today the novels are of great demand.

Thomas Hardy had logic of supporting the destiny in human life. This term he inserted in his novels for a good and bad cause. Presently this concept may not hold the issues in depth, much due to the fact that the society had developed. R.K. Narayan handled the subject logic in a grand manner. In fact, all the actions are otherwise, have a greater impact with respect to the application of logic. This is a powerful tool and both authors have made use of it. For the better presentation, adoption is another sensitive issue which makes people changes their mind for the present scenario of life.

To conclude, Thomas Hardy and R.K. Narayan is the regional novelist and they have not projected any information beyond their regional limits. Both had classic, sharp ideas to understand what is socio-cultural and environment. They have handled both the topics very well. They are very good regional narrators and touched so many aspects. But these points will be accepted right, only by the respective regions.

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