

Dislocation of Gandhian Ideals in R.K Narayan's the Vendor of Sweets: a Critical Reading

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ABSTRACT: The paper is an attempt to describe the violation of Gandhian philosophy. The ideas of Mahatma Gandhi are fluctuated after the death of him. R.K Narayan superimposes the enrichment of Indian culture through the novel. The paper, by using the novel *The Vendor of Sweets* by R.K. Narayan, elucidates the devilish impact of western culture. In this paper I have tried to show the authenticity of Gandhian philosophy to live happily in this bewitching earth and secondly, it precariously demonstrates the decadent western culture.

KEYWORDS: Mahatma Gandhi, R.K Narayan, Philosophy, Culture and Precariously

I. INTRODUCTION

The enrichment of Indian civilization is percolated in all over the world because of the ideals of Gandhi who germinates the notion of non-violence and moral education to combat with the brutish British. The character of Jagan portrays the reduction of Gandhian ideas through his internal dissatisfaction with his son, Mali. Jagan can be called as a 'Small Gandhi' who eagerly follows the principles of 'Bapu'. The charismatic effect of Mahatma imbues the Indian people to be loyal, merciful and helpful to others. R.K Narayan makes a conflict between Gandhian reflection of society and western norms of society. Narayan perspicuously traces the deterioration of Gandhian ideology and above all, the impact or the affluence of western culture over the masses is palpably exemplified in the novel. Mali discontinues himself from the Indian enhancing culture which is revealed through his rough conversation with his father, Jagan throughout the novel. Mali behaves rudely to his father after his mother's death and thinks that he is the real culprit behind his mother's death. Nature, according to Gandhi, is an indispensable adjunct in our life which makes people enthusiastic and soothing. In one of his letters he writes "Nature suffices for my inspiration. Have I not gazed at the marvelous mystery of the starry vault, hardly ever tiring of the great

panorama? Beside God's handwork, does not man's fade into insignificance? (to D.K. Roy, letter dated 2 February, 1924; quoted in Desai's Diary, vol iv . p .27.) Jagan intends to cure her wife's disease naturally, by using the leaves and through fasting. Mali is horrified due to his father's process in curing his mother by using natural elements. Virtually, Mali commits an error by not eulogizing Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi does not oppose the scientific invention. He, rather motivates the youths to engage themselves in the scientific fields. Mali alienates himself from his father and dislikes the abundance of Indian culture after his mother's death.

Mali's avoidance of Gandhian concept is seen in his conversation with his father. He speaks to his father via the cousin of Jagan. He converses very ruthlessly with his own father through which Narayan excavates the demolition of pacifism in India. Pacifism is the board commitment to make peace. Gandhi uses it as a device to fight against the Britishers. As a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, Jagan behaves very mildly to his wife, his son, and his near and dear ones. Even his wife speaks very rudely to him because of his interference in her disease.

'His wife refused to associate herself with any of his health-giving activities. She hated his theories and lived her own life. Their first clash occurred when he forbade her to swallow aspirin and suggested that she should fry a little margosa tree in and swallow it for relief from headache. Seated beside the ancient pillar in their courtyard, she had knotted a towel round her temples and sawyed madly back and forth, desperately begging for aspirin. Jagan was very sympathetic, no doubt, but he was convinced that aspirin would not do good for her. She had looked up at him and said, 'oh this headache is not half as unbearable as your talk. You would sooner me dead,' I suppose'

Mali's stern adherence to adopt western culture makes Jagan very desperate. He deceives his father by telling that he wants to go America to learn creative learning. Mali unhesitatingly walks

towards the western society. The upliftment of western dresses in Indian society is galvanized through the portrayal of Mali. He does not wear dhoti at his own home and exaggerates himself as a gentleman or a learned man by wearing western dresses .

‘Mali never wore a dhoti at home, but a pair of dark trousers over a white shirt, and always had his feet in sleepers. He hardly ever left his room or visited any part of the house. He seldom went out : if he did, he waited for darkness to descend on the town and then, dressed elaborately in shocks, shoes, jacket and tie, stepped out in the company of Grace and strolled up a deserted part of new Extension Road, but never in the direction of the statue or market road. He carried himself like a celebrity avoiding the attention of the rabble.’

Gandhi is undoubtedly a visionary who can see the ills of industrialization. His *Hind Swaraj* depicts the impending doom of industrialization. Mali intends to establish industry of publishing books. He does not succeed the ladder of publishing books due to his hatred towards Indian civilization and tries to exploit the people economically. Gandhi writes in *Young India* (20-12-1928, p.422), “ God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the west. The economic imperialism of a single tiny minions took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world like locusts “. Mali behaves like schizoid who is addicted to wine after his arrival from America. Bapuji stands against intoxicants like alcohol, tobacco, opium and ganza. The behavior of mali make Jagan pathetic and utters the unalloyed words of Gandhi to get consolation in his inner self. The character of Mali exhibits the destruction of Gandhian culture and the society. Jagan leaves his home to purify his soul.

He gazes all the extreme effects of western society in the mind of his son. He leaves all the property to get salvation .

“Jagan felt it would be impossible for him to get back to the house. ‘ it’ is tainted , but it is not my house that’s”

Gandhi speaks of equal rights of woman and marriage should be a partnership between two equals. Mali’s open relationship with Grace is the root of proliferating western culture .Mali brings her to start a business in India . As a citizen of India it is obligation of Mali to marry her because he shares one bed with her. It perturbs Jagan and leaves the house for redemption.

There is no iota of doubt that the Gandhian ideas refine the cultural heritage of India. Here , Narayan bestows the contamination of western culture. The characters unlike Mali and Grace trace the fluidity and simplicity of Eastern culture or above all, the Indian culture. The novelist irradiates the excessive tolerance of Indian people. Jagan leaves his house without saying anything through which the novelist tries to cite the supremacy of Indian culture.

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