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## THE IDEA OF FAMILY BOND IN THE MAN-EATER OF MALGUDI

ALOK KUMAR ROY

### *Abstract*

*R.k.Narayan has abiding faith in the life and its established order .the story of the man eater of Malgudi makes it clear that Narayan's conception of Life is essentially that of a Hindu.he proves it through the stories for from Hindu classical writings that 'Dharma and Dharma destroys those who try to destroy Dharma'(The Gita) the truth is Soon error later accepted by everyone .Vasu killed himself it is also a parody of the well-known myth about demons such as Ravana, Mahisha and Bhasma, Natraaj as a true Hindu, believes in the incarnation of God or super human being to save the suffering humanity. This finds expression in Natrajs cry of anguish and his prayer to lord Vishnu. "Oh Vishnu, save of elephant, and save all the innocent man and women who are going to pull the chariot." his prayer is granted and the elephant is saved miraculously .vacuuming an effort to trap a couple of mosquitoes, bangss on his forehead with the flat of his plam and dies of conclusion.*

**Keywords:** *Dharma , man-Eater, Vasuu, faith, Malgudi, women*

The man eater of Malgudi is peopled with so many interesting minor figures who are not really 'minors' there is Sen, the journalist blaming Nehru for everything that goes wrong "Muthu the tea shop.m an who very soon ceases to be just another man selling tea in unwashed tumblers, the adjournment lawyer who owes money for the printing of invitation cards but refuses to mix up a accounts and wants Natraaj to send him cash every time so that he can move the court for adjournment on his behalf (his office consisting) of just a chair for himself, a table and a shelf of law books was above a bed- makers Shop, cotton stuff was always flying about as the matics went down for a week after a legal consultation .then there is a forest officer with his collection of golden thoughts from the Bhagwat Gita, the Upanishads, Shakespeare, mahatma Gandhi, the Bible, Emerson Lord Amesbury and Confucius, the tailor who does not want ailing elephant to move and is suspected by the charitable people of Malgudi to in league with Vasu in his attempt to poison the elephant. Kj who can sit only cross-legged in the queen Anne chair, with his coloured drinks, whichhe is prepared to give away free at the great festival, Rangi, the temple -dancer black as cinders and looking rugged. But still seductive. Natrajs wife is ready to give up everything for her husband but she is most unreasonably Jealous where another women is

concerned however remotely. Dr.joshi, the veterinary surgeon, who insists on prescribing for Natraj – “All diseases are alike whether in men or animals, only the dosage varies, the urchin with his toothless grin who knows if how to make an elephant, it will jump, and the elephant get up. when a frog is put under an elephant, it will jump and the elephant will jump with it.

Thus it has all the characteristics of the stories of R.k.Narayan with an eye for humorous situation in our daily life and with a very slight touch of exaggeration. All characters are full of life and vitalities .they are so very well sketched that we remember them long after we have completed the noble, but the dominant character is Vasu, “The man Eater of Malgudi. The action of the novel is determined by his character, but the story is told from the point of view of Natraj who is also the participant in the action. N.mukherjee remarks that “in doing Narayan has left the reader”. The perplexing picture of a narrator who recounts his story shrewdly but is at the same time a self-confessed bumbler. the two approaches are simply not congruent. the man eater of Malgudi is not so much the story or Vasu as it is the story of the man eater Natraj The printer of Malgudi “K.R.S.lyenger finds that “ the man eater of Malgudi is a modern rendering of the old Bhasmasura myth, and carries a warning to our mighty men of Steel that they are fore-doomed achieve only their own destruction”.

With its unusual subject matter of taxidermist this novel has situations which are realistic as these are humorous making it above all a comedy and closer to fantasy then any of Narayan’s novels. It is full of humour and satire

.Narayan always pokes innocent Fun at our day to day situation. His satire mildly points out the absurdities inherent in all such situations, such as bargain with the waste paper buyer Natrajs journey to Mempi village by Jeep and return journey by bus.the the episode of taking Kumar to Malgudi from Mempi village and the delay in the processions because the elephant ornaments had to be obtained at the last minute from a place ten miles away, Natrajs meeting with the adjournment lawyer in a room full of cotton fluff, Natraj, shastri and the poet feverishly printing Radha Kalyan on the night beford dedication, Natrajs conversation at midnight with Rangi, the prostitute, through the iron grille, the story has a large background but the interrelationships are not so important. the scene is more crowded and eccentric. The centre of events is not attachment or love or money in this novel as it is in case of Mr Sampath, The financial expert and the guide. only Vasu attaches himself to Malgudi are no longer under human control.

The Bhagwat Gita describes two ways of life in this world. the Godly and the Delvish. The deliveries are of the view that the universe is without truth or a moral basis and God .they say that everything is based on the lust. H.vasu, M.A.taxidermist is devil incarnate and the Mempi hills and Mempi village is the place of his action and not the Malgudi town which is away from the wildness. Narayan pushes social convention much further



including a larger preordained scheme. Vasu going the natural way meets his ends as a rakshasa. Here the Delvishmoral basis is saved and the ultimate truth of the universe is protected. Thus the ideas and explanations of the people about Dharma dominate the fact of the story of the man eater of Malgudi. The man eater of Malgudi is a perfect piece of workmanship and it can be termed as a well- turned out novel of R.k.Narayan. The novelist is at his best in depicting the enchanting picture of Malgudi making the setting sharp and alive. there is unhurried pace of life, unfailing good humour, gentle satire and a whimsical playful tone which makes the novel most in the man eater of Malgudi ,Narayan uses myth as a technique to realise his moral mission and employs the familiar literary device of ex machina to achieve his artistic purpose. this arrangement is necessary for the safety and continuity of the human race while lecturing at Columbia University in 1972, Narayan himself said, "at some point in one's writing career ,one takes a fresh look at the so-called myth and legends and finds new meaning in them. After writing a number of novels and short stories based on the society around me. Some year ago suddenly came across a theme which is struck me as an excellent piece of methodology in modern dress. It was published under the title, the man eater of Malgudi ----I based this story on a well-known methodological episode, the story of Mohini and Bhasmasura."

The man- eater of Malgudi is at once a recreation of the old Hindu myth of bhasmasura in modern form (a myth presented with both serious parallelism and ironic contrast in the manner of William Faulkner) and a presentation of two diametrically opposed attitudes to life. the Bhasmasura parallel is clearly indicated in the Nobel in more than one place by Shastri , who tells Natraj the narrator, less than half way through the story that Vasu,"show all the definition of a rakshasa----- a demoniac creature who possessed enormous strength ,strange powers, and genius but recognised no short of restraint of men or God." He adds every rakshasa gets swollen with his ego.he thinks he is invincible, beyond every law.but sooner or later something or other will destroy him. This principle he illustrates from the story of bhasmasura ,---- who acquired a special boon that everything he touched should be scorched, while nothing could destroy him. He made humanity suffer, God Vishnu was incarnated as a dancer of great beauty, named Mohini, with whom the a Sura became infatuated. She promised to yield to him only if he imitated all the gestures and movements of her own dancing. At one point in the dance Mohini placed her palms on her head, and the demon followed this gesture in complete forgetfulness and was reduced to ashes that very second, the blighting touch becoming active on his own head."

The second reference to the Bhasmasura myth comes right at the end of the novel, when in the last paragraph but one Shastri points out to Natraj the moral of vasu's sudden and violent end.

‘Every demon appears in the world with a special boon of indestructibility. Yet the universe has survived all the rakshasas that were born. Every demon carries with in him unknown to himself a tiny seed of self destruction. And goes up in thin air at the most unexpected moment otherwise what is to happen to humanity.

Vasu is indeed the perfect embodiment of the typical rakshasa of ancient Hindu mythology. he seems to be a copy-book example of the demote lot described in detail in the sixteenth chapter of the Bhagwat Gita (Verse 4 to 17) among the demoniac characteristics mentioned here are over seeming pride, wrath, harshness of speech, insatiable desire, and cruelty, such men as Gita says, ”go to the lowest State”. The rakshasa is always pictured as a being of super human strength ugly and ferocious in appearance with cannibalistic propensities, incapable of affection, gratitude sympathy or regard for others, and in fact reveling in inflicting pain a nocturnal creature of the jungle, full of mystery, dirty and unclear in habits, and a being completely athoral, obeying no laws of God or man. The demons in ancient Hindu mythology have another interesting characteristics. There are open Seen to be not ignorant, unlettered monsters but actually Skilled in learned and scientific pursuits and capable of the hardest penance with which they secure valuable bones from the gods. Shukracharya , guru of the Asura was a scholar who could bring the dead to life with his skill in Sanjivani Vidya. Ravana who was well versed in the Vedas is actually said to have invented new and Systematic ways of reciting them, all the Mayasura who designed the wonderful assembly hall for the Pandavas , was an accomplished architect. This description of the rakshas as fits perfectly in all respects. His very appearance is rakshasa- like “A large man about six feet tall, he has a bull-neck a tanned face, a humanity fist, large powerful eyes under thick eyebrows, a large forehead and a shock of unkempt hair, like a black hat, his clothes loud and gaudy (recheck bush shirt and field gray trousers) are all of a piece with his appearance, so is his vehicle a jeep which he drives at breakneck speed. Nataraj aptly describes him as the prince of darkness, his movements are as mysterious as his activities in the jungle. he is taxidermist (a profession that clearly puts him in the cate -gory of those outside the pale civilization according to ancient Hindu belief) , and his room is is filled with a strong strength of rotting flesh and hides being cured - which does not disturb him in the least Vasu, appropriately nick-named man Eater by Nataraj, has the strength of a rakshasa also, illust-rated clearly by the story of his training under the”pahelwan(wrestler). His diet then consisted of one hundred almonds every morning, with half a seer of milk, and six eggs with honey, followed by chicken and rice for lunch and vegetables and fruits at night. Rigorous exercise starting at three o’clock in the morning coupled with this diet gave him a giants strength within six months. His feats of strength in-cluded Splintering at three inch pannel of seasoned teak with his fist, snapping chains twisting iron bars and pulverizing granite, later in the story he breaks his bedstead with are single blow of his dislocates the wrist of temp

policeman (with a smile snake and kills himself when himself when he hits himself on) the temple to crush a mosquito.

Vasu does not only have a rakshasas strength, he uses it like a rakshasa also. Borrish and unmannerly, rude and aggressive, he bullies and Beats people, I challenge any man to contradict me, is his absolutely in capable of any regard for others and their feeling and needs in fact he seems to take a perverse pleasure in making people suffer. for instance he takes Nataraj with him to the Memphi forest and abandons him there, even ignoring him when the poor man hungry and tried ask him for money he should the pet dog of small boy and horrifies the entire Town by shooting and eagle and announcing his plan to shoot the temple elephant. He seems to be perfectly immune to all human emotion and felling. love is for him Mere lust hence the Many and various women who ascend his staircase at night. children only bore him . when Nataraj tries to introduce him to his little boy. vasu briskly says, now go away boy. ingratitude ,a special characteristics of the rakshasa mentality (as revealed in the legend of Bhasmasura, who had given him the wonderful boon) is another of vasu's traits. the only omage he pays to the Guru who trained him is contained in his own words. I knew his weak spot. I hit hini there with the edge of my palm with a chop – ping movement. and he fell down and squirmed on the floor.” And the recollection of this incident moves him to laughter. later, he repays Nataraj's hospitality by harassing him in several ways.

Narayan’s view of society is not based on illusions. Prostitution causes moral turpitude and degradation in society. It is even nasty to think about other women. vasu, in The Man-eater of Malgudi finds is necessary to satisfy his sexual appetites with the help of prostitutes and other the degraded woman of Malgudi. This adversely affected the pure social stream of the Life of Malgudi Narayan’s writes sometimes is slim girl went by sometimes a fair one, sometimes in between type, sometimes a fuzzy-haired woman, some morning a fashionable one who had taken the trouble to tidy herself up a bit before coming out----- I had no notion that our town possessed such a varried supply of women.

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