

The Glorification of Indianness: Indigenous Culture and Identity in R. K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*

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Abstract

To assert the native identity and culture, post-colonial writers reject the colonialist ideology of superiority and suppression, disassociate themselves from cultural imperialism, and celebrate the indigenous culture and identity in all its forms. They likewise address the issues of mimicry, digestion, and hybrid experienced by the local societies and individuals. R.K. Narayan has managed many parts of the post-colonial works hanging tight for the Mahatma. In light of post-colonial critical theory, the study aimed to investigate how Narayan depicts the celebration of indigenous culture and identity in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. According to the survey, Narayan's credentials as a post-colonial writer are strengthened by the novel's celebration of Indian culture, traditions, and identity, particularly Gandhi's status and stature as Mahatma.

Keywords: the celebration of indigenous; mimicry; Indianness; oppression; hybridity; colonialist ideology.

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I. Introduction

The ideology that their race, culture, and civilization are superior is presented and projected by colonialist discourses. The goal is to maintain and reinforce this image of superiority. Post-colonialist writings, on the other hand, refute such assertions and claims. The indigenous culture and identity are celebrated and emphasized in these writings. In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, a post-colonial author named R. K. Narayan, discusses the various facets of Indian culture and identity. The novel focuses primarily on highlighting the multiple aspects of Gandhi's personality. His writings are situated in the fictional town of Malgudi. V.S. Naipaul associates it with myth and history in his writings despite the fact that it is "a place of ancient myth and history" (Garebian, 1975). Crane (1992) correctly asserts that Narayan's invention of Malgudi went one step beyond that of other Indian authors. He insists that Malgudi is a fictional setting where Narayan can reenact the continent's political events.

II. Literature Review

Numerous critics, including Crane, have commented on *Waiting for the Mahatma*. Crane is familiar with Indian culture, but he makes a lot of assumptions that need to be checked. Due to his lack of understanding of Indian culture, R. Cronin's (1989) interpretation of the novel is entirely incorrect. F. A. Khan (1993) says she has done an excellent job, but many of her claims are false. Her research also has some holes in it. The novel is handled very casually by T. Rehman. 1991) This study aims to fill in these holes and correct many unsubstantiated assertions.

III. The Research Methodology

The entire text of the chosen novel was thoroughly analyzed in light of post-colonial critical theories for this study. The following research questions, which were developed in response to Tyson's suggestions, are the focus of the study: i) How does the author depict the culture of the colonizers, their culture, and ideologies? ii) How does the author depict and address indigenous culture and identity? iii) How are the indigenous heroes depicted? iv) How is the oppression and exploitation of the colonizers depicted? v) How does the author feel about mimicry and hybridity?

IV. Discussion and Analysis

4.1 The depiction of the British colonialist ideology and culture

The portrayal of the British's complete dominance over their culture at the outset of *Waiting for the Mahatma*. Sriram's father dies while fighting for the British in Mesopotamia has a significant impact. An Indian soldier serving in the empire is the father of Sriram. Grandmother secures Sriram's pension from his father's service to the kingdom, demonstrates the Indians' complete internalization and assimilation of the imperial culture and colonialist ideology, as evidenced by their willingness to sacrifice their lives for their masters. Additionally, it is demonstrated that Sriram is completely influenced by British culture and ideology. He thinks that the British culture, race, and civilization are superior in every way. Sriram is fascinated by the picture of the British queen in Kanni's shop. She has curly hair, apple-shaped cheeks, and gorgeous, large, dark eyes. 6). Sriram, a faithful imitator, would like to own a portrait of the British queen, who symbolizes the supremacy of British culture and race. This is evidence of the subject race's cultural marginalization, a necessary consequence of the colonialist establishment. Like the Fanonian local, Sriram wants to become one with the English culture, at the end of the day, to "marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness" (Fanon, 2008). Sriram makes the offer to purchase the picture from Banya at any price. Because he considers the image a symbol of good fortune, the Banya refuses to give it up. The reader is shown Sriram as a man who does not recognize his identity and is unaware of the distinctive characteristics of Indian culture or its traditions and customs. He wants the British queen's rosy cheeks and curly hair on his dearly departed mother (1). Fanon (2001) refers to this as the assimilationist phase.

4.2 The glorification of the Ancient Indian Culture and Identity

Narayan, alongside the depiction of the strength of the English culture, additionally states and commends the Indian personality and the antiquated practices of India through the nature of the grandmother of Sriram. She is ancient, just like India, but no one knows her exact age. She embodies devotion, sacrifice, and love. For instance, she has put away every penny of her late son's pension so that her grandson can use it when he is old enough (5). Narayan reveals Sriram's grandmother's personality and identity. She promotes traditional Indian culture, Indian identity, and traditions. She is the Great Mother India, who cherishes her kids and will deliver any penance for their good. The myth and the reality of the grandmother's life coexist.

In contrast to Naipaul, who asserts that the mythic aspects of Indian culture and identity are subject to "petrification" and "restricted lives," Narayan highlights the positive aspects of ancient Indian traditions and culture. Narayan also celebrates the ancient nature of Indian identity and culture by referring to the centuries-old neighborhood where Sriram lives with his grandmother. The festival of the native should be visible all through the book. While Sriram sits on the floor, Grandmother presents Sriram with food on a leaf and rice in a bronze pot, in typical Indian fashion. He uses a brass tumbler to drink water. Narayan honors Indian delicacies like badam halwa, idlies, vadai, chicken pulao, and chappatis (195).

Sriram's grandmother celebrates her grandson's twentieth birthday. This is a significant day for Sriram and the grandmother. This is equally significant for India. India and Sriram must overcome the phase of assimilation. They are both expected to reach adulthood. In the true spirit of the Indian grandmother, Granny is steeped in Indian culture and tradition. Because sugarcane is regarded as a sign of good fortune in Indian culture, she receives sugarcane for her birthday. In addition, to celebrate her grandson's birthday, she sprinkles colored rice powder on the threshold and hangs a string of mango leaves across the door.

For the puja, the grandmother welcomes the new year with jaggory and jasmine. This is how the indigenous Hindu and Indian cultures and traditions are shown and celebrated. Sriram continues to exist as a naive individual; he is away from social phenomena and responsibility because he has not yet been initiated into India's traditions and customs. Sriram declines grandmother's request to invite his friends to the birthday celebration. When Gandhi is depicted asking everyone to "spin and read Bhagavad Gita and utter Ram Nam and wear khaddar," the celebration of Indian identity is complete (96). Narayan emphasizes Gandhi's mission and the celebration of indigenous Indian culture and identity. Gandhi's volunteers and employees should learn Indian languages.

While they were in jail, to read Tulsi Das Ramayana and kept busy spinning charka. This is how Gandhi's deep involvement with Hindu culture and identity is shown. It is the celebration of Indianness and the rejection of Western civilization. Interestingly, Jaswant Singh later referred to Gandhi's "religiously provincial character," which was responsible for the Partition of India, due to Narayan's positive portrayal of Gandhi's religious aspect. The love, devotion, sacrifice, and loyalty of an Indian Hindu girl to her man are celebrated in Narayan. Sriram's filthy appearance after the long train ride makes him nervous and confused. His standing-on-end hair is messy. He is vulgar, gruesome, and unattractive. Before meeting Bharati, he wishes he could improve his appearance. He longs to blend in with the crowd and sneak off to see her later. When Bharati sees Narayan, he demonstrates that his anxiety and fear have subsided. Her eyes spot him in the group. She sprints to him while waving her arms. She says, "Oh, how good to see you again!" as she holds onto his hands. 236).

Sriram loses himself, forgets his grime and appearance. Her beauty is praised by him. Narayan demonstrates that she gives him happiness and life. He is transported to another world by Bharati's kindness, love, and loyalty over the years. She exemplifies self-sacrifice and self-negation as an Indian Hindu girl who offers to fast instead of her lover. She is also deeply ingrained in Indian tradition. Similar to how Sidhwa celebrates the beauty of a brown Hindu girl with a lot of hair, Ayah Narayan praises Bharati's accomplishments. Narayan demonstrates that both India and Sriram begin to deviate from the colonialist ideologies of containment and imperial culture dominance.

4.3 The portrayal of the adoption of Indian Culture and Identity

Sriram emerged from his early years and is influenced by imperial culture. Bharati, the daughter of Bharat, is his first encounter with Indian identity and the beauty of Indianness. She is soliciting contributions for the national cause on behalf of Congress. The celebration of Indian culture, traditions, and identity is known as Bharati. She is a social phenomenon which is deeply ingrained in Indian culture and tradition. Bharati is modern India, and Grandmother is the ancient India. Narayan praises this Indian girl for her beauty. Naipaul would have dismissed Bharati as merely a khadi-clad black girl. Her stunning, dazzling beauty astonishes Sriram. She is young and thin. Her eyes shimmer with satisfaction. Sriram considers her to be significantly more beautiful than the British monarch. This is rejecting the colonialist culture, containment ideology, and superiority presumptions. This is the depiction of the reception of public culture at the individual and general level. Sriram burns his mill-made clothes with kerosene oil while wearing his dhoti and jibba (99). Through Sriram's love affair with Bharati, Narayan highlights the charm and beauty of India and the Indian people. The girl moves like a dancer. He longs to have the chance to touch her. She is like a bird gliding on its wings to him.

Sriram intends to sing her a song. He regrets not putting all of his money in her money box. He feels ultimately out of place compared to that "other worldly creature" (24). He wishes he had completed his B.A. and possessed the refined manners necessary to attain Bharati status. Bharati is compared to an angel or a goddess (Deveta) by Sriram. This "sweet-smelling creature" (132) is Sriram's, undying love. She is gorgeous despite wearing khaddar. Narayan's story reads like a romantic poem about admiring an Indian girl who is dressed in a homespun rather than a suit from the "new world." He makes it to Gandhi's camp at three in the morning, just as his beloved Bharati wanted, like a seductive moth driven by personal desire. He, as a maverick, needs a prompt marriage with Bharati. However, she, the girl of Bharat, is well-established in Indian practices and customs and can't make such a choice in segregation. Narayan emphasizes her completeness and wholeness through this. As a result, she could not wed without Bapu's (Gandhi's) permission. Cronin (1989) also notes how significant this change is. Cronin thinks that Sriram must abandon the Western conception of a woman and fall in love with Bharati. Sriram learns that the girl is connected to Gandhi's cause; As a result, Sriram joins Gandhi's side after meeting the symbol of social responsibility, Indian culture, and identity.

4.4 The celebration of the stature of Gandhi

Malgudi is getting ready for Gandhi's visit. Narayan demonstrates that no one truly supports Gandhi in his struggle against the empire. Mr. Natesh, who is in charge of the municipal committee, has the slightest interest in either Gandhi or his politics. He is motivated by his snobby desire to flaunt his wealth and palace, and he wants to enjoy the glory of hosting Gandhi. To suitably accommodate Gandhi, he makes all the necessary adjustments to his home's decor.

On the other hand, Gandhi decides to remain in the sweepers' colony. Gandhi is depicted as a man who cannot maintain his identity as distinct from his people. Instead, he gets rid of it and merges with his people. Gandhi, who was once referred to as the "half-naked fakir" of India by the prime minister of the British Empire (Collins, 1975) and as a "little bastard" by John Masters (1983), is hailed as the Mahatma. The novel's title is a celebration of Gandhi as Mahatma and the indigenous Indian Hindu identity and traditions. Sriram and Bharati must wait for Gandhi's approval before getting married. Narayan makes the characters in the story wait for the prominent historical figure. In Indian culture, this also demonstrates that social phenomena and tradition are more important than individuals. The mythology and history of Hinduism and India are deeply ingrained in Mahatma. Narayan depicts Gandhi's effort to wake the Indian people up and prepare them for the fight for freedom. He rejects the masters' language and speaks Hindi to them (27). Fanon (2001) beautifully describes the situation of former subjects like Gandhi. "Suddenly, the language of the ruling power is felt to burn your lips" (178). Gandhi is shown to be aware of the superiority assumptions and the containment ideology of the colonizers, and the ruling power associated with the English language.

Additionally, he is aware of the profound connection between culture and language, as Macaulay so eloquently demonstrates (1972). Fanon refers to Gandhi's current behavior as cultural nationalism and the nationalist stage, also known as the fighting phase. He awakens the people and becomes the spokesperson for actual reality. With the assistance and support of the populace, Gandhi plans his revolution and struggles. "Ram Dhun, spinning of the charka and to practice absolute truth and non-violence," he urges his force of Indians to practice (28). Gandhi's rejection of the labels and stereotypes that the empire had created about Indian heritage

and identity is depicted by Narayan. He, through these endeavors, focuses on the "crystallization of national consciousness". Gandhi literally strips naked to study the history of his body (Fanon, 2001). Narayan demonstrates Gandhi's desire to establish his nation's new identity based on its ancient culture. Martin Green's ideas align with Narayan's portrayal of Gandhi as an anti-imperialist and his efforts to make India and Indians proud of their past and culture. Narayan's depiction of Gandhi's emphasis on non-violence is an Indian response to the colonialist depictions of the colonized as barbaric people who only understand flogging or death. Gandhi wants to convey to the empire that the Indians are the most civilized people, that only they could practice non-violence and truth as the most civilized nation, and that they are not the stereotypes of inferiority that Said pointed out.

Because the British are not included in the book, Crane (1992) questions and doubts Narayan's portrayal of reality in the novel as not being "a fully rounded picture." However, unlike in British stories about India, the British are not absent from the book. However, they do not and cannot take center stage. In addition, they are not depicted as eminent figures, as with colonialist authors like Masters, who portrays a colonial officer in *Savage* (1983). They are depicted as oppressors and exploiters. This establishes *Waiting for the Mahatma* as a post-colonial text that must emphasize the reality from the native people's perspective, and it is very in line with the spirit of the empire writing back. Narayan demonstrates that the collector, who holds the British Empire's prestige, only refers to Mahatma as Gandhi (39). Narayan also draws attention to Raj's presence through the collector's refusal to grant freedom of expression. The district collector first censors Gandhi's speech. The collector represents the Raj; As a result, he uses his authority to silence Gandhi's voice. Said (1993) focuses on colonialism's oppressive nature. Narayan portrays Gandhi as an iconoclast who worked to free Indians from "petrification and restricted lives." Without slandering Hindu culture as Naipaul does, Gandhi is depicted as reaching out to the untouchables and breaking the centuries-old taboos of ancient Hindu culture. Not only does Gandhi spend time in colonies for untouchables, but he also invites a child from this group to share oranges with him (48).

The reader is introduced to Gandhi's extremely challenging daily routine. Narayan celebrates Gandhi's devotion to his work, extraordinary dedication, and "more than a man" like dedication. According to Cronin (1989), it is complicated to concur that Gandhi is "only an occasional actor in the story." However, Crane is correct when he asserts that Sriram is the focus of the fictional narrative and that "the historical elements of the novel revolve around Gandhi's role in the National Movement." Crane calls Gandhi's central role as a historical figure a "significant departure from the generally accepted criteria of the historical novel" (1992). Gandhi is shown doing multiple things at once. The author writes, "He spoke while his hands were busy turning the spinning wheel, drawing out a fine thread." He is also reading a letter to a man sitting in a corner with a pad on his knee and dictating his response. Interestingly, when Cronin asserts that "charka, functions like a religious implement, like a rosary," he misinterprets the significance of the spinning. When Cronin refers to charka as a "wickedly frustrating little machine," he is being extremely unfair. He probably needs to comprehend the true history and culture of India because he is not from the subcontinent. Crane correctly refers to the practice of absolute truth and charka spinning as "the way to defeat the British" (1992). Intriguingly, Rehman inaccurately labels Gandhi's portrayal as contentious in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. Narayan celebrates Gandhi's admiration for the beauty of Indian rivers, landscapes, the sun, and the air, all of which are portrayed negatively by a colonialist novelist named Forster (1981). The child narrator of *Sidhwa* (1989) also recounts her encounter with Gandhijee. Lenny's description of the man reinforces the portrayal of Gandhi by Narayan. Narayan depicts Gandhi stressing elders' significance as the traditions' stewards. Narayan shows Gandhi's concentration on social peculiarity, in contrast to the push of the advanced Western human progress upon individual and uniqueness. After obtaining permission from his grandmother, Sriram is not permitted to join Gandhi's camp. Gandhi makes Bharati the Guru of Sriram, who asks him to treat Bharati with respect and reverence (93). The social phenomenon that is Bharati holds Gandhi in the highest regard. She must frequently write to Gandhi. She responds as if she were indeed Bharat's daughter.

4.5 The depiction of the British Raj

Narayan depicts the British Raj's "real benefits" and "the light of civilization" for Indians. The British Raj's famine affected seven hundred thousand villages. Narayan makes the 700,000 villages explicit about emphasizing India's indigenous identity, mythology, and history. "There is no village in India, how so ever mean, that has not a rich sthalapurana, or legendary history of its own," Rao asserts in the foreword (1963). Narayan demonstrates Gandhi's tireless efforts to inspire courage and hope in the victims. Narayan indicates that a vast war reservoir in Western Europe contains all of India's non-disabled men, corn, and timber. "See what the British have done to our country," says a character in the book named Gorpad (89). The famine has affected everyone, including the children, who are potty-bellied, naked, and have visible ribs. "There is no one to look after them, everyone is engaged in this war," Gorpad concludes. It (corn) is purchased by the war machine at any cost. "It's too large a competitor for these poor people" (89). Narayan's depiction of the Second World War is more than just a shadow, as *Sidhwa* does. Narayan paints yet another picture of India during the Raj, bringing

to light the Indian people's hunger, poverty, misery, and suffering. In his analysis of colonialism's evil nature and the colonial machine's inherent flaws, Narayan demonstrates that Fanon was correct (2001). Narayan sheds light on Indians' status during the Raj. India is like a prison; the Indian people lack human dignity and rights. He seems to echo Kent's declaration in Shakespeare's *King Lear* (2000) that freedom lives elsewhere and exile here. Indians are treated similarly to prisoners and enslaved people.

Additionally, Zohra, a Muslim Congress activist, is detained without a trial or charge under the Defence of India Rules, which are referred to by Shah Nawaz (1990). Under the Raj, the police have no regard for proper legal procedure. According to the Raj remnants, Sriram can be detained without a trial or a charge of being framed (191). A comparative frontier demeanor towards the Orientals is communicated by V.S. Naipaul (1984). According to Naipaul, the natives of Ivory Coast live "petrified" and "restricted" lives (90). Under the Raj, Indians feared the collector because, according to the Defence of India Act, he could detain any Indian.

According to Cassirer (1979), myth regains its hold in the critical moments of man's political and social life, mainly if the other binding forces of social life lose their relevance and influence. A fellow prisoner of Sriram wanders into the world of myth and the unreal in the face of the present cruel reality, which is human degradation and oppression (195). The "benefits" of the Raj are portrayed as silence, intimidation, isolation, and alienation. "He was amazed at the isolation that had been devised—inhabiting the same planet people were completely cut off from one another" (199). The prisoners are brought back to the real world of quarry work by the hour. When Cronin asserts that *Waiting for the Mahatma* avoids and evades politics, it isn't easy to agree with him (1989). Politics are at the heart of *Waiting for the Mahatma*. This is how the politics of Gandhi were portrayed. In a similar vein, it's difficult to concur with him that the book is, in part, a comedic bildungsroman. However, he is correct when he asserts that it is partly a nationalistic religious fable. We also glimpse Gandhi's salt march to Dandi in 1930 through Sriram (120). This was a defiance of the empire's power and a violation of the English salt laws. Narayan demonstrates that India is depleted of its forests and timber to construct ships and rifles for the empire's war. Sriram undergoes a change from his worship of the personal god of desire to his final submission to the social tradition in the form of Mahatma, even though he is still driven by his individual, personal desire for Bharati and is not yet fully initiated into the social phenomenon. He travels slowly but effectively. He now moves toward wholeness and completeness. He conveys to the Indians a message opposing Raj's exploitation of Indian resources (107).

The elegant and frontier way of life of the English amidst craving, sickness, and outright neediness of the Indians is depicted by Narayan in the book. Sriram lands on a plantation at the height of 4000 feet above sea level. He is now outside the Mathieson Estate, which belongs to an English gentleman. The English greets Sriram while he is smoking his pipe. To emphasize their master's imperial status, the Indian servants at the estate wear white uniforms with lots of buttons. Sriram refers to the presence of beautiful chintz-covered wicker chairs. There are plants for decoration. Sriram draws parallels between it and his own house, a decrepit temple built thousands of years ago, with only a sleeping mat and many scorpions and snakes. "All this while millions of people in this country are starving and without a place to live!" (107). This is how British India is depicted—the estate's British owner employs 5,000 field workers, 200 factory workers, and office workers (114). Additionally, this response to Cronin's objection. Conrad (2005) also depicts the colonialists' abundant way of life despite hunger and poverty.

4.6 The delineation of the significance of the Indian Traditions

Bharati obeys Gandhi's orders completely when she is sent to jail. She yields to the social and collective demands of the nation. Sriram is still an individual who is motivated by personal and individual considerations, prioritizes personal interests over the interests of the nation, and avoids arrest. Narayan demonstrates that Sriram is also gradually introduced to Indian customs and traditions. Sriram adjusts, gives up his position, and acknowledges the significance of the ritual. "Will you marry me after we are out of this, will you promise, if Babu permits?" (141). He is on his way to being complete and whole. When Sriram is away from Bharati and Gandhi, he forgets what Gandhi and Bharati taught him about non-violence and becomes deeply involved in terrorist activities. Narayan shows the risks of being cut off from the roots and customs. The social phenomenon and significance of tradition are both represented by Bharati. Granny's death and rebirth are significant events. It is referred to as a "truly comical scene" by Khan (1993). None of these things are true. It demonstrates, on one level, the Hindu belief system's celebration and the influence of mythology on Indian culture. This is Narayan's deliberate response to Western civilization's defenders, such as Macaulay, who disdainfully characterized Indian heritage, culture, and history as unworthy of a single Western philosophy bookshelf (1979).

Additionally, it is a celebration of Mother India's resilience. Narayan demonstrates that Mother India eventually overcomes the shock of colonialism. "She is like a mother to us. We shall take care of her" asserts Kanni. She will be taken care of by us, Narayan conveys Sriram's emotions upon his release from prison. It coincides with India's independence. He is free to be who he is and do whatever he wants. In the past, inside and outside the jail, colonial rulers controlled and regulated everything. He sees buildings adorned in the tricolor

flags, with the charka in the middle and declares, "this is an independent India into which I am walking now" (219).

At this point, no one can pursue me. Whether I have a hairy or clean-shaven face, no one will care. After years of being pursued and hunted by his oppressors, Sriram is delighted to be left alone and recalls the British wartime prime minister's views on Gandhi. This refers to the classic example of the empire and its leaders portraying the Orient and its leaders as the lowest "Others." Said (2001) refers to the colonialist practice of making statements about it, authorizing views about it, describing it, teaching about it, settling it, and ruling over it: Orientalism, in a nutshell, is a Western strategy for controlling, reorganizing, and governing the Orient.

4.7 The portraiture of the Partition Massacres and the role of Gandhi

Like all authors who have written about Partition and independence, Narayan focuses on the riots and violence that followed. He shows that the killer gangs are looking for their victims who belong to opposing religions by depicting the Hindu and Muslim massacres. After the killer gangs acquire evidence that he is a Hindu, even Sriram can miraculously save his life (234). Sidhwa (1989) likewise depicts what is going on. Narayan features Gandhi's harmony mission during the Segment brutality (231). Gandhi travels to Noakhali, Calcutta, and Bengal. Narayan depicts burning houses, orphaned children, men being killed, and women being taken away. Narayan conveys Gandhi's agony over women's suffering, which includes losing their homes, children, and honor. Narayan demonstrates Gandhi's absence from Delhi celebrations on August 15, 1947, India's Independence Day. He goes to Calcutta. "His place was where people were suffering and not where they were celebrating" (243). On his peace mission, Gandhi walks through the swamps of East Bengal barefoot through villages. He offers support to the victims and reprimands the criminals. Gandhi stays longer and puts his life in danger in areas where violence is at its worst. Amid such misery and suffering that accompanied partition and independence, Narayan has every reason not to "glorify" the new nation. Crane takes a notification of this exclusion (1992).

In addition, Sidhwa (1989) does not concentrate on independence celebrations. Narayan demonstrates Gandhi's deep interest in religion and mythology and his desire for faith to be finally minimized; because it may result in violence. There is no religious discrimination regarding the names of the campers, who are all given the names of flowers. Bharati had thirty children before she got married (250). Before he died, we get a glimpse of Gandhi, a man who was more than just a man and in whose person, change, and tradition coexists.

Narayan focuses more on the human, manly aspect of this than on a man. Narayan shows that in Gandhi, individuals and politics exist together. Gandhi inquires about orphan children's health. Anar, a young girl, is suffering from a cold. He distributes numerous oranges, apples, and flowers to the children (250). Like a customary Indian young lady, Bharati, while Gandhi gives his final approval for marriage, she keeps her head bowed and her mouth shut. "We are waiting for your blessed permission to marry" (252). According to Cronin (1989), Bharati undergoes a "surprise" transformation when she becomes a traditional Indian bride. Cronin incorrectly refers to it as the novel's oddest fact. Cronin has seriously misinterpreted Bharati's character. She has been portrayed by Narayan as someone who is both modern in every sense of the word and deeply rooted in Indian customs and traditions. She exhibits what Khan (1993) aptly describes as "a harmonious co-existence symbolizing unity, a wholeness toward which Narayan's protagonists are continually progressing" (27-28). She also represents post-colonial culture, which is ultimately a hybridized phenomenon involving a relationship between indigenous reality and planted European cultural systems that are coded to create or recreate a distinct local identity (Ashcraft, 1989). Sriram is also an excellent example of this, albeit to a lesser extent. He starts with his individualistic approach and gradually realizes how strong tradition and social interaction are. When Gandhi says, "She would be a very unbecoming bride, who spoke her mind aloud!" (252). Hindu extremists kill Gandhi, a symbol of non-violence and love to millions, with extreme violence (254).

V. Conclusion

According to the study, R.K. Narayan celebrated indigenous Indian culture, traditions, customs, and beliefs in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. He has honored Gandhi as a great national hero who, as a man and more than just a man, worked for his country's freedom and liberty. Gandhi is celebrated as a revivalist of ancient Hindu culture and identity while simultaneously being portrayed as an icon of social and political change. Untouchability and other social taboos are shown to be demolished by him. It depicts his emphasis on women's equal status in society. The novel's title celebrates Gandhi's status as the Mahatma. The study has also demonstrated the individual's subservience to Indian culture. This reflects Gandhi's understanding of the social phenomenon's significance. Narayan has emphasized Gandhi's contribution to bringing people who are grieving peace and comfort. Narayan has praised the Indians' pride in their culture, tradition, history, and identity while rejecting the colonialists' presumptions of superiority. Narayan has also depicted the empire's exploitation of native resources. The study also demonstrates that Narayan has represented the British Raj's scars on Indians and India. He has brought to light the misery, famine, poverty, and suffering the Raj's people endured. Narayan

has depicted the development of Indian culture from imitation to celebration of its identity through the fictional characters Sriram and Bharati. He has also demonstrated the connection between culture and imperialism and the Indians' rejection of imperial culture and colonialist ideology. To emphasize indigenous identity, culture, and Indian English, he has utilized numerous Indian words, phrases, and idioms. According to the study, Narayan celebrated Indian beauty through Bharati and love. In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, an Indian girl's devotion to her partner challenges Western misconceptions of India and Indians.

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