

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

**R.K. NARAYAN'S UNDER THE BANYAN TREE: AN ECOCRITICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBALTERN INDO- ANGLIAN WRITING****Dr. SUMANA BISWAS**

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**ABSTRACT**

Environment and ecology play a predominant role in whatever is being created in the spheres of science, technology, economics, history, literature, sociology and various other branches of knowledge, In our endeavour of analyzing literary presentations, despite their chronological and generic multifariousness, human being's functions as a preserver, nurturer, exploiter, destroyer and the scourged depending on their eco-awareness have been witnessed. According to the oriental philosophic tradition, most elementarily, 'Purush' and 'Prakriti' i.e. Man and Nature complement each other, sharing the responsibilities of creation and its continuation. Man is incomplete in the absence of Nature. Against this, in the occidental philosophic system, man/civilization is the controller and exploiter of Nature/woman; hence, there is an incessant confrontation between civilization and Nature. This distorted and limited viewpoint has certainly left an impact on society and literature particularly in marginalizing the literature of oriental origin as subaltern work. The proposed work focuses upon an ecological interpretation of R.K. Narayan's Under the Banyan Tree to ascertain the relationship between mankind and Nature and to evaluate the degree of ecological awareness in human beings as reflected in subaltern literature.

The study illustrates the influence of Nature upon mankind and their culture besides Nature's significance and indispensability in human lives. It also demonstrates how in the undertaken story modern civilization's indiscriminate materialistic quest and anthropocentrism along with its illusion of self-aggrandized pseudo-supremacy have been mocked and ruthlessly dismantled by Nature's agents themselves, and the futility of modern man's synthetic world to which particularly urban people are addicted against eco-centric diversity. It also aims at manifestation of some more ecological aspects as portrayed in Under the Banyan Tree: Nature is charismatic, philanthropic and hostile, hence incomprehensible; Nature puts all her fellow-beings to test, and for their integral development she grafts, prunes and shapes them; ecological wisdom has always been there, though it often gets buried under the debris of

cataclysmal philosophies; biodiversity is valuable in itself and humans should abstain from reducing or defying this diversity; civilization is only a microcosmic part of the macrocosmic Nature/universe. It evinces how materialistic rationalism gets absolutely nullified and displaced by ecological sensibility amidst omniscient Nature.

Keywords: ecocriticism, subaltern, ecology, anthropocentrism, Narayan

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## I

The oriental philosophic tradition and culture pertaining to Man-Nature relationship is distinctly different from its occidental counterpart. According to the Eastern belief, Man and Nature complement each other, sharing the responsibilities of creation and its continuance. Man is incomplete and lost in absence of Nature. This eco-affable notion is opposed to the western philosophic system, in which man acts as a self-appointed authority and master of Nature, always claiming civilization's superiority over Nature. Consequently, there arises an unremitting encounter between civilization and Nature. This contorted and narrow outlook has certainly left an impact on society and literature. Man, the vanquisher, tries to conquer Nature in different ways without realizing that we have only one earth to live in. Naturally, any threat to its flora and fauna, or its biological and physical Nature, basically endangers civilization's existence itself. So, it has become the cardinal concern of the ecological writings. The South-Asian countries hold a different approach to deal with the destructive effect of modernization and westernization based on consumerism and industrialization and the consequent ecological crisis overwhelming them. The literary canonical figures have expressed quite vividly and elaborately about Man's relationship with Nature and the factors responsible to disrupt it and create existential problem. Such environmental crisis that challenges the Mother earth and makes the Man-Nature relationship extremely fragile and vulnerable has acquired an existential dimension. Ecocriticism is a phenomenon, movement and development, all at once, that intends to raise consciousness/awareness about Nature and our tangible physical environment. Ecocriticism focuses upon the flamboyant and cryptic facets of sovereign Nature that stimulate the civilization integrally. "Ecocriticism is an attempt to organize and

understand the human and non-human interactions and interrelationships. Ecocriticism is further an attempt to reintegrate the human and the non-human, to retrace the lost links between humanity and the world out there." (Sivaramakrishnan) In the 1998 collection entitled, *Reading the Earth*, Michael P. Branch explains that "Ecocriticism is not just a means of analyzing Nature in literature but it broadens human conception of global community and advocates equally for cultural change by examining the narrowness of cultural assumptions about the natural world. This attitude has limited our ability to envision an ecologically sustainable human society." (Estok 220) In *The Ecocriticism Reader* Cheryl Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment". (Estok 220) Lawrence Buell's *The Environmental Imagination* documents the term "'ecocriticism' as [a] study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to the environmentalist praxis." (Estok 221) Ecocriticism is defined as "an ethical criticism and pedagogy, one that investigates and helps make possible the connections among self, society, nature and text." (Cokinos) Karen J. Warren emphasizes upon "the important connections between the treatment of women, people of colour, the lower class and the treatment of non-human natural world. According to her, ecocriticism must look at the relationship between the domination of women and that of Nature." (253-267) Ecocriticism is "...an ecologically focused criticism is a worthy enterprise primarily because it directs our attention to matters about which we need to be thinking. Consciousness raising is its most important task. Ecocritics encourage others to think seriously about the relationship of humans to nature, about the ethical and aesthetic dilemmas posed by the environmental crisis, and about how language and literature transmit values with

profound ecological implications.”(Glotfelty) Ecocriticism intends to assess texts in terms of their utility as a solution to environmental crisis.

The ‘subaltern’ is an anthropocentric term meaning inferior, subordinate, secondary or of lower status against ecological ethics. Ecocritically, “in the fields of post-colonialism, subaltern identifies and describes the man, the woman, and the social group who is socially, politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure of the colony and of the colonial Mother Country. In describing “history told from below”, the term subaltern derived from the cultural hegemony work of Antonio Gramsci, which identified the social groups who are excluded from a society’s established structures for political representation, the means by which people have a voice in their society. In the 1970s, the application of subaltern began to denote the colonized peoples of the South Asian Subcontinent, and described a new perspective of the history of an imperial colony, told from the point of view of the colonized man and woman, rather than from the points of view of the colonizers; in which respect, Marxist historians already had been investigating colonial history told from the perspective of the proletariat. Yet, as a method of intellectual discourse, the concept of *the subaltern* occasionally proved culturally problematic, because it remained a Eurocentric method of historical enquiry when studying the non-Western peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.” (Subaltern) “In Post-colonial theory, the term *Subaltern* describes the lower classes and the social groups who are at the margins of a society — a subaltern is a person rendered without human agency, by his or her social status.” (Young) Post-colonial theory studies the power and the continued dominance of Western ways of knowing, of intellectual enquiry. Ecologically speaking,

...the oppressed subaltern man and woman, to explain how the Eurocentric perspective of Orientalism produced the foundations and the justifications for the domination of The Other, by means of colonialism. Before and during their explorations of the oriental regions, the Europeans had created an imagined geography of the Orient as predefined images of savage and monstrous

places beyond the horizon of the known world. The concepts of the “difference” and the “strangeness” of the Orient were perpetuated, thereby leading to differentiate the Orient from the Occident. This served in making the foundation of colonialism, because it represented the Orient as backward and irrational lands, and, therefore, in need of Western help to become modern, in the Western sense. Hence, the discourse of Orientalism is Eurocentric, and does not care to include the voices of the Oriental peoples, the subalterns, themselves. (Said)

It has been proposed that “... in order to be heard and known, the oppressed subaltern must adopt Western ways of *knowing*, of thought, reasoning, and language; because of such Westernization, a subaltern people can never express their ways of *knowing* (thought, reasoning, language)...”(Sharp) “...The subordinated can only be heard by his oppressors if he or she speaks the language of the oppressor; thus, intellectual and cultural filters of conformity muddle the true voice of the subaltern.”(Subaltern) During this current period of globalization, subaltern literature represents an eco-centric voice of protest and self-assertion, and its rise in the second half of the 20th century accentuate the turning away from white western supremacy in literature towards embracing the new subaltern voices. Thus, subaltern literature depicts things seen from the standpoint of the subaltern.

R.K.Narayan (10 October 1906 – 13 May 2001) is a legendary figure in the field of Indo-Anglian literature. Narayan’s *Reluctant Guru*, which is about his exposure to the funny naiveté of American campus crowds during a tour as a Distinguished Visiting Professor. Narayan meets in shock and silence, a crowd of people who consider India as the mythical domain of “snake charmers, yoga, mysticism, philosophy, poetry and fakirs”. (Under The Banyan Tree) The overall outcome is the distorted view the west has of the eastern subcontinent, especially India in their superficial pursuit of mysticism, a meaning for life and a canonized faith in oriental culture and tradition, which is considered as the representative of the subaltern.

II

*Under the Banyan Tree* belongs to a collection of short stories by R. K. Narayan set in and around a fictional town of Malgudi in South India. The stories range from the humorous to the serious and all are filled with Narayan's acute observations of human nature. The story revolves around Nambi, a technically illiterate story teller who lived in a little temple of Somal, a small village in Mempi hills used to tell long stories under the banyan tree on moon lit nights. Every fortnight, when he was ready with a new story, he would light a lamp under the tree to give a signal to villagers to assemble and hear his story. All his life, Nambi had been following this routine. In fact, storytelling was his only occupation and passion. But one day, he suddenly could not remember the next phase of his story. He tried very hard, but his memory failed him. He could not utter a single word. As expected, Nambi was left flabbergasted. After this initial failure, he tried to recreate his magic repeatedly, but, each time, he failed miserably. Finally, he ended his career by making a genuine and bold announcement of taking a vow of silence for the rest of his life, realizing that a story-teller must have the sense to know when to stop and not wait for others to tell him. The undertaken study is of *Under the Banyan Tree* with an ecological approach.

Somal village nestling away in the forest tracts of Mempi suggests a place populated with both human and non-human life forms joyously celebrating the open space outside together, displaying a perfect ecologically balanced environ. We do not come across in Somal, any human creation, which clashes with non-human entities, heading towards the latter's exhaustion. Somal, the rustic settlement represents living eco-centrally, although it can be viewed as intrusion of the civilization into the serene realms of Mempi forest to some extent. The straggling cottages and twisted lanes smothering each other denote suffocation, inadequate space and over-crowdedness, and seem to tarnish the virgin ambiance of the forest. But again, this human effort has been penalized by spreading of malaria and typhoid along with the stagnation of house-drain water in the form of green puddles in the backyard of all houses as signatures of Nature in protest against human encroachment in her

sanctuary. The fact, which remains undeniable, is that despite being deprived of all materialistic privileges, both fundamental and secondary, the villagers remain engrossed in a sort of enchantment delivered by Nambi's charismatic stories compounded with ecological placidity. They are not seen using any inorganic disinfectant to sanitize the surroundings; this ecologically suggests not only their disinclination towards annihilating other organisms or lethally damaging the environmental balance and configuration by toxic pollutants but also an indirect promotion of bio-centric/organic cleanliness beyond the understanding of modernized scientifically advanced society. Their using highway as refuse ground indicates their protest against depletion of natural resources for fulfilling civilization's convenience in the name of progress, their mockery of and indifference towards the technological marvels that the mechanized urban society often boasts of. The highway is meaningless and useless to the rustic society of Somal because it fails to provide them any sort of eco-oriented economic assistance; instead, the far off bus station and the highway act as invisible barricade separating and marginalizing this rustic commune from the mercenary mainland. The conversion of highway by Somal village into a wasteland of bio-degradable matter indicates Nature's rejection of the man-made scientific advancements through her eco-centric agents in the form of the villagers, who also contribute to the dismantlement of eco-antagonistic urban man's manipulative craftsmanship on the surface of the earth in the name of development, and in the process causes an assimilation of that colonized domain back into its organic origin. The peaceful human settlement thriving upon eco-amicable sharing and caring amidst Mempi forests documents not only Nature's abolition of social Darwinism and hierarchy but also her magnanimity, impartiality and equity towards all against unfair distribution and injustice practiced in an anthropocentric society. The use of mud lamps by Nambi for worshipping and also as a signal for the villagers when he is ready with his tales is definitely an eco-centric perspective in the story. In each case he lights up the mud lamps to accomplish his purpose, environmentally harmonious. The mud lamps are bio-degradable

objects, hence akin to Nature. Furthermore, the fusion/amalgamation of mud, fuel and fire [elements of ecosphere] produces light, which enables man to survive his biological limitation of eye-sight after sunset during absolute darkness. Thus, it not only exhibits the ecological utilization of natural ingredients in a prudential way, but also hints at an advocacy of socio-ecological economy, which sustains many such productive eco-friendly occupations, one of them being pottery.

Nambi, the story-teller pertains to the oral tradition of narrating stories. The most remarkable aspect of this custom is that it does not require any consumption of paper, the industrial product of wood pulp obtained from slaughtered trees, and the ink, incurred from the dark protective fluid ejected by cuttlefish and other cephalopods, thereby averting the ecological crime of ravaging and annihilating the other living organisms. So, Nambi's such an attribute contributes to the conservation of flora and fauna and also appeals allegorically that by adopting such a method, man will certainly cease to be a threat to the biosphere. Nambi's technical alphabetism fails to handicap him; instead he surpasses and dismantles all synthetic methodologies, prejudices and beliefs related to the evaluation of wisdom and knowledge with the aid of his ecologically enriched and Nature-tutored imaginative and creative faculty. He holds the villagers together with his enchanting stories, which soothe, relieve and deliver them from all worldly business and stress, thereby acting as a life-force for them, yet he entrusts them to their own occupations, will and lifestyle. Neither does he impose himself, nor does he exercise any possessiveness, authority and power upon any living species and non-living objects. His unconditional concern for others, and thus maintaining an aesthetic distance and allowing space to all entities with rationality and sensitivity renders him ecological. He is symbolically equivalent to the Banyan tree, which shelters, comforts, nourishes and facilitates all creatures alike with magnanimity and life-supportive elements. Furthermore, his being a devoted worshipper of Goddess Shakti, an embodiment/ incarnation of Mother Nature or 'Prakriti', the enigma and source of energy infinite affirms his absolute and unconditional submission of

self to Nature's will and ways. He firmly believes and admits that he gets illumined, inspired and enlightened with enamouring ideas by the grace of Nature. His skillful process of weaving magnetic stories organically associates him with a tailor/weaving bird, which weaves its nest dexterously with the aid of various ingredients collected from bio-environment. Narration comes to him naturally just like chirping is to the birds. He finds solace under the Banyan tree beneath the blue sky where there is more dynamism. Nature delivers him from all trivial stress, insecurity, discomfort, morbidity, monotony, loneliness and emptiness of enclosed space. The serene rustic environment emblemizing purity, tranquility, freshness, vigour and divinity exhilarates, elevates and stimulates him. His realization and honest acknowledgement of the fact that his kinship with Nature flourishes his contemplative and narrative abilities shows his eco-awareness. His unconditional love and care for all bio-entities may be viewed as his reciprocating Nature's benevolence with gratitude. "He decorated the images with flowers, which grew wildly....offered to the Goddess fruits and flowers...."(Narayan 637) Nambi's use of wild flowers is an eco-congenial gesture of disapproval against cultivation and pruning, the artificial techniques epitomizing westernized strategy of homogenization. When asked about his age, Nambi "referred to an ancient famine...and indicated how high he had stood from the ground at that time." (Narayan 636) This implies Nambi's preference of measuring his growth in an organic way rather than adopting corporeally engineered conventional process of age-determination because ecologically, geological time-scale is too complicated, continuous and infinite to be ciphered by man-made scientific methodologies and techniques. It marks Nambi's subtle rejection of anthropocentric assumptions to derive an account of his age. "He opened his story....Jerking his finger towards a vague, faraway destination, he asked...It was not the weed-covered waste it is now, for donkeys to roll in... not the ash-pit....It was the capital of the king....Dasaratha, Vikramaditya, Asoka, or anyone...; the capital was...Kapila, Kridapura, or anything." (Narayan637) This excerpt presents a disillusioned panorama of ecological truth/reality thus: Man attempts to conquer and colonize

landscape and Nature in the form of different territories and name them as a mark of possession to manifest his capability, power and authority, but cannot obviate its eventual dilapidation into dust predestined by Nature; the world is not made for only human beings and Nature looks upon all fellow creatures alike without any discrimination; puniness and futility of all materialistically accomplished enterprises in front of Nature get reflected; Nature denies recognition on the basis of taxonomic hierarchy implemented and practiced by mechanized civilization, thereby winnowing out anthropocentrism as an insignificant phenomenon absolutely. It appears as if Nature employs Nambi, the rustic being as her agent to convey her message pertaining to ecological ethics, which an entity is expected to conform to for the proper functioning of the macrocosmic bio-centric network. Nambi's adaptability, placidity, magnanimity, patience, contentment, modesty, compatibility, cooperative disposition, congeniality, rationality, sensitivity, responsibility, simplicity, altruism and non-ambitiousness signify metaphorically his inclination of conserving ecological virtues and life sustaining elements of Nature to maintain and preserve a healthy approach towards life. He has no somatic demands, expectations or eco-antagonistic reservations; he is happy with his basic necessities of survival being fulfilled. Neither does he struggle against the course of Nature, nor does he seek for any justification of Nature's manners by beating around the bush unnecessarily. Rather, he accepts Nature's ways as fair to all and continues adapting ecologically. Though we come across in the later stages his encounter with some baffling hurdles, for instance, how he forgets, stumbles, loses predominately his hold over his communicative faculty/power resulting into his restlessness originating from the fear of being ostracized from Nature's boon and grace, yet no grudge against Nature's visible apathy towards him gets registered in Nambi's reaction.

Instead, by maintaining a calm disposition he concentrates more upon meditation and offering prayers to Goddess Nature/Shakti during this crisis. Story-telling for Nambi is not a mercenary medium intended to fulfill his quest of earning fame and prosperity; instead, this activity aims at life

escalating qualitative values much like spiritual illumination and artistic fulfillment. His abounding faith in Goddess Shakti/Nature testifies his respectful understanding of eco-diversity and his attachment with the entire creation. He epitomizes ecological discipline compounded with detachment and austerity. Nambi devotes and invests his vitality in eco-centric creative art, thereby proving the fact that the energy is conserved in some form or the other in this biosphere. It appears as if Nambi in tranquility communicates with Nature, who in turn impregnates his profound fertile womb like mind with divine novel thoughts that eventually gets metamorphosed into ecstatic stories as ultimate harvest/fruits. The feminine activity of conceiving takes place in the mind of Nambi, who is otherwise a member of male clan. Thus, an amalgamation and assimilation of masculinity and femininity into one another, each being the inevitable phenomena and component of Nature for the purpose of creation gets evinced pragmatically. Therefore ecologically Nambi symbolizes "Ardhanarishvara myth representing the synthesis of masculine and feminine energies of the universe (Purusha and Prakriti) and illustrates how Shakti, the female principle of God, is inseparable from (or the same as, according to some interpretations) Shiva, the male principle of God. The union of these principles is exalted as the root of all creation." (Ardhanarishvara) Moreover, he manifests the negation of indispensability of technology, through his strong kinship with cryptic ecology, synonymous to the spiritual phenomenon. It seems as though Nature embodies itself in the form of Nambi in its endeavour to make urban materialistic man confront their limited knowledge of the biological world and realize the triviality of their cataclysmic scientific and industrial enterprises often boasted of in the name of progress and development. His simple life-style conveys the eco-affable message that life becomes meaningful only when we start living integrally and altruistically.

Moreover, the very existence of this rustic settlement, Somal not only stands as a challenge to the urban edifices, but also evinces the insignificance and dwarfishness of gallant commercial enterprises in front of gigantic,

philanthropic and mystic configuration of Nature. Villagers' recurrent visiting Nambi suggests man's innate urge to return repeatedly into the lap of Nature for seeking and obtaining ultimate peace, satisfaction and salvation. The villagers epitomize a sanctuary against a selfish, corrupt, distrustful violent, monotonous, incompatible, perverse, arrogant, treacherous, covetous, malicious, rigid, reckless, impulsive, destructive, irrational, callous, manipulative, unjust and prejudiced domain practicing social vices like commoditization, provocation, subjugation, exploitation, abrogation etc. Their livelihood illustrates a kind of denunciation of artificial sources/methods of achieving temporal pleasure and comfort designed for mere fulfillment of aeonian and unquenchable cravings for pretentious issues like aristocracy, security, vanity and luxury. It is a sort of resistance, an ecological gesture of the countrified commune against the crisis-evoking mechanized modes of living continuously and inordinately promoted at the cost of Nature. Therefore, Somal village, though materialistically impoverished, undoubtedly stands as a landmark in this biosphere because of its deep spiritually enriched form and ecological prudence.

### III

*Under the Banyan Tree* ecologically suggests that according to the oriental culture a place peopled with other non-human life forms can be euphorically shared and celebrated by the humans without any conflict if the latter acts eco-sensibly and is reasonably adaptable. Under such eco-favourable circumstances, a non-human life form need not necessarily clash with any human creation to the extent of decimation of the former. Here, Nature being the preponderant background, direct Man-Nature connectivity is witnessed. The sole idea in the story is related to Nature's continual and exponential abilities of renewal and resurgence. Life in Somal village apart from being exotically arcadian is full of vigour and freshness which is being enhanced by Nambi's enamouring stories full of life-force, hence a sharp contrast to materialistically modernized lifestyle, barren and cold. The human inclination towards searching for comfort, peace and happiness inside man-built closed space is reversed here. It has mocked in its own way civilization's dread of assumed discomfort and inconvenience in

open space and progressive men's incessant hammering upon the theory of mercenary security that drive them build smothering, desolate, insensate edifices to shelter themselves. But, ironically instead of being a refuge, it turns out to be a perilous antipathetic wasteland veiling dilapidation and death while wilderness provides rescue and assuagement, thereby suggesting collapse of human contrivance. It also registers its argument in favour of oriental tradition and strongly against the decline of eco-affable ideologies in human mind which has been rebutting religion as a humbug and discarding the heart and soul of man as a storehouse of fairy tales and token of superstitions, an aftermath of the conceited advances made by scientific knowledge. The story conveys a way of escape into ecological solitude especially when humaneness starts decaying and man's integral world crumbles into a chaotic domain due to his disjunction from Nature partially or fully in his objective pursuance of worldly ambitions. *Under the Banyan Tree* is a testimony to Narayan's trivialization of man's irrepressible eco-antagonistic desire of conquering, colonizing and controlling landscape and Nature as a paradigm of power-demonstration. The story typifies the insignificance of ostentatious human inventions in front of ecological way of living and also a rejection of anthropocentrism, which ruthlessly and unjustly disrespects and denies bio-diversity. *Under the Banyan Tree* suggests that the life enhancing qualitative values are very much similar to the spiritual bliss or the artistic fulfillment as epitomized by Nambi himself. *Under the Banyan Tree* acts as a remedy/therapy in our present day-to-day life of hard reality when at every instance we turn towards the physical sciences for appreciation and approval because they can convincingly furnish us with corporeal lifestyle. Industrialization coalesced with materialistic glamour, conveniences and privileges have taken over. *Under the Banyan Tree* documents protest subtly against conservatism and prejudices maneuvering the mechanically progressive society opposed to biological world's equity and impartiality. It simultaneously manifests a strong disapproval of totalitarian civilization's tendency to manipulate and consume the entire organic world and the 'weak others' exorbitantly without caring for the need of the rehabilitation of the dissipated.

Narayan has communicated through this masterpiece his standing against the pandemic hazards of civilization that have been highly instrumental in exasperating the ecological imbalance. Modernization and development through technology and science, a concept of Western culture is not an unwanted idea, but Narayan seems to suggest that we should not allow ourselves to be allured by the applied sciences to the verge of getting addicted to self-aggrandizement and of being callous towards the environment. Also, we need not ravage inordinately our natural resources or indulge in atrocious activities such as annihilation of the bio-world, dreadfully envenoming our natural water bodies apart from damming and contaminating them chemically, digging lethal holes in our atmosphere and thereby jeopardizing our own existence. The story suggests the necessity of our restoration to the organic world, for our salvation from the hemlock of frustration, restlessness and bewilderment, the curse of modernization. Narayan has shown the possibility of our return to ecological wisdom, which has persisted always, but, often gets enshrouded under the rubble of destructive and exploitative perspectives. *Under the Banyan Tree* instructs that we can celebrate, enjoy and preserve our natural environment neither through exercising power and authority over others nor through any policy of homogenization but only by respectfully maintaining an aesthetic distance and recognizing compassionately their animate heterogeneity. It witnesses ecologically that the voices of the minorities, the underprivileged, the subaltern and the marginalized would not get nullified and become distinctly audible only if we are ideally ready to renovate/reintegrate our fundamental values and tradition with an eco-centric approach rather than with an anthropocentric outlook. The story illustrates in its own way that man's illusion of superiority and indispensability apart from his vague, discriminatory and biased mannerisms get outlived by omniscient Nature, which predestines all happenings. *Under the Banyan Tree* globally advocates for and emphasizes upon the urgency of man's undergoing integral self-realization so as to reinforce his immediate return to Nature from gross synthetic world of consumerism and capitalism in

this modern age of ecological crisis for averting catastrophic aftermath that would eventually evoke self-destruction. Thus through his elaborate and sensitive presentation, Narayan stands out as another spokesperson of ecological movement and enigmatic Nature.

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