

As levels notes

[Art & Culture](#), [Comedy](#)



Jamie Jacobs 11N Mrs. Orpen A Horse and Two Goats, R. K. Narayan AS Levels English In the short story, A Horse and Two Goats we see that Narayan narrates in such a way that is non-judgmental and gentle in its humour. The critical aspects of the author's style and tone help him achieve this sense of humour. The style Narayan uses for this story is used to focus on the theme of a culture clash. The culture clash is between Muni (the main character) and the American, Muni representing the Indian culture and the American representing the Western culture. Narayan uses the third person narrative point of view, giving the narrator the power to only unfold the story, but not reveal the character's feelings or innermost thoughts. This point of view reports everything that is happening, but is not a part of the story. The use of this narrative point of view allows us to feel as though the story is unfolding before us, and makes us aware of each character and the comical nature of the conversation. Without the narrator and his translations, the reader wouldn't be aware of the miscommunication and humour. This style also emphasises on the irony of the dialogue between the American and Muni; showing the miscommunication in a gentle way, without anger or frustration. The story is also written in direct speech: "I am not a millionaire, but a modest businessman. My trade is coffee" (p. 246), except for when Muni describes his memories, indirect speech is used for these parts of the story to shorten his narratives. Irony is shown throughout the story, but more so in the end when both men get what they want, well more the one than the other, even though neither of them has understood the other. The tone Narayan uses in the story is detached and light. He uses this style of making the story humorous in a gentle way, allowing the reader to

have a response of warmth and empathy. The tone could also be ironic, as the entire story contains irony. The way Muni is constantly bullied by everyone and lives a tragic life, yet comes across this American who he thinks is keen to listen to his memories and stories. This shows that despite the fact that Muni and the American were both unaware of what they each were saying, the ability for Muni to tell his story and reminisce meant more to him than any money he could've received, despite the fact that the American couldn't understand any of the stories. The irony is also in the fact that even after the equal exchange of Muni's two goats for the American's one hundred rupees, there was still misunderstanding, as the goats were returned to Muni's house later that day. This irony emphasises how both men were lost in translation and how different their cultures are. The characterisation used in A Horse and Two Goats contributes to the gentle humour in the narration, as the author contrasts the characters. Muni is a poor, old man that can barely find enough money to provide spices or food for his wife to cook, and has to work on a credit system at the local shop. He is lonely, and emasculated by everyone around him: his wife, the shopkeeper, and the children at the school. Yet, he still manages to be polite and friendly with everyone he meets. The American is one of these people that Muni meets and is friendly with. The American tourist is arrogant in his manner, wanting to speak in English when clearly the old man can only understand Hindi. The American is only interested in the statue for material reasons (so that he can take it home as souvenir); this shows his ignorance to the value of the statue. The American pretends to be friendly, but he does not understand the old man, but the old man is unaware of this so he

continues with his stories of memories and tales of Hindu mythology. This is more offensive in fact as the American isn't actually listening to the old man then. This ignorant and arrogant attitude is typical of tourists, who pretend to befriend the local inhabitants, when in fact don't take any interest in their homeland. By forming these two contrasting characters, the author can create this humorous misunderstanding between them, by using the language barrier and cultural differences to create this. All these critical aspects of the author's style and tone create this humorous and non-judgemental style of narration. The way the author: writes in the third person narrative point of view using direct speech mainly in the dialogues; uses a detached, light and ironic tone; and uses characters that contrast in tradition and language. Using this style of narration, readers may experience this truly tragic story of an old man who is ^' lonely, poor, and emasculated by everyone he knows — as a humorous story of miscommunication and cultural differences.