

## **PORTRAYAL OF RELIGIOUS ETHOS IN NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI'S *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN UNKNOWN INDIAN***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Religion has always occupied a central position in Indian social and cultural life. Indian literature, particularly autobiographical and reflective prose, frequently represents religion not merely as ritualistic practice but as an ethical and civilizational force shaping identity, culture, memory, and consciousness. The *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* by Nirad C. Chaudhuri stands as one of the most intellectually stimulating autobiographical works in Indian English literature. The text offers a profound exploration of Indian civilization, colonial consciousness, cultural transformation, and religious ethos in Bengal during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chaudhuri's narrative presents religion as a deeply embedded social and psychological reality influencing everyday life, communal relationships, intellectual development, and national identity.*

*This research paper critically examines the portrayal of religious ethos in *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. The study investigates how Chaudhuri represents Hindu religious traditions, rituals, festivals, spirituality, and philosophical thought within the broader framework of colonial modernity and cultural transition. The paper further analyzes the tensions between traditional religious beliefs and Western rationalism, highlighting Chaudhuri's complex attitude toward Indian spirituality and European intellectualism. Through autobiographical reflection, the author portrays religion as both a source of emotional belonging and a marker of civilizational continuity.*

*The research adopts a descriptive and analytical methodology based on textual analysis of the primary text along with scholarly criticism related to religion, colonial identity, and Indian English prose. The study reveals that Chaudhuri's writings preserve a vivid cultural memory of Hindu religious life while simultaneously critiquing dogmatism and social stagnation. His representation of religious ethos is neither blindly devotional nor aggressively secular; rather, it reflects a nuanced intellectual engagement with Indian traditions. The paper concludes that Chaudhuri's work contributes significantly to the understanding of religion as a cultural and historical force in Indian society.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Religious Ethos, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Hindu Culture, Indian Civilization, Spirituality, Colonialism, Bengali Society, Indian English Literature, Cultural Identity, Autobiographical Narrative.*

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