Chapter II

SUPPRESSION OF THE PROTAGONIST

In this second chapter both mental and physical actions and reactions of the protagonists of R.K. Narayan are discussed. For him the central character is important. “My focus is on character. If his personality comes alive, the rest is easy for me,” says R.K. Narayan (qtd. in Gilra 168). The study of his novels shows that his main focus is on the protagonist’s development. The titles of most of his novels are closely related with the protagonists, for example Swami and Friends, Mr. Sampath and The World of Nagaraj. Here the names of the protagonists are used by Narayan. The novel The Bachelor of Arts refers to the degree of the protagonist. In the novel The Guide, the protagonist is the tourist guide turned spiritual guide is portrayed by Narayan. In the novel The English Teacher, The Vendor of Sweets and The Financial Expert the professions of the protagonists are used by Narayan. Therefore it becomes essential to study his protagonists first and then rest of the characters. For the readers and the critics if the personality of the protagonists of Narayan becomes clear then the rest of the things become very easy to understand.

R. K. Narayan started his literary career, as a novelist, with his first novel, Swami and Friends. Swaminathan, a small boy is the protagonist of the novel. As Narayan grows as a novelist his protagonist and his Malgudi also grow; in The Bachelor of Arts the readers meet Chandran, the protagonist as a college going adolescent who later on turns into a young man. Later on the readers meet Krishna in The English Teacher, Raju in The Guide, Ramani in The Dark Room, Sampath in Mr. Sampath, Margayya in The Financial Expert, Jagan in The Vendor of Sweets, Sriram in Waiting for the Mahatma, Nagaraj in The World of Nagaraj. All these protagonists are adults. In this way, it becomes evident that the journey of
Narayan’s protagonists is from simple to complex one, from childhood to adolescence, and from a young man to a more mature man nearing old age.

The plots of Narayan’s novels are with a background of a South Indian community. The community is from Malgudi, the location which firmly establishes a cultural tradition. His characters, especially protagonists return to the normal life that is the traditional pattern of life which underlines cyclical pattern of the plot construction of his novels. There is a reconciliation of fact and its mingling with imagination and of substance with form in the plot constructions of Narayan’s novels. Humble beginning, interim rise in the middle, and slopping down to a quiet in the end is the plot-design of the most of Narayan’s novels. There is a logical development in the events and the characters; it not only sustains the interest of the reader, but also gives a better understanding of both characters and the incidents in the novel. Narayan uses simple and episodic plots for his earlier novels. Some departures from the right path, leaving outs, digressions, and sometimes diversions are there in the novels. The interesting thing is that there is a cyclical and classical pattern in the plots of Narayan. The protagonists of the novels fall spiritually from a better situation in the beginning in to some worse situation at the end, and that sustain the interest. The protagonists either merge in the society as a common-man like that of Chandran, in *The Bachelor of Arts*, or collapses at the end like that of Raju in *The Guide* or take retirement like that of Jagan in *The Vendor of Sweets*. Narayan deliberately closes his novels with something for the reader’s imagination.

Chance as a device plays a very significant role in plot construction of Narayan’s novels. There are some unexpected happenings in the plot. The development in the story is not because of the certain flaw or error in the protagonist, but because of the fate. The protagonists or the characters are governed by the hands of chance; they do have that much neither strength nor potential to become the master of the fate, and to modify or to change it as per their will. In this sense also the protagonists of Narayan are subordinate and
suppressed. Chance leads to a major turn in the fortune of the protagonist. While talking about chance, it is not possible to forget the name of Thomas Hardy. Narayan also used chance as a device with the same effectiveness as Hardy used it. A study of the character of Michale Henchard in Hardy’s The Mayor of Casterbridge, shows that man is a puppet in the hands of fate. It is by chance Vasu the Man-Eater of Malgudi kills himself in an attempt of killing a mosquito, it is by chance Chandran meets Malathi on the bank of the River Sarayu and falls in her love at the first sight, by chance Raju meets Marco and Rosie on the Malgudi railway station these are some of the examples where Narayan used chance as the structural device.

The journey of Narayan’s themes is also from simple to complex, from local level to the national level. The problems that the protagonists face are also from simple to complex one. For Swaminathan how to deal with his friends and teacher is the problem. While reading as an adult one may laugh at the thing to which Swaminathan calls as problems. The way in which he thinks is very true to his age and very interesting. The language, behaviour, thoughts and actions suit Swaminathan. For him the matter of three paise is big one, for him the happy union of his two friends Mani and Rajam becomes the moment of great happiness. Attempting to rescue an ant flowing into a steam, which finally disappear into a gutter; and thereafter praying to the gods for resting the soul of the ant in peace, is all funny and suits to the age and nature of Swaminathan.

Chandran’s falling in love of Malathi; his becoming mad for her; instead of going to his uncle’s house, his rush to the hotel and there by accepting sanyas, and becoming home-sick all these are adolescent acts. Krishna, a young man nearing thirty, feels restless because of the tedious nature of job. Being young, it is but natural for him to get depressed by the early death of his wife. His revolt against the British education system suits his age. Raju’s tempting of Rosie, wife of Marco, suits his age and his type. Young Sriram’s love for Bharati, and his active participation in the national freedom struggle is very natural. Jagan’s gets
disturbed by the nagging nature of his wife, and his getting shocked and depressed by the strange behaviour of his son, after returning from America definitely natural. Being a father of an only son, love for his son and wish for his better life is very realistic. Ramani’s infidelity and rude behaviour which disturbs the marital life of Savitri does not appear artificial anywhere. The extra marital affairs of the employees are easily found in urban areas. Getting disturbed quiet and comfortable world of Nagraja’s by the arrival of Tim is very natural. In this sense all the protagonists are true to their age and their type.

In this sense all the protagonists are true to their age and type as said by Horace while talking about the nature of characters in the drama. A character is true to its age; it means the language, behaviour, thoughts and actions must be true to the age of the character. If the character is a child then there must be childishness, carelessness in him. He should imagine like the children. He must live, behave, talk and act like a child and not like an adult. If the character is an adolescent, then he must be act and react like an adolescent. In this sense Swaminathan, Chandran, Krishna, Raju, Nagaraj and Jagan all are true to their age and true to their types. (Prasad 40- 41)

Narayan is born in pre-independent India and died in post-independent India. India was under the Raj and later on became free. In this sense, all Indians were the subalterns during the pre-independence period and later on they ceased to be so. The study shows that the condition of a subaltern is not always the same; it changes from time to time and from situation to situation. Some are born free but become subalterns, some are born as subalterns and become free later on and unfortunately some are born as subalterns and die as subalterns. It is also found that some are born subaltern, some are made subaltern and subalternity is thrust upon somebody. A children like Swaminathan are born as subaltern, culture of home, schools and society make them subaltern. A child is treated as subordinate, who knows nothing, and he is governed by the rules of the family, society etc. In the course of time he acquires the status of elite at his home first and eventually in
the society. There are certain characters like Jagan, the untouchables, subalternity is thrust upon them. Women like Savitri are made subaltern by the strong customs and traditional husbands in the society.

One thing is important to note here that all human beings are human beings first and last; no one is either an elite or a subaltern by birth. Elite or subaltern are the man made unnecessary adjuncts. The concepts of elite and subaltern are not natural, but they are manmade. Society culture, history, economy, politics all go hand in hand in making a nation, a place, a person or a group of persons subalterns. It is the elite, dominating and selfish mentality of the human being that has divided the society into these two groups. Unless and until a person surrenders to somebody, for whatever may be the reasons, he cannot become a subaltern. Similarly a person cannot dominate the other, unless the other is available and becomes ready to get dominated. To dominate or to suppress and to get dominated or suppressed one has to come in the particular structure. It is a very complicated structure where social, cultural, sexual, caste, religious, economic, political, educational and bureaucratic structures are intermingled in a very complex manner.

The protagonists of Narayan are meek, weak and deprived socially and economically. They try to raise their voice against the cruel, irrational customs of society, authority, elders, especially father but their voices are suppressed by the strong forces of the society, religion, certain institution and sometimes by certain person upper in rank to the protagonist.

Narayan, with his typical style, chooses first a central figure and then prepares other events accordingly. Narayan’s own words to William Walsh about his theory of fiction are worthwhile to recall here. Walsh in his work R.K. Narayan: A Critical Appreciation notes: “My main concern is with human character – a central character from whose pain of view that world is seen and who tries to get over a difficult situation, of succumbs to it or fights to it in his own setting” (Walsh 22).
R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand are the three great novelists. A study shows that all of them deal with man, but with variations. They have different areas of their writing. For Narayan the individual man is very important. For Mulk Raj Anand the social man is significant. And Raja Rao focuses his attention on the metaphysical man. Narayan chooses a central character; and through his viewpoint he looks at the various aspects of society as a silent onlooker. As a creative spectator, Narayan is very objective and detached from all the characters and the situations in his novels. It is also true that in his earlier three novels: Swami and Friends, The Bachelor of Arts and The English Teacher, so many autobiographical elements are found; but later on such type of autobiographical elements are not found in his novels, for example The Guide, Mr. Sampath, The Dark Room etc.

The study of Narayan’s novels shows that he has made his common man, the hero of his novels. His protagonists neither belong to aristocracy at the top nor the poor at the bottom, but belong to the middle class, which is the largest class in India. The protagonists of Narayan are aware of their strengths, weakness and potentialities which help them initially to fight against and to rise above their so-called destined role in the society. But as they are not strong enough to fight, after facing the problems in life; they fall down to their former positions, where they remain quite comfortable by accepting it as the ultimate reality. The impact of Hindu culture is so strong that neither Narayan nor his protagonists have the potential to shake themselves off the irrational social customs and superstitions which govern the ideology of most his characters. Initially it seems that they will revolt against it and change the situation; but later on, it is clearly seen that, they surrender to the situations and accept the customs as if they are born to follow them; and their previous act was a mere stupidity. They are there, where they are destined to be. They are with those with who they are destined to be.

In The Bachelor of Arts there is a beautiful dialogue between Chandran and his mother. “It is all a matter of fate,” said Mother. “You can marry only the
person whom you are destined to marry and at the appointed time. When the time comes, let her be the ugliest girl, she will look all right to the destined eye” (BA 158 ch. 17). This statement of Chandran’s mother has double significance.

Firstly, it has a deep impact on Chandran’s mind, which results in his marriage with a destined girl of his parent’s choice. Chandran, who earlier thought that his beloved Malathi is the most beautiful girl, later on feels that the face of Susila, a destined girl, as the most beautiful.

Secondly, it shows the deep impact Hindu philosophy on Chandran’s mother and ultimately on the whole family. As per the Hindu philosophy everything is pre decided, man is only a puppet in the hands of destiny. In other words, nothing is in the hands of man. Then the question comes, if everything is pre-decided, if nothing is there in the hands of man, then why should anyone do anything?

The above words of Chandran’s mother are very significant from narrative point of view and for imposing customs on the protagonist. These words also give the glimpses of Chandran’s future. Chandran who considered Malathi as the most beautiful girl in the world, changes his ideas about Malathi. In a dialogue with Chandran, his mother tells him the profound philosophy of life. She says to Chandran, “Ugliness and beauty is all as it strikes one’s eye. Everyone has his own vision. How do all the ugly girls in the world get married?” (BA 158 ch. 17). Here it is important to note that the role of Malathi is minor; and she is merely kept in the background.

One evening he came to the river, and was loafing along it, when he saw a girl, about fifteen years old, playing with her younger sister on the sands. Chandran had been in the never felt before the acute interest he felt in this girl now. He liked the way she sat; he liked the way she played with her sister; he liked the way she dug her hands into the sand and threw it in the air. (BA 54-55 ch.7)
This kind of filmy entry of Malathi in the life of Chandran brings some romantic moments in his life. “He paused only for a moment to observe the girl. He would have willingly settled there and spent the rest of his life watching her dig her hands into the sand” (BA 55 ch. 7). He considered that girl as the most beautiful girl in the world. “She looked like one with the name of Lakshmi” (BA 56 ch. 7). From that day onwards he begins to go to the river bank in the evening to see his dream girl to whom he gave his own imaginary name ‘Lakshmi.’ Here the mythological influence is seen on Chandran. ‘Lakshmi’ is the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity. It is a Hindu custom to consider a girl as a Lakshmi of that home and that person’s whom she marries. The Myth is that Lord Vishnu is the husband of Lakshmi, it means the husband of that girl is her god. Chandran thinks for three whole days about that girl. He gets ready and goes to the river bank and traces her out among all the people on the bank of the river. Chandran says to himself, “Destiny always worked that way” (BA 60 ch. 7). He follows her and tries to go closer to her so that they can see each other. He tries to convince himself with these words: “Staring was half the victory in love” (BA 60 ch. 7). Thereafter Mohan and Veera, old classmates of Chandran, meet him. One day Chandran goes to Mohan’s room to meet him. Mohan lives in the “Room 14, Modern Indian Lodge, Mill Street” (BA 63 ch. 7). This place adds a new chapter in the romantic unsuccessful love story of Chandran and Malathi. Chandran starts to visit his old friend Mohan, regularly. He does not go to meet his friend Mohan, but to see Malathi because her house is near Mohan’s room. There started optical communication; which became a daily habit.

His powers of observation and deduction increased tremendously. He gathered several facts about the girl. She wore a dark sari and a green sari alternatively. She came to the river chiefly for the sake of her little companion. She was invariably absent on Fridays and come late on Wednesdays. Chandran concluded from this that the girl went to the temple on Friday evenings, and was delayed by a music master or a
stitching master on Wednesdays. He further gathered that she was of a religious disposition, and was accomplished in the art of music or embroidery. From her regularity he concluded that she was a person of very systematic habits. The fact that she played with her young companion showed that she had a loving disposition. He concluded that she had no brothers, since not a single soul escorted her on any evening. (BA 64 ch. 7)

The purpose of quoting this much long passage from the novel is to show Chandran’s madness in love of Malathi; and how this madness is wiped off by the destined girl, Susila. Chandran dared to tell about his love at his home, but ultimately all this ends in his sanyas. One more thing is also there that the passage shows how a girl is trained to be a house wife. Malathi’s learning of music, stitching and embroidery and her habit of going to temple indicate the same.

During the period of his college life to the life of a sanyasi, Chandran undergoes a lot of experience of life. His return journey from a sanyasi to his home itself is very suggestive. Chandran who was once very revolting ready to set an example by marrying Malathi; now ready to live without Malathi. He lives a very normal life of a newspaper agent in Malgudi by forgetting his past.

After some days a relation comes from Talapur. There is very interesting conversation between Chandran and his college friend Mohan. They toss a coin to decide whether Chandran should marry or not; finally after tossing a silver coin it is decided that Chandran should marry the girl provided that she must be good looking. If this incident is critically analysed then it becomes clear that here also Chandran is governed by his fate instead of governing his fate. It is not a manly act to take such type of serious decision of marriage with such type of childish act of tossing a coin. This act puts a question on the maturity of Chandran and his friend Mohan. It shows that Chandran became a young man of marriageable age physically, but lacks the seriousness and maturity required to understand the concept and meaning of marriage. Narayan a keen observer of the society helps
him portraying the incident; as such types of incidents are very common in Indian societies.

Even by reading the whole novel it is difficult to get any hint about the beauty of Susila, a destined girl to whom Chandran marries at the end of the novel. But from the eyes of Chandran one can understand how beautiful Susila is! Chandran goes to see Susila to her home at Talapur. “He saw her face now. It was divine; there was no doubt about it. He secretly compared it with Malathi’s, and wondered what he had seen in the latter to drive him so mad…” (BA 161 ch. 170). After looking Susila, Chandan’s mind and heart is filled with only Susila. She is a girl learning in the sixth class and has little knowledge of music. On the return journey Chandran’s mind is full of Susila: “the word ‘Susila’ rang in his ears. Susila, Susila, Susila, Her name, music, figure, face, and everything about was divine. Susila, Susila—Malathi, not a spot beside Susila; it was a tongue-twister; he wondered why people liked that name (BA 162 ch.17). Here it is important to note that the description of Susila is neither of the narrator nor of any other character, but of the destined boy i.e. Chandran. While talking about the issue of marriage Chandran’s mother says to him that: “It is all settled already, the husband of every girl and wife of every man. It is in nobody’s choice” (BA p.159 ch.17). If the statement made by Chandran’s mother is accepted as the truth, then one may laugh at the all the acts done by Chandran about getting married with Malathi, and the sanyas accepted by him after the failure in love. Whatever is done by Chandran is much ado about nothing. Whether Chandran marries or not that is not important, but to whom he marries that becomes more important here. At the end of the novel Chandran not only marries a girl, destined for him, but also lives very happily with her by considering his love for Malathi as a trick of devil, all that was doing of the empty mind. The end of the novel is very significant, it imposes a thought on the readers that fate is stronger, customs are correct and everyone has to surrender to them. One may try to get rid of it, but it is of no use. If the end is pre-decided then what is the point in doing something as per ones will.
The marriage of Malathi with her cousin is a great shock for Chandran. The day on which he learns about her marriage; he has fever that night. He has high temperature and he raves. He takes ten days to recover from the shock. After that his sensible father takes a decision to send Chandran to Madras for a change. Chandran’s uncle lives in Madras. Chandran’s father gives him fifty rupees and a letter to his brother and sends Chandran to Madras. Chandran goes to Madras but not to his uncle’s home. Instead of going with his uncle’s son, who comes there on the Madras railway station, Chandran goes to some hotel by avoiding his uncle’s son. At the hotel he meets “the whiskerd man, who announced that his name was ‘Kailas’” (BA 96 ch. 11). Meeting of Chandran with Kailas has its own importance in the novel. It not only tests Chandran’s moral, but also it throws light on the some people like Kailas, and the immoral trafficking in big cities like Madras. Chandran learns that Kailas has two wives at his home. He loves both of them. He has made plenty of money in Malaya and settled down in his old village, which is at a night’s journey from Madras. The words of Kailas to Chandran reveal his nature and mentality. In fact, Kailas is the representative of certain type of people in the society. The words of Kailas to Chandran: “I have brought two hundred rupees with me. I shall stay here till this is spent, and then return to my village and sleep between the two wives for the next three months, and then again come here. I don’t know how long it is going to last” (BA 97 ch.11).

The above words of Kailas make Chandran aware about the dirtiness which is going in the society. Chandran says to Kailas at the dinner that he has taken a vow before his mother, never to touch alcohol in his life. After the dinner they go to Kokilam’s house at Mint Street. It is the place where prostitutes are available for men like Kailas. When they go there by a taxi; Chandran comes to know that this is prostitute’s house, in the words of Kailas, his girl’s house. After knowing the fact Chandran flies away from there. In this way Chandran knows what has been happening in the society, but he neither takes part in such type of ugly activities nor tries to correct them. Rather he runs away from the place. He feels home-sick,
but he decides never to return to Malagudi. He feels that it will be impossible for him to return to that hell again. As there is no any other solution available with Chandran, he decides to be a *sanyasi,* the simplest solution available with him. It is alternative for committing suicide. Through the incident of Chandran’s *sanyas* Narayan laughs at those who accept *sanyas* like Chandran.

Narayan’s central characters are very much aware of the things that happen in the society. They do not remain in their own world. They are in touch with the happenings around them. They take part in the socio political events, but to the extent of saying that they are aware of it and not more than that.

In the very first novel of Narayan, it is found that the protagonist is aware of the socio-political changes around him. On the 15th of August 1930, about two thousand people of Malgudi gather on the right bank of the River Sarayu to protest against the arrest of Gauri Sankar. He is a prominent political worker of Bombay. Through this incident Narayan creates a link between Mumbai and Malgudi. Whatever happens in big cities like Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta, its impact is found in Malgudi. In other words, the socio-political developments of national level are brought to local level through such type of incidents.

Very artistically Narayan takes the readers along with Swaminathan, the protagonist to the bank of river, where all ready all the Malgudians assembled. In fact, the age of Swaminathan is very small to understand and take interest in it; even then he stands with great interest and listen the speech given by an earnest-looking man in *khaddar.* The man talks about the achievements of Gauri Sankar. Then the speaker says that all the Indians are slave today. Today they are worse than ever before. He addresses to the people to remember the glorious past of India. By giving reference to the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,* he says that it is the land of Gods and Goddesses. Further he says to them to remember Kalidasa and Buddha. He tries to tell the people that India is not better only because of its religious background but also it has a sound economic history. By making a comparison between India and England the speaker says that: “Our ships sailed the
high seas and we had reached the height of civilization when the Englishman ate
raw flesh and wandered in the jungles, nude. But now what are we?” (SF 95
ch.12) In this way the subject is taken from national level to the international level
to discuss the issue of colonialism. It is true that Swaminathan and his friend Mani
do not understand the speech of the man. It is not expected too, if their age is taken
into consideration. The speech of that man shows how Indians are treated as
subalterns; and how their voices are suppressed by the Englishmen, who have no
elite ancestry like that of Indians. It is a paradox that the Englishmen who were
once wandered as savage, now came to India to civilize those Indians who has a
long history of elite ancestry.

The speaker takes a pause and then continues his speech: “Just think for a
while…Why are we become, through no fault of our own, docile and timid? It is
the bureaucracy that has made us so, by intimidation and starvation” (SF 95 ch.
12). The speech makes the people to introspect for their faults and timidity. It is an
awakening moment for them. It is the right time to give free out let to their
suppressed voices. Though the year of the speech is 1930, the month and the day
is very important to be noted here i.e. 15th August. It is the same day and month on
which India became free, but the year is 1947.

Parth Chatterjee, an eminent scholar of Subaltern Studies, in his research
article “The Nation and Its Women” notes:

The world was where the European power had challenged the non-
European peoples and, by virtue of its superior material culture, had
subjugated them. But, the nationalists asserted, it had failed to colonize the
inner, essential, identity of the East, which lay in its distinctive, and
superior, spiritual culture. That is where the East was undominated,
sovereign, master of its own fate… But in the entire phase of the national
struggle, the crucial need was to protect, preserve, and strengthen the inner
core of the national culture, its spiritual essence. No encroachments by the
colonizer must be allowed in that inner sanctum. (SSR 246)
The analysis of the speech of the speaker shows that the Englishmen are the elites of international level and Indians are the subalterns. The above speech also reveals that in the passage of the time once elite can become non-elite and vice-versa. Making a country like India, a subaltern nation is a matter of international politics. The speaker talks about the bureaucracy that has made Indians timid and to bow before only a few Englishmen, by intimidation and starvation. It means bureaucracy is one of the root causes of timidity and subalternity of the Indians. Through bureaucracy the Englishmen created hierarchy in India. There is an upper officer and some lower employees in it. Further it created the classes i.e. the upper class (elite) and the lower class (non-elite) or the subalterns. It involves economy and politics which gives birth to the struggle, domination and suppression of the lower or the subalterns by the elites.

After listening to this speech of the speaker Swaminathan shouts ‘Gandhi ki Jai.’ It shows the impact of the speech on children; and how even children also get involved in the freedom struggle of India. There begins a discussion between Swaminathan and Mani about the speech and the Europeans. Mani says if the Indians spit on the Europeans, they will shoot the Indians, for they have no heart. For the rest of the evening Swaminathan is caught by the speakers speech. He and his friend Mani weep over the plight of the Indian peasants. On the next day there is patriotic bonfire of English cloths in Malgudi and by throwing his cap in it Swaminathan resolves to boycott English goods. He goes to the school bareheaded.

When Swaminathan goes to school the people making protest come there to close the school and the headmaster closes Albert Mission School. In this way Swaminathan takes part in the protest and goes to the Board High School to close it along with the crowd. He breaks the glass panes of the school; and by dragging this way and that way Swaminathan gives a blow on the head of headmaster, who says that he will call police. When the crowd reaches to the Market, police come there and there is lathi charge by the police on the crowd. Terrified Swaminathan
says, “Don’t kill me. I know nothing” (SF 102 ch.12). He is caught and asked by the policeman, why is he there? He says to the policeman to leave him, for he knows nothing. It shows the cowardice nature of Swaminathan and his involvement in it is incidental. On the next day Swaminathan narrates the story of yesterday at his home and demands his father a new cap for him. His father rebukes him, for the cap was not English, but from *khaddar* shop. In the school, the headmaster punishes all the students who were with the crowd. The headmaster gives four powerful cuts with a cane to Swaminathan. He says to the headmaster to not to beat him, for it gives him pain. Finally, “He had a sudden flood of courage, the courage that comes of desperation. He resisted the tears that were threatening to rush out, jumped down, and, grasping his books, rushed out muttering, ‘I don’t care for your dirty school’” (SF 107 ch.12). In this way Swaminathan revolts against the headmaster of his school. This episode is full of local to national level politics.

In *Waiting for the Mahatma* both the Sriram and Bharati are engaged in the national freedom struggle. Bharati is the true follower of Gandhiji. She is always with him. Once Mahatma Gandhiji comes to Malgudi and addresses the people of Malgudi. He says, “I will not address you in English. It’s the language of our rulers” (WM 27 pt.1). The statement of the Mahatma is a part of national philosophy and a matter of patriotism.

Instead of considering the matter of poverty at individual level, it is considered at the national level. In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Sriram goes to Mathieson, a British officer with an envelope in his hand. It contains a message for Gandhiji, and the message is for the British to *Quit India*. There is a talk between Sriram and Mathieson. He cools down Sriram first and then tries to tell him how he and their leader Gandhiji are wrong. He asks Sriram to come in and asks for drink. On Sriram’s rejection of any drink, he asks him for some tea or coffee. He orders two glasses of orange juice. He takes him to veranda. The veranda is well furnished with wicker chairs covered with a beautiful chintz, beautiful plants in
big pots. The servant comes there with two glasses of orange juice. He is in a white uniform with a lot of buttons. Sriram reflects: “This man wants even a particular kind of dress for Indians who act as his servants’, and felt an inexplicable rage” (WM 111 ch. 2). When Sriram asks Mathieson how he manages all this. Thereupon Mathieson laughs at him and says that they do not call it as luxury. “And all this while millions of people here are going without food or shelter!” (WM 112 ch. 2) It is the colonial policy of the British to make the native believe that they are thinking and doing in the interest of the Indians. “It is our prayer,” said Mathieson, ‘that all of them may have not only enough to eat soon but also beautiful houses to live in, something, I hope, better than this, which is only a make-shift” (WM 111pt.2). Being a social worker and a freedom fighter Sriram understands it well. “Sriram put down this explanation to racial arrogance” (WM 111pt.2). He reflects that it is his prosperity and the feeling of ownership the country that makes him to talk like this. Mathieson says that they want to give better life to the Indians and respect to Mahatmaji’s words. But what Mahatmaji advised Indians to “spin the charka, wear Khadi, live without luxury, and we shall have India ruled by Indians” (WM 111pt.2).

The above words of Sriram show that he is a follower of Gandhiji. Though the Mahatma’s physical presence is no longer with him, Sriram has a feeling that his movements are guided. He lives with only a few things by reducing his needs. Gandhiji has blessed his idea of self-development. “He had said: Spin and read Bhagavad Gita, and utter Ram Nam continuously, and then you will know what to do in life” (WM 96 pt. 2). While taking bath with cold water Sriram sings “Raghupathi Raghava Raja Ram, Pathitha Pavana Seetha Ram” (WM 96 pt. 2). Gandhiji has presented him a charka as a key for his future and Bharati has taught him to how to insert a cotton thread, how to run the wheel, how to spin and how to use it.

Bharati comes barefoot to meet Sriram on the hill in the evening. Loving and caring lover Sriram says her: “You should not walk barefoot” (WM 100 pt. 2).
Bold Bharati, being a true follower of Gandhiji, with her full patriotic feeling argues that: ‘Why not? India’s three hundred sixty million walk barefoot’ (WM100 pt.2). Bharati thinks of the whole nation where as Sriram thinks of her first then of the nation. The answer given by Sriram makes it clear. “They may, but it doesn’t mean you should also walk barefoot. There may be cobras about, this place is full of such things” (WM100 pt.2). His feeling of care is mingled with fear, but she is not afraid of anybody or anything.

Bharati is neither afraid of cobras nor lonely roads nor police, all these things terrify a woman in general. She is confident enough to manage with all these things. She taught him to spin on *charkha*; it is symbolic enough. It symbolizes that she has taught Gandhism. In this sense she is his *guru*. When Sriram says her that she should not be afraid of him, but others must be afraid of her then she says, “Yes, because I am your Guru” (WM100 pt.2). She comes to the hill all alone and goes all alone, this act of Bharati creates a sense of fear in Sriram and a feeling that: “she doesn’t seem to feel she is a woman” (WM101 pt.2). All this makes Sriram a subaltern. Bharati becomes an elite by breaking all the norms that make a female Other. She is sharp in contrast to Savitri of *The Dark Room*, and Sriram is also sharp in contrast to that of Ramani, who neither cares for his wife and children nor loves them. Bharati comes to the hill to meet him. There is no one except them on the hill. He thought:

She ought to be my wife and come to my arms. He wandered for a moment, ‘What is it that prevents me from touching her? What can she do? She is all alone in this place. Even if she shouts nobody will hear for ten miles around.’ He revelled in this terrific possibility. But it was only a dream. (WM 100 pt. 2)

Sriram loves Bharati, he cares for her; but he could not dare to even touch her. She might not have disliked or rejected his touch for she comes there on her own just to meet him; and no one is there to stop him from doing so. She comes there and goes away and touching her and taking her in his arms remains a dream
for him. There are two reasons for this, one is he is weak and the other is the image of Bharati. Man loves or gets terrified by the image of some man or woman. It is the image of Bharati that prevents Sriram from doing so. It is the manly image of Bharati that prevents Sriram from doing any such type of act.

Sriram’s grandmother is a good person. But her problem, according to Sriram is that she never treats him as a grown up man. She never gives him one hundred rupees, but only fifty rupees. So he imagines that: “I am an adult with my own money, going home just when I please. Granny can’t ask me what I have been doing…” (WM 19 pt.1). Sriram is a grown up men, but he is not treated so by his grandmother. It shows two things, first is the authoritative and elderly position of grandmother and the subordinate position of Sriram in the house. The second is that at the psychological level Sriram has a desire to attain that position which all the elderly men achieve in the house by virtue of age and the money they earn. As per the tradition, earning money and age are the two essential things to jump up from the subordinate to the authoritative and elderly position in the house. He says that he wants to come to home when he pleases. It shows that his act of remaining out from home is also controlled by his grandmother.

There is a small incident in the novel Sriram comes near a tree and waits for a bus. He talks about the arrest of Gandhiji to his grandmother: “All trouble must end. I wish they would release Mahatmaji” (WM 156 pt. 3). It is true that Sriram wants that Gandhiji should be released from the jail, but his intension is less in the interest of nation and more personal: “As long as he is in prison we will fight this devilish government. How dare they lay their hands on him? If they hadn’t done that, Bharati would be out and happy, and Mahatmaji would have given his consent to her marriage” (WM 156 pt. 3). He wants to marry Bharati. She is a true follower of Gandhiji and she cannot marry him without Gandhiji’s permission. So to marry Bharati, Gandhiji must be released from jail so that he may give consent to Sriram and Bharati’s marriage. This incident and the above mentioned incident of Bharati’s barefoot walking show two things; one is Bharati’s patriotism, her
reverence for Gandhiji, the other is Sriram’s self-interest first and social service next. Sriram is mad in the love of Bharati. “I will be your slave. I will do anything you ask me to do for you. I will buy you all the things in the world,’ he behaved like a idiot” (WM132pt.2).

When the bus comes Sriram travels by the bus: “Within the bus someone was snoring, someone was explaining the war and its progress on all fronts…”(WM 158 pt. 4). In this way, people discuss different things from war to politics and from gods to various other abstract things. They discuss these things only for the sake of discussion and time pass. They discuss such things to show their awareness about such things and nothing more than that. The same is the case of the protagonists of Narayan.

Sriram is not strong; rather he is weak and submissive. On the contrary Bharati is strong. He loves her: “but he also felt afraid for her more than at any other time. He simply said, ‘If you will not be angry with me, Bharati, I wish to ask one thing’” (WM 140 pt. 2). These words of Sriram are exactly opposite to the nature of Ramani. It is true that Ramani and Jagan are married and having children where as Sriram is in his courtship. There may be little change in the nature of any person after marriage; a drastic change is generally not possible. The respect of Sriram for Bharati is because of the better image of Bharati. She is always with Mahatma Gandhiji; she is a true follower of Gandhiji; she knows many languages; she talks with the people with great confidence etc. Sriram is impressed by these qualities of Bharati; and it makes him subordinate to Bharati. “He wanted to seize her in his arms and take a stormy leave of her, but he had to content himself with asking, ‘Will you marry me after we are out of all this, will you promise, if Bapuji permits?’” (WM 141 pt.2). She promises him that she will marry him and goes away, but Sriram stands there where he watches her till tears gather in his eyes.

Mahatma Gandhiji wrote a letter to Sriram. The content of that letter is a part of Gandhian philosophy.
Your work should be a matter of inner faith. It cannot depend upon what you see or understand. Your conscience should be your guide in every action. Consult it and you won’t go wrong. Don’t guide yourself by what you see. You should do your duty because your inner voice drives you to do it. Look after Bharati as well as she looks after you, that’s all. (WM 127-128 pt. 2).

Gandhiji’s stress is on inner faith and conscience. According to him the work in hand must be a matter of real satisfaction; and it is possible only when the work becomes a matter of inner faith. He further says that the conscience is the real guide in every action of man. For Bharati the work is a matter of her inner faith and not for Sriram and Krishna of The English Teacher. Krishna’s conscience guides him that he has been doing something wrong. So finally he makes up his mind to leave the job of Assistant Professor at the Albert Mission College, and decides to join the child world, where his work will be a matter of inner faith for him.

The words in the letter of Gandhiji for Sriram signify Gandhiji’s balanced view about man and woman relation and their equality. “Look after Bharati as well as she looks after you, that’s all” (WM 127-128 pt. 2). These words signify that both man and woman are equal; no one is either superior or inferior, according to Gandhi. It is the duty of both of them to take care of each other. If they do so the life of both of them will be better. Instead of hierarchy in the home there will be equality along with love and care.

No doubt, the European power had challenged the Indians and their culture. The British tried to establish the supremacy of their material culture. India has its very rich culture since antiquity. It is inculcated very deeply in the mind of the Indians. They have accepted certain things from the material culture from the Europeans. There are so many people who accepted the Gandhian way of life. There is a special place for such people in Narayan’s fictional world. In Swami and Friends, the protest, the patriotic bonfire in Malgudi and Swaminathan’s
father buying the cap and other cloths from the *khaddar* shop are some of the examples. *Waiting for the Mhatama* is full of such examples. Jagan, the protagonist of *The Vendor of Sweets* accepts Gandhian way of living. But some people like Jagan’s son Mali and Raju in *The Guide* by accepting the materialistic culture fail miserably and go to the jail.

In the chapter number thirteen of *Swami and Friends*, by forgetting all about the speech, the speaker and the protest Swaminathan lives very normal life. It is true that Narayan imbues his protagonists with social awareness and sense of responsibility only to the extent it helps him to bring out their human qualities. This becomes very clear from the above mentioned incidents which come by chance in the life of Swaminathan. The same is true about Sriram in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. It is true that the age of Swaminathan is very small to understand the speech and the ideas mentioned in the speech, but it also cannot be denied that he understands the essence of it and moved by it, but only for a very short time.

Sriram, the protagonist of *Waiting for the Mahatma*, instead of becoming a follower of Gandhiji, falls in love of Bharati. He is well aware of the work undertaken by Gandhiji and his true follower Bharati. Sriram neither prefers to work for the nation nor for the upliftment of the untouchables. He has reverence for Gandhiji, love for the nation, good feelings for the untouchables. He waits to marry Bharati, till she gets time and permission from Gandhiji, but all this is to the extent of saying that he has social awareness and a sense of responsibility and nothing more than that. Sriram is very much aware about the *Dandi March*, *Quit India* movements and the war; it shows that he is well aware about the socio-political developments that were happening in India. On certain occasions he is seen while making people aware about the work and mission of Mahatma Gandhiji. The behaviour Sriram is that of any sensible man, who is well aware about his rights and duties.
Sriram tries to make the shopman aware of what Gandhiji is doing for India, who is selling the salt at the price the government has fixed, here it is important to bear in mind that the government then was the British government.

You must support those of us who are fighting the government on these questions,” said Sriram, “if you cannot do anything else. Do you remember Mahatma’s march to Dandi Beach in 1930? He walked hundred miles across the country, in order to boil the salt-water on the beach of Dandi and help anyone to boil salt water and make his own salt. (WM 120 pt. 2)

Sriram does not allow the shopman to sell the English biscuits in his shop. He gives a lecture to the shopman on it and makes him realize his mistake. But he does emerge neither as a freedom fighter nor as a social worker, even though he gets good opportunity to be so while working for Subhashchandra Bose and under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhiji in the company of Bharati. In fact it is very difficult to be a follower of Gandhi and Bose at one and the same time, for the ideologies of these two great personalities are opposite to each other. Bose preferred gun to free India whereas Gandhi preferred non-violence for the same purpose. The end of both of them is the same i.e. free India, but their means are two different poles. Some times Sriram works for Bose and sometimes for Gandhiji, it puts question mark on his work; and one may say that he is aware about both of them. On the other hand Bharati emerges as the true follower of Gandhiji.

Steve Jones says, “Major social change which leaves the condition of the working class fundamentally unaltered is, for Gramsci, no change at all” (AG 5). The political and social activities which were going on in the decade of 1930s and 40s with its epicentre in Delhi, affected almost all Indians; and Malgudi is no exception to it. From the rich to the poor people of India get involved in it, either directly or indirectly. The people of Malgudi also are not exception to it. Some persons like Bharati gets involved in it completely and directly, and some like
Sriram half-heartedly, like Mr. Natesh, the Municipal Chairman of Malgudi superficially; and the shopman and the poor woman who comes to the shop indirectly and involuntarily. The political and social change which have been taking place in India definitely brought positive changes in the life of elites either at national level or at local level. But conditions of the working class fundamentally remained unaltered and according to Gramsci, such change is no change at all. In fact, what is the use of such superficial change for the poor people like the shopkeeper, the poor woman who comes to the shop and the many more poor workers living in India? During British India they were the subalterns and unfortunately, after the independence, in free India they have been living the same life of the subalterns.

To bring the change in the social and political conditions of the poor people, the economic conditions of the poor people must be changed. They must be uplifted economically to change their position in the society so that it will bring social and political changes in their life. In his book *Antonio Gramsci*, Steve Jones notes that Gramsci argues that economy, culture and politics are the three different things, but they are interlinked. Gramsci is the first original Marxist thinker who has a broad vision of looking towards the things. To him economy is the base but it is not the only factor which is to be taken in to consideration for everything. To him culture and politics are also equally important. He considers that economy, culture and politics are well organized in a relationship of mutual exchange with one another. There is a constantly shifting and circulating interlinking network of influence among them. This very complex process is termed as *hegemony* by Gramsci. In this sense the concept of *hegemony* is not only dynamic one but also different from domination. (AG 3-7)

Steve Jones, an eminent critic of Gramsci, gives the example of a film and a newspaper to make the point more clear. A detailed study of a film gives the address of the studio that produced it, the role played by the censor, criticism and the popular taste of that period in which the film is made. Similarly a detailed
study of a newspaper article reflects the pattern of its ownership at the moment, the taste of the target public that reads it, government’s role in giving license to the press and finally the activities of the industry watchdogs. For a common reader an article in a newspaper is the product of its writer’s mind but for serious scholar like Steve Jones it is something more than that. It is complex mixture of the so many above mentioned things. (AG 4-6). Similarly while studying the incidents from the novels, it becomes important to take into account the other aspects like the period during which it is written, the socio-political conditions of that period, the customs and the tradition prevalent in the society, the impact of religion and so on. Economy, politics, culture and education these are the four pillars on which the society rests, the effect of these four factors is individually and collectively found on the society. Not only this, but there is mutual exchange among these four factors, which forms a complex network that makes the whole process difficult to understand.

In the afternoon, after finishing four lectures Krishna, the English teacher rests in a chair in the common room for the staff of his Albert Mission College. There is a silence in the common room and Krishna does not like such type of silence there. “There were a dozen other teachers. As each of them sat looking at a book or at the ceiling vacantly, there was a silence which seemed me oppressive. I never liked it” (ET 15 ch. 1). So he makes a statement to break the silence in the common room. It shows that Krishna is not an introvert and reserved type of person. He is very normal man, who delights in maintaining a good contact with his colleagues. There began a discussion among all the professors including Gajapathy, Sastri, Kumar and Dr. Menon. All of them participate in the discussion and put their views.

Professors belong to the intellectual class of the society. They have the treasure of knowledge. They collect it with a lot of devotion. They get pleasure in imparting the knowledge to their students. For them gaining and imparting knowledge for shaping the minds of the students, so that they may stand on their
own legs in future, is the sole motive of life. In this sense they are the creators. Their discussion is intellectual; and there is such type of intellectual discussion in *The English Teacher*. Education is the main theme of the novel and its protagonist is the Assistant Professor of English.

The discussion which starts from the spelling of *Kant* which is wrongly spelt as *Cant* by a student ends on the issue of colonialism. Assistant Professor, Gajapathy asks how they would treat a student who will spell *Kant as Cant*. Of course, Gajapathy does not like it because he is loyal to the British people and their language. But Dr. Menon says that it will not bother him. This reply of Dr. Menon is due to his free attitude which is developed because of his stay in America. Dr. Manon has completed his Ph. D in America. Liberal Americans developed liberal attitude towards spelling, they spell what they pronounce or vice versa. Then Gajapathy says that there is a merit in accuracy, which must be cultivated for its own sake. To this Gajapethy’s statement Krishna gives a reply. It is in support to Dr. Menon’s view. Krishna says “Americans spell honour without ‘u’” (ET 16 ch. 1). Dr. Menon, who has completed his Ph.D. at Columbia University, adds to it: “Americans are saner than their English cousins in most matters” (ET 16 ch. 1). Gajapathy with his life-time loyalty to English people and language says: “I think the American spelling is foolish buffoonery” (ET 16 ch. 1). There upon Krishna says, “If we had Americans ruling us, I suppose we would say the same thing of the English people” (ET 16 ch. 1). The conclusion of the above discussion is that who is the ruling authority is more important; and who is correct is least important. It is like might is always right. To be more specific and to throw more light on it, it is worth to recall here what Steve Jones notes:

‘The ideas of the ruling class,’ ‘are in every epoch the ruling ideas … Marx and Engels claim that the ruling ideas ‘are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas’. In other words, the ideas of bourgeois thinkers are simply reflections of bourgeois social life. (AG 28)
The ideas imposed by the ruling class, become a part of the mentality of the class being ruled. It is essential otherwise the subaltern class will question the things and the ideas, which is dangerous for the ruling class. Those who consider that the ideas imposed by the ruling class are correct, they remain as subaltern forever, but those who question them, those who think apart from that, their process of become free from that mentality starts. In the course of time, they cease to be subalterns like that of Krishna. He thinks and questions the education system imposed on Indians by the British. Finally he resigns and prefers to go the world of children, where he can work as per his will and where he can implement the innovative ideas. He will get the work satisfaction and peace of mind, there only.

Krishna and Gajapathy both are the Assistant Professors teaching in the same college but there is a marked difference between their thinking. The analysis of the whole discussion is that Gajapathy has accepted subalternity completely; whereas Krishna is preparing to revolt against it, to set himself free. The attempts of Krishna to free himself at the beginning of the novel become fruitful at the end of the novel. He decides to leave the good job of professor, for the sake of freedom. By the end of the novel Krishna becomes free, by leaving the job; whereas his other colleagues remain there happily in pleasing their British boss Principal Mr. Brown. Through the story, Narayan tries to show how some are born as subaltern and die as subaltern like Gajapathy and his colleagues, and how some break the shackles of subalternity like Krishna. Here the words of Krishna at the outset of the novel throw light on it and they also foreshadow Krishna’s resignation of the post, which he gives to the principal at the end of the novel.

The feeling again and again came upon me that as I was nearing thirty I should cease to live like a cow… eating, working in a manner of speaking, walking talking, etc.—all done to perfection, I was sure, but always leaving school behind a sense of something missing. (ET 5 ch. 1)

The close study of the life of Krishna shows that initially he was very much interested in the English language and English literature. As he says at the very
outset of novel: “I had done almost all the things I wanted to do, and as result I felt heroic and satisfied” (ET 1 ch. 1). As a result of it he became a Professor of English at Albert Mission College in Malgudi. But all this is in the background of the novel. When the novel starts, on the very opening page of the novel the readers meet Krishna as a Professor of English working without any job-satisfaction, very mechanically, at Albert Mission College of Malgudi, only because the salary of rupees one hundred per month is given. It is important to note what he thinks, “One ought, of course, to be thankful and rest content. But such repose was not in my nature, perhaps because I was a poet, and I was constantly nagged by the feeling that I was doing the wrong work” (ET 5 ch. 1). These words of Krishna at the outset of the novel are suggestive that he will do something different as he is not getting the inner satisfaction in doing this job and he will not remain there like Dr. Menon, Gajapathy, Sastri, Kumar, Krishna and etc., the other professors of the college. In fact, a reader who starts reading the novel in the course of reading realises that Krishna will leave his job, and by the end of the novel; he gives the resignation of his job of a Professor of English at Albert Mission College and prefers to work for children like the headmaster who comes in Krishna’s life.

When the novel starts readers meet Krishna as a subaltern and by the end of the novel they meet him as a free man, who has escaped from a subaltern position. Now he has no boss like that of Mr. Brown, no fixed salary per month, but freedom to do whatever he likes. He can now work where he pleases to work i.e. the world of children; where he will not work mechanically, but with satisfaction. Peyman Vahabzadeh in his research article “The conditions of Subalternity: Reflections on Subjectivity, Experience and Hegemony,” notes: “Subalternity is overcome through a creative act, an act of decision, which attests to the attempt at re-grounding one’s life-world” (Peyman 110). The act of teaching to the children is very creative and not mechanical like that of a professor who goes on reading and reading the same, and teaching the same only for the sake of the salary without any satisfaction.
Dr. Menon, Gajapathy, Sastri, Kumar, Krishna and etc. are the all the professors working at Albert Mission College, in Malgudi. All of them have been working on the same posts but with different mentality and different attitude of looking towards the job. A person like Dr. Menon finds no fault if someone goes a bit out from the track, whereas for Gajapathy it is unexpected and wrong to leave the track. Normally it happens, after getting a degree with a lot of efforts one gets a good job of a professor in some college. After getting the job he remains there for the rest of the life, teaching the same syllabus and the topics prescribed by the university, under the so called able guidance of the principal. It is true only in the case of the people of subaltern mentality like that of Gajapathy, Sastri and Kumar, but not like that of Krishna.

One day Krishna gave an exercise to the students of his class to write an essay on an epigram: “‘Man is the master of his own destiny’ “An idiotic theme,” I felt, “this abstract and confounded metaphysic;” but I could not help it. I had been ordered to set this subject to the class” (ET 15 ch. 1). The statement shows that actually Krishna is not interested in it, but simply doing it because he is ordered to do so. Being a subaltern he has to follow the order. In this way the voices of the subalterns are suppressed by the seniors or the boss. He calls the theme as an idiotic, but by the end of the novel he becomes the master of his own destiny. Narayan uses this incident to foreshadow the future of the protagonist.

In the fifth chapter of The English Teacher there is an example of suppressed subaltern voice. Narayan tries to show how the hierarchy at the college suppresses the voice of the junior. One day Mr. George of the language section is absent. Mr. Gajapathy being senior to Krishna says him to keep the boys engaged. The Principal doesn’t want to let the boys off when they have not a teacher for a particular period. In the English department everybody ought to be able to handle any part of it. He has to agree with him as there is no any other alternative.

Krishna goes to engage the class, but all unwillingly. He thinks that it is a torture to engage the classes of the non-available teacher. In fact, he does not like
to go to the class to engage it. But being the inferior he has to obey the senior. In the first chapter when Krishna looks at Gajapathy, what he thinks is important to not here: “he was my senior in office, and he might give me an hour of extra work every day, or compel me to teach the history of language, of which I knew nothing” (ET 6 ch. 1). A subordinate has no any other option other than following the authority. Being the subordinate to the principal Krishna expresses his grudge somewhere else, but not in front of the principal. Mr. Gajapathy says to Krishna that their principal believed in keeping them well-read and whenever they get time they must spend it in library. So Krishna goes to the class very much unwillingly and sends a boy to the library to fetch any book from the English section. The boy brings a book of nineteenth-century essays. Krishna sits down and read the book mechanically. “Some boys in the front listened. But they found it difficult to hear and complained: “Can’t here, sir” (ET 104 ch. 5).

Krishna who is subordinate outside the classroom, in front of the principal and Mr. Gajapathy, now the superior in the class in front of the students replies as follows to the students who are subordinate to him. “‘Ask your friends to shut up and you will hear better,’ I said” (ET 104 ch. 5). From it the mentality of a subaltern to behave differently at the different places is noticed. Krishna being a subaltern gets suppressed by his superior, the principal; in another situation he suppresses when he is in the classroom.

On one morning Krishna took a paper and wrote a poem entitled *Nature*. It is a fifteen lines verse. He reads and re-reads it, and finally when it satisfies him, he thinks: “I felt I had discharged a duty assigned to me in some eternal scheme” (ET 11 ch. 1). These words of Krishna remind the background of the famous poem “On His Blindness” written by John Milton. The creativity in Krishna always makes him restless. He is not born to be a professor of that kind, but something else. As the job could not satisfy his inner urge, it becomes difficult for Krishna to work there half-heartedly only for the sake of salary. On one day Krishna goes to the college without sufficient preparation for the lecture. In the class he says to his
students: “My dear fellows don’t trust me so much. I am merely trying to mark
time because I couldn’t come sufficiently prepared, because all the morning I
have…” (ET 13 ch. 1). This statement by Krishna shows that he is truth lover; he
dares to tell the fact in the class. Krishna dares to speak but certainly not very
loudly so that the elite can listen it. Peyman says that every hegemonic subject
could at certain historical moments gives up subalternity, sometimes totally, but
most of the times partially. He remains oscillating between subjectivity and
subalternity, depending upon his subject position.

On one Sunday Krishna goes to his daughter’s school. Leela is Krishna’s
daughter. He meets the headmaster of the school; and there is a discussion about
school, learning and education system between them. In the discussion the
headmaster says to Krishna, “We are a poor country, and we can do without
luxuries. Why do we want anything more than a shed and a few mats and open
air? This is not a cold country for all the heavy furniture and elaborate buildings”
(ET 135 ch. 6). These words of the headmaster are suggestive enough to justify
how Indians are suppressed by the British in educational field. India has its own
age old rich educational tradition; it has its own atmosphere, culture and people of
its own mentality. They are proud of it, but the British rule in India suppressed all
this and forced the native of this land to accept their educational system. Further
the headmaster says to Krishna that he has three such types of classrooms, but he
does not need them because they spend most of their time outside under the tree.
Krishna argues that many people think that one cannot have a school unless a few
thousand rupees are invested in building and furniture. To this belief of the people
the headmaster replies: “It is all mere copying, multiply your expenses, and look
to the Government for support, and sell your soul to the Government for the grant.
This is the history of our educational movement” (ET 135 ch. 6). In this way the
headmaster attacks on the education policy of the British for not providing
financial support to the local educational institutes. It is a part of the education
policy implemented as per the suggestions of Macaulay. He considers that it is of
no use to spend funds on local educational institutions or for teaching Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian and the cultures that have been going with them. (Stephenson 31). Certain nationalists like the headmaster do not like to expend a lot of money on infrastructure.

Certain schools try to copy the British education system. It is a blind adherence of the government and the missionary schools. It is like selling the soul just to gain some funds from the government. Novelty is better than blind adherence. There is a novelty in the teaching methods and the whole concept of education of the headmaster. It influences Krishna and ultimately brings him on this track. The headmaster thinks that the British education system gives a lot of importance to sports instead of giving it to the development of the mind and character of the students. He thinks that the schools and the colleges are turned into gyms. The concept of the headmaster is very clear about education. He says: “The main business of an educational institution is to shape the mind and character and of course games have their value” (ET 135 ch. 6). Krishna adds to it by saying that his Principal Mr. Brown goes to the club to see the match. He loses himself in excitement, congratulates the team and shakes hands, and gives no end of liberties to the tournament players and even sends them on tour. The headmaster says that: “They are even made to pass examinations! And this sort of thing is supported to make our people modern and vigorous...” (ET 136 ch. 6). If it is so, how the students can develop excellence and achieve merit as expected by Professor Gajapathy in the discussion in the common room of Albert Mission College.

In Krishna’s case his subalternity is overcome when he, as a subaltern speaks back to the structure which created the elites and subalterns. He questions the education system. A reader notices its indications from the very first page of the novel. The unhappiness of Krishna is clearly seen at the outset of the novel. He says to himself that he is not happy with the job of Assistant Professor at Albert Mission College. The job does not give him job satisfaction which is an important thing about any job. It becomes clear that he has been working there because he is
paid rupees one hundred on the first of every month. The work which he has been
doing there is very tedious and monotonous. The words of Krishna make clear his
ideas about the job. He says:

I took stock of my daily life. I got up at eight every day, read for the
fiftieth time Milton, Carlyle and Shakespeare, looked through compositions, swallowed a meal, dressed, and rushed out of the hostel just
when the second bell sounded at college; four hours later I returned to my
room; my duty in the interval had been admonishing, cajoling so that they
might mug up Shakespeare and Milton and secure high marks and save me
adverse marks from my chief at the end of the year. (ET 5 ch. 1)

Though this passage is long enough to quote, it deserves the mentioning
here. This passage is Krishnas’s own ideas about his job. The job is definitely a
good source of money for him, but it is not the good source of satisfaction for him.
It becomes evident that he has been working there because he gets money in the
form of salary on the first date of every month. He does not get salary for his
livelihood, as he has been giving the best of him and the time in the form of
service. For the teachers working there like Gajapathy and some others, it makes
no difference; but for Krishna it makes the difference. Working for salary or
getting salary for giving the best of once own and the time in the form of service
that is the question. It is the question of working with self or without self. Krishna,
along with the other professors of Albert Mission College, works without self; but
he does not like it.

In addition to the above mentioned passage from the novel it is worth to
quote here what Krishna says further about the tedious job of a professor. “For this
pain the authorities kindly paid me a hundred rupees on the first of every month
and dubbed me a lecture. One ought, of course, to be thankful and rest content”
(ET 5 ch. 1).

Krishna does not want such job. Earlier he says that the feeling again and
again comes up to him that as he nears thirty he should cease to live like a cow. As
a cow eats, works in the same way he speaks, walks and talks and all this is done with perfection. He is sure that there is a sense of something missing in his present life. He misses the job satisfaction, which becomes the real problem for Krishna to continue his job. He feels that he is born to be something different and not to live like this. He says, “But such repose was not in my nature, perhaps because I was a poet, and I was constantly nagged by the feeling that I was doing the wrong work” (ET 5 ch. 1). By the end of the novel Krishna is seen very satisfied after leaving the unsuitable job of Assistant Professor of English at Albert Mission College. Krishna works with his self and with real work satisfaction in the world of children.

From his studies and his teaching experience at Albert Mission College, Krishna realises that the whole British education system is not good. Adam Stephenson in his “The Whig Interpretation of History Applied to the Empire: Macaulay’s Minute on Education” begins with the actual words of Thomas Babington Macaulay from his Minute on Indian Education of 2nd February 1835:

> A single shelf of a good European library (is) worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. (Stephenson 29)

These statements of Macaulay are interpreted by different Indian and Western thinkers and scholar differently. Stephenson says that these statements are used as the solid proofs to make the point clear that the British deliberately tried to kill off the Indian languages, cultures and even the political identity of India. It is worse than economic exploitation done by the British. Macaulay’s Minute on Indian Education is an important thing in the postcolonial theories and subaltern studies. Stephenson very artistically and logically convinces in the article how it is wrongly interpreted. He says that initially and apparently, it seems that Macaulay wants to replace education system and culture with an entirely new system in
India, but actually it is not like that. Stephenson tries to justify how Macaulay was correct in saying so. He gives a detailed account of the past of Macaulay and his work. Macaulay wrote Indian Penal Code which is followed by the Civil Code in India. In this way he tries to make it clear that Macaulay’s intension was not bad, but it is wrongly interpreted by some people. Whatever may be the argument and justification of Stephenson, in the defense of Macaulay’s statements; but one thing is obvious that no reader tries to know the mindset of the writer, his past, his previous statements and work; to analyze his present statement. So it is but natural to appear wrong, as it is, to the person like Krishna or any other.

As a matter of oppose to it he says: “I would send in a letter which … I was going to attack a whole century of false education” (ET 178 ch. 8). As a result of the education system created by Macaulay, only subaltern and blind adherers like Professor Gajapathy are created in India; to whom Wikipedia calls as ‘Macaulay’s Children’. (qtd. in Stephenson). So Krishna wants to resign from the post. He says to Mr. Brown, the Principal: “I can’t go on with this work any longer, sir….” (ET 178 ch. 8). When the reason of resignation is asked by Mr. Brown, he says, “I am taking up work in a children’s school” (ET 178 ch. 8). He further says, “I am beginning a new experiment in education, with another friend” (ET 179 ch. 8). This new friend is the headmaster. Some new innovative methods of teaching are adopted by the headmaster in his school. Krishna also has something like this in his mind. But he never got an opportunity before this to implement. The ideas of Krishna from the first chapter are much similar to his thoughts in the last chapter of the novel. The work which he has done there in Albert Mission College is very tedious and monotonous. The words of Krishna as mentioned above make clear his ideas about the job.

These words of Krishna show that the job has nothing new and challenging. He has to work not to get adverse remarks from the principal. There is neither scope for his interests and his abilities nor any value. The job is definitely a good source of income for him, but it is not the good source of satisfaction for him. It
becomes evident that he has been working there because he gets money in the form of salary on the first date of every month and not job satisfaction. This kind of thinking comes to an end in the last chapter of the novel. He says to Mr. Brown: “Sir, what I am doing in the college hardly seems to me work. I mug up and repeat and they mug up and repeat in examinations… This hardly seems to me work, Mr. Brown” (ET 79 ch. 3).

In the first chapter of the novel there is one incident where Krishna goes to his class and while taking attendance students make noise in the class. He says them to keep quiet, and thinks: “Who was I that they should obey my command?”–students obey the command due to fear of absent mark” (ET 12 ch.1). Thereafter what Krishna contemplates is worth to note:

What tie was there between me and them? Did I absorb their personalities as did the old masters and merge them in mine. I was merely a man who had mugged earlier than they the introduction and the notes in the Verity edition of Lear, and guided them through the mazes of Elizabethan English. I did not do it out of love for them or for Shakespeare but only out of love for myself. If they paid me the same one hundred rupees for stringing beads together or tearing up paper bits every day for a few hours. I would perhaps be doing it with equal fervour. But such reflections do not mar our peace when we occupy the class-room chair. So that I banged the table—shouted till they were silenced, and went through the attendance; all this tittle-tattle swallowed up half an hour. (ET 12 ch. 1)

Krishna, the English teacher has no job satisfaction—students obey the command of the teacher due to the fear of absentee mark and not due to the respect for the teacher and he has no personality like that of his teachers. In other words, the British education system is not sound enough to develop the personality of a student or a teacher.

As the novel, The English Teacher is an autobiographical novel one can find so many events in the novel which resemble with the real incidents in the life of its author R. K. Narayan. He started his currier as a teacher but he could not continue
the same. Thereafter he took a very big decision of accepting writing as the profession. His decision of accepting writing as the profession was considered by others as a wrong and risky one, like that of Krishna’s decision of leaving the job. But in the course of time everyone accepted the fact that the decision taken by Narayan was very correct. His decision of devoting himself for creative writing itself is an escape from subaltern mentality; which leads him towards fame as a writer, honour of Padmabhusan and Member of Parliament.

From national to local level different varieties of elites are found in India. A study of history of India shows that there were national elites, colonist elites and local elites. Gayatri Spivak in her paper ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ notes that: “Certain varieties of the Indian elite are at best native informants for first-world intellectuals interested in the voice of the Other. But one must nevertheless insist that the colonized subaltern subject is irretrievably heterogeneous” (CSS 26). It is already discussed in the earlier introductory chapter that the concepts of elite and subaltern are dynamic and progressive in nature. To understand this one has to understand the history of India. Mr. Brown is the local colonist elite, The Collector who reads and censors the speech of Mr. Natesh, the Municipal Chairman of Malgudi, is the regional colonist elite. Ramani (The Dark Room) represents the third kind of dominant indigenous group of local elite. Through him Narayan shows the image of a typical Indian conservative husband who treats his wife and children as subalterns. He has neither love nor care for them. He lives as he pleases and only for himself.

Sriram in Waiting for the Mahatma is arrested and sent to jail by the British for joining Jagdish and helping him in noting down the messages and speeches of Subhash Bose from Tokyo and Berlin. He circulates the cyclostyled copies of the messages and speeches among the Indian soldiers. By jumping into the freedom struggle of India Sriram comes in the fourth group i.e. a subaltern and British in the first dominant group. Sriram and many like him work for the nation under the leadership of Subhash Bose. But such types of acts are considered by the British
government as illegal and baneful. They work with this ideology and whoever works against them will be considered as a wrong doer. When certain ideas remain in the society for a long time they take the form of ideology; and they become a part of way of thinking and living of the people. People think everything in the same direction, for a long practice of the same ideas they began to appear true and other than that seem to be false. Ideas do not remain only something abstract things after remaining for a long time in the society. They become an ideological part of the society. They become a way of living for the society. They become concrete reality in the form of social practices. So it becomes very difficult to either to move or to change them from the society where they existed for a long time. More long the practice of the ideas; more is the possibility of becoming the ideas more concrete reality. In such a case it becomes very difficult to change such type of old ideas, though they are wrong.

*The Man-Eater of Malgudi* is an allegorical novel. Vasu is a man of about six feet, bull neck and hammer first. He is a man of aggressive behavior. He kills so many animals. It arouses a strange type of fear in the mind of Natraj. Through this novel Narayan shows how dominant groups are self-destructive. Finally at the end of the novel Vasu is found dead and through Ragini, a dancer Vasu’s death is reported. She tells that Vasu slapped his temple to strike a mosquito and died. In this way Vasu dies of a blow from his own hammer-first. It is based on the mythology of Bhasmasura. Lord Sankar gives the boon to Bhasmasura to turn into ash anybody on whom he puts his hand. With this boon, he creates fear among the gods. So they go to Lord Vishnu to help them. He changes Himself into a beautiful girl and says to Bhasmasura that she will marry him if he dances with her. He agrees to do so and dances with her, while dancing she puts her hand on her own head and Bhamasur also imitates her and turns into ash. In this way his own boon becomes the cause of his own destruction. Similarly the physical strength of Vasu becomes the cause of his own destruction. Till his death Natraj, the subaltern protagonist remains under fear. Vasu’s death brings relief to him.
Swaminathan is weak and not strong like his friends Mani and Rajam. In the second chapter of *Swami and Friends* when there is happy union between Mani and Rajam, terrified Swaminathan dances with joy. He considers that Mani and Rajam are the supreme powers. In another situation, in fear he prays all the gods to help him, when he misses in the Forest of Mempi. But it doesn’t mean that he never dares to revolt or oppose anybody. There are some incidents in the novel that reveals his revolting and protesting nature. Sankar, Somu and Samuel are the friends of Swaminathan. They are not happy because of his close friendship with Rajam so they call him as *Rajam’s tail*. It makes him unhappy. In an angry mood Swaminathan beats Samuel and Sankar. Here it is important to note that Swaminathan, who dared to slap Sankar and the Pea in the class now afraid of getting killed on the last day of the school. He considers school as the dangerous place. In fact he has no enemy, but there is fear in his mind of getting killed. So he remains always with his strong friend Mani. It shows the timid nature of Swaminathan. Instead of having trust in oneself; and in once own power Swaminathan has a lot of trust in Mani. So he prefers to be his subordinate. It shows that even the world of children, which is supposed as innocent is not free from such type of complex things.

On one occasion, in the first chapter of the novel, Swaminathan dares to question Mr. Ebenezar, the scripture teacher. Mr. Ebenezar hurts the religious feelings of Swaminathan by abusing Hindu gods and religion. Thereafter he talks about the superiority and truthfulness of the Lord Jesus and Christianity. When the teacher compares Jesus with Sri Krishna; and blames Krishna for his practice of dark tricks on those around him. He praises the great acts of Lord Jesus. Disturbed Swaminathan asks the teacher: “If he did not, why was he crucified?... If he was a god, why did he eat flesh and fish and drink wine?” (SF 4 ch. 1) He narrates the whole incident at home and his father writes a letter to the headmaster of the school. He gives the letter to the headmaster; it is another thing that the headmaster does not take any action against Mr. Ebenezar. The headmaster says,
“...you should have been so foolish as to go to your father about this simple matter. I shall look into it. Take this letter to your father” (SF 10 ch. 1). It shows two things; the first is that Swaminathan dares to question the authority. The other is, as Mr. Ebenezar is subordinate to the headmaster; he could have taken action against him or at least warned him to not to do so. But as both the teacher and the headmaster belong to the same ruling class, he does not take any action against him. In this way the people of one class join hands by forgetting their local hierarchy; they think about the higher hierarchy of nation and religion.

While describing the routine activities of the school-boys, Narayan is aware of the social segregation between the rich and the middle-class. The class-consciousness comes to the mind of Swaminathan while decorating his study-room to receive Rajam, the son of Police Superintendent. The feeling of the class consciousness in Swaminathan is not natural one, but it is created by the society. For example when Swaminathan and Mani go to Rajam’s house, what Swaminathan observes, the treatment he gets from his friend Rajam, the way in which Rajam treats his cook and the policeman are enough to make this point clear. As a result of it, Swaminathan tries to show Rajam that he is also like him. Rajam promises Swaminathan to come to his home on Saturday. It starts Swaminathan’s struggle to show Rajam that his house is like Rajam’s house. So he cleans his father’s room, arranges all the books and things neatly on the table; and tells his Granny about Rajam’s promise. He says to his mother, “You had better something very nice, something fine and sweet. Rajam is coming this afternoon. Don’t make the sort of coffee that you usually give me. It must be very good and hot” (SF 36 ch. 5). Swaminathan makes all this preparations not because Rajam is his good friend, but because Rajam has all this at his home. Rajam has all these because he is a son of a rich father. Swaminathan remembers how in Rajam’s house everything is brought to the room by the cook. So he says, “Mother, would mind if I don’t come here for coffee and tiffin? Can you send it to my room?” (SF 36 ch. 5) The observations of little children are very good. While talking about
Aristotle’s observations on poetry, B. Prasad in his book *An Introduction to English Criticism* notes that children learn by way of imitation and they get pleasure in doing so. The behaviour of Rajam is the result of his observation of his father’s behaviour; similarly the behaviour of Swaminathan is also out of observation. Swaminathan turns to the cook of his house and says: “Look here, you can’t come to my room in that dhoti. You will have to wear a clean, white dhoti and shirt” (SF 35 ch. 5). After a while he turns to his mother and says: “Mother, can you ask father to lend me his room for just an hour or two?” (SF 35 ch. 5) Not only this but he goes to his father and asks for the room to receive his friend. All these preparations of Swaminathan show his struggle to be elite, like Rajam in all the way.

R. K. Narayan is a balanced writer; he never moves in a single direction. He gives equal importance to all the aspects of life. To him the domestic world is as important as the child world. From the title, *Swami and Friends*, it seems that the novel is only about Swaminathan and his friends, and nothing else. But it is not like that Swaminathan’s family is at the centre of it. Along with it, the family of Rajam also throws light on some other aspects of domestic life.

The action of the novel is not confined only to the world of boys, but it is also equally concerned with domestic world of Swaminathan, in particular and Rajam’s and others in general. The movement of the action of the novel is from the home to the school and from the school to the playground with certain master touches of socio-political life in the form of protest against the arrest of Gauri Sankar which starts from the River Sarayu. The scope of novel is widened by bringing in the Indian struggle for independence, and its impact on Malgudi, particularly on the world of boys, it seems that the seeds of *Waiting for the Mahatma* are sown there. Definitely as pre the title, *Swami and Friends*, the novel primarily deals with the world of children, but at the same time his parents and in particular his Granny, Rajam’s father, the cook and the teachers at the school provide the adult interest.
Really the world of children is very interesting one. One day Swaminathan waits till his father goes out, the moment he goes out, Swaminathan sleeps away from his home to wander with his friend Mani. He does not bother about his mother or Granny; but his father is the dominant man by virtue of culture. The same is the case of his friend Mani. Though Mani is strong and dominating at school and among his friends, he is weak like Swaminathan at his own home. When Swaminathan goes to his home and calls him to come out Mani says: “Fool! My aunt is here, don’t come in. Go away and wait for me there” (SF 24 ch. 3). It shows that the child world is dominated by the elderly people in the home. The unity of the plot is held together by the adventures and misadventures of the innocent school boys. It shows that the characters and the incidents act and react; and the plot revolves as a logical sequence of all this.

Swaminathan was very much impressed by the bravery of Rajam’s killing of tiger with his gun. Neither Swaminathan has actually seen the incident nor tried to know whether it is true or a made story just to impress Swaminathan. But with a great interest he tells his grandmother about Rajam: “‘You know, he has a real police dress,’… ‘His father is the Police Superintendent. He is the master of every policeman here.’… ‘He gets ninety marks out of one hundred.’… ‘Granny, when Rajam was a small boy, he killed a tiger’” (SF 20-21 ch.3). These words of Swaminathan show how much he is impressed by Rajam. At psychological level, he has considered himself inferior to Rajam. It shows two things one is the innocence of the child-world and the other is the inclination of Swaminathan towards subordination.

There is a close relation between Swaminathan and his Granny. He shares his feelings and the incidents that happen with him with her and she also equally gets involved in it by giving active listening to him. Narayan’s knowledge and special liking for the myths is seen from his first novel as a result of it myth forms the inner structure of *Swami and Friend*. Granny has a strong faith in myths. Swaminathan tells Granny about Rajam that: “He would shoot anyone that called
him a liar” (SF 22 ch.3). Granny expresses her approval for this attitude and relates it with “the story of Harishchandra, who, just to be true to his word, lost throne, wife and child, and got them all back in the end” (SF 22 ch.3). A number of such types of mythological references are found in Narayan’s novels.

All the characters of Narayan move within the municipal limits of Malgudi, a newly inhabited place in *Swami and Friends*, which is neither a village, nor a city but a town of the modest size. It is Malgudi of the thirties, with its certain known landmarks like Nallappa Grove, the Lawley Extension, Kabir Road, the Sarayu River, Albert Mission School, the Sarayu River and Mempi Hills. All these landmarks did not remain static, but flourish in importance in the novel itself and the other succeeding novels of Narayan. Afterwards, the newly inhabited town, Malgudi becomes the fastest growing literary town in the Indian English literary world with each novel and short story of Narayan, the development of the town goes on till the publication of *Grandmother’s Tale*.

The greatness of Narayan lies in skilfully introducing the political theme in the novel primarily focusing on the world of children. The influence of the political disturbances in the peaceful Malgudi of thirties, catches hold the attention of the readers. Very skilfully Narayan takes his protagonist and his friend Mani to the Sarayu River, where they witness the protest against the arrest of Gauri Sankar, a prominent political worker of Bombay. Swaminathan and his friend Mani’s involvement in the protest are made so natural by Narayan that it becomes very natural and an integral part of the novel. In fact, a reader forgets to think why the little children should take interest in such type of political things? The chapter ‘Broken Panes’ is very much symbolic. It symbolises student’s involvement in a strike, and how the public properties are destroyed in such type of protests and strike.

After listening to the speech of the speaker on the bank of Sarayu the people of Malgudi set the patriotic bonfire and Swaminathan burns his cap in it. On the next day, he goes bareheaded to his school. The school is closed by the people as a
protest. Thereafter they go to the Board School to close it, where the headmaster of the school says to the leader of the crowd to go away otherwise he will call police. “This was received with howling, jeering, and hooting. And following it, tables and benches were overturned and broken, and window-panes were smashed. Most of the Board school boys merged with the crowd” (SF 100 ch. 12). Thereafter the crowd moves to the Market where there is a lathi charge on them. Swaminathan is terrified to see Rajam’s father there and tries to run away from there. The policeman catches him and on his request the policeman leaves him.

By showing how even the small children like Swaminathan get involved in the freedom struggle; Narayan tries to show how the whole of the nation is involved in the freedom struggle. Swaminathan and his friend do not get involved in it intentionally, but they participate in it by chance. It makes some points clear; one is that the public at large become aware about their rights during this period in India. Second, people began to think and question the British rule. Third, Indians began to feel that they are treated badly by the British in their own nation. Forth, India is their nation and they are not the subalterns. Fifth, they have accepted the leadership of Gandhiji. The influence of Gandhiji is very deep even on the small children of eight years old like Swaminathan. They take part in boycott of English goods, and make an earnest request to wear home spun khaddar. They also shout Gandhiji ki Jai and Bharat Mata Ki Jai with the rest of the people.

There is dialogue between Jagan and his son Mali. One day while taking his breakfast Mali says to his father that he does not want to continue his studies. It shocks Jagan, he tries to know the reason. “Nothing,” said the boy. “I do not find it interesting, that’s all...” (VS 23 ch. 3). The boy goes on munching his food with his eyes down. Jagan has never seen him so serious. When Jagan insists him to tell the reason: “I don’t want to study, that’s all,” repeated the boy” (VS 23 ch. 3). The boy seems to have suddenly grown up. He has never spoken to his father in this tone ever before. It is the beginning of Mali’s release from the domination of his father or in other words, it is the beginning of Jagan’s suppression, which
completes at the end of the novel. Slowly certain changes occur in the relation of Jagan and his son Mali. The ancestral house which was once like a heaven began to appear like a hell. The house is divided in two parts. “Jagan now had a separate key with which he let himself into his house softly” (VS121 ch. 9). To the disturbed mind of Jagan, Gandhism comes to sustain. “Gandhi had prescribed spinning for the economic ills of the country, but also for any deep agitation of the mind” (VS121 ch. 9). Disturbed Jagan “had a feeling that his identity was undergoing a change...he was a different man at this moment. An internal transformation had taken place” (VS 122 ch. 9).

The internal transformation also takes place in Mali. When he was a small boy his father used to order him. But in the course of time situation, mentality and personality of Mani is changed. One day he goes to meet his father, living in the same house, but in the Other part of the home. “Sit down, father,” Mali commanded, “but don’t turn that wheel; it’s noisy and I want to talk to you” (VS121 ch. 9). There is talk between them about the wheel and his objection for that. During the conversation Mali says: “I am a new personality and have to speak a new tongue” (VS121 ch. 9). The words and the tone of Mali are very shocking for Jagan. “In a few hours, I have undergone a lot of changes, but the boy doesn’t know it,” Jagan reflected (VS124 ch. 9). In this way once elite at home, Jagan now become a subaltern in his own home. To such a man it is but natural to appear his home like a hell on earth. A person, who was once at the centre of the home now gets a place somewhere in the circumference of the circle.

Being father, it is natural that Jagan must think about the changes in Mali. Jagan is worried. He works at the shop, “ but his mind worked on only one theme only, the puzzle created by Mali” (VS147 ch. 9). Whether Mali is married with Gracy or not society asks different questions to Jagan. People talk about them and their relationship all this suppresses Jagan. It makes the society dominant and Jagan as a subaltern. In this way not only human beings, but also the society and certain customs become very dominating that they suppress a man and make him a
subaltern. The modern mentality and living style which Mali has brought with him from the West is the real cause of Jagan’s worry. He tries to find its solution in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Jagan compares the father-son relation between him and his father and him and his son. When it is decided to send Jagan to see a girl for Jagan: “Jagan’s father had sent his elder son to accompany him and commanded Jagan, “Don’t stare at the girl. I have seen her and I know she is good-looking. Don’t imagine you are a big judge of persons.” … Jagan had already been warned by his elder brother not to be too communicative …” (VS149 ch. 9). There is a shocking difference between the unlimited freedom taken by his son Mali and the very little freedom given by his father to him. “Jagan retired to his room asking himself, “Is no one interested in my opinion of the girl?” (VS149 ch. 9) It is the marriage of Jagan, but his idea about the girl is not important. In this way Jagan’s voice is suppressed then by the customs and their blind adherer, his father and his elder brother; and now by the Western modernity which came to his home with his son Mali from America. Dominant local customs and Western modernity both suppress the voice of Jagan and made him a subaltern in his home.

Narayan’s novels provide minute details of the domestic life in a Hindu joint family. There is one incident in the novel where readers meet a just married couple: Jagan and Ambika. The comments made by the family members at home make the newly wedded girl very awkward. So she tries to keep distance from her husband. Jagan’s mother often commented:

“A son is a son until the wife comes,” feeling bitter that he could spare so little time for the others at home. His younger sister said, “Who may you be, stranger? We have forgotten your face.” And his wife herself often said, “Please don’t create all this embarrassment for me. At least pretend that you are interested in the others.” His elder brother took him into the garden and advised, “I know how you feel about things. I have passed through it all myself. If you spend four hours in your bedroom, at least
give the others an hour now and then; otherwise you make yourself unpopular at home.” (VS 163)

Despite of all such comments from the family members Jagan lives in a perfect intoxication of husbandhood. Attraction between the newly married couple is common and natural, in the course of time, its intensity becomes less. The elderly persons who have experienced it know it well; even then they go on commenting like Jagan’s mother and elder brother. Jagan is a man, he is in his own house, the persons who comments are his kith and kin; but what about a woman who is a new member in the house. Really it embarrasses her very much and nobody cares for it.

Hindu religion is one of the oldest religions in the world. It has its own philosophy which is the life philosophy for a Hindu man like Jagan. How a man should live from his birth till his death is told in Hindu religion. Hindu religion recognizes four stages of man, they are called as: Brahmacharya (a stage of man from his childhood to adulthood. In this stage he stays in gurukul as a student and observes brahmacharya), Grihastha (the second stage, where the man enters in the household life by marring a girl), Vanaprastha (the third stage where he takes retirement from the worldly things) and Sannyasa (the fourth and the last stage where the man prefers renunciation).

Jagan’s first stage comes to an end with his marriage with Ambika; and he enters in the second stage of Grihastha ashrama. The death of his wife Ambika makes Jagan a widower. His sixtieth birthday passes unnoticed, and it troubles him. “A widower had no right to celebrate anything. He was fit only for retirement,” says Jagan (VS 175 ch.13). Mali’s return from America with Gracy, brings the third stage of Vanaprastha ashrama in Jagan’s life. By the end of the novel Jagan says to the cousin that: “The world doesn’t collapse even when a great figure is assassinated or dies of heart failure. Think that my heart has failed, that’s all” (VS 184 ch. 13). Jagan enters in the fourth stage of Sannyasa by giving the whole charge of the shop to the cousin with the instruction to take care of it till his
son Mali comes from jail. The analysis of the four stages of man shows that man enjoys all the powers in the second stage of his life i.e. *Grihastha ashrama*. He does not enjoy power either in the first or the third and fourth stages of life. Customs make a man an elite and a subaltern too.

The above study of protagonists in the novels of Narayan shows that they are suppressed by different dominating forces. From the colonist elite the British government to the local elite dominates them. The policy of the British government, the British officers, bureaucracy, Indian customs, traditions, elderly people in the home, sometimes young too like that of Mali, suppress the voices of the protagonists of Narayan. Sometimes they try to revolt against them, but most of the times they fail and surrender to the dominant force. The protagonists like Swaminathan, Chandran and Jagan surrender themselves to the customs. They merge in the society in such a way that it seems that they never revolted against it. They surrender themselves by willingly accepting the defeat and merge in the society in such a way that one can doubt that they ever revolted. Raju tries to revolt against the customs, but he becomes helpless. The suppressed voice of Krishna becomes free by the end of the novel. He feels very relax and his mind is at perfect peace. Someone like Professor Gajapathy may think that Krishna has taken a wrong decision of resigning the job, but it is worth to quote here that: “Success must be measured by its profitlessness, said a French philosopher” (ET 182 ch.8).
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