Chapter 5
5.1. General

Narayan’s irresistible urge to write in English is the result of his early passion for English literature. While talking about his interest in English literature he says: “After Scott I picked up a whole row of Dickens and loved his London and the queer personalities therein. Rider Haggard, Marie Corelli, Moliere and Pope and Marlowe, Tolstoi, Thomas Hardy—an indiscriminate jumble; I read everything with the utmost enjoyment” (My Days 1986:61). Further he says: “I and my elder brother shared a room outside the main house but in the same compound, and there we competed with each other in reading….In addition to fiction, part of the time I enjoyed reading the history of English literature.” (1986:61). He goes still further and says:

English has proved that if a language has flexibility and experience can be communicated through it, even it has to be paraphrased some times rather than conveyed, and even if the factual detail is partially understood---I may straight away explain what we do not attempt to do. We are not attempting to write Anglo-Saxon English. The English language… is now undergoing a process of Indianization in the same manner as it adopted U.S. citizenship over a century ago,…I cannot say whether the process of transmutation is to be viewed as an enrichment of the English language or a debasement of it. All
that I am able to confirm is that it has served my purpose admirably, of conveying unambiguously the thoughts and acts of a set of personalities who flourish in a small town located in a corner of South India. (qtd. in Baghmar, 1992:119)

Now, being prompted by his words one may be justified to ask what exactly is Narayan’s style of writing. Commenting on his style, Meenakshi Mukherjee says: “R.K.Narayan’s style is most difficult to analyse or discuss, and he has a tendency to elude categories and classifications. ...His style is so unobtrusive and so devoid of purple patches that it is difficult to find quotable passages to illustrate his particular characteristics”(1971:191).

Whatever may be the varying opinions of the critics about Narayan’s style of writing, one may not deny that simplicity and clarity are two outstanding traits in Narayan’s style. It is said that the fundamental element of good style is clear thinking. Birjadish Prasad is of the opinion that one should “avoid clumsy construction, long unwieldy sentences, faulty grammar, overweighted images”(1973:197). Narayan’s style is not only devoid of all these, but also strengthened enormously by clear thinking.

The term ‘style’ may mean generally a writer’s unique verbal pattern, which may enable him to express the meaning that he wishes to convey. According to Abrams, “Style is the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse – it is how a speaker or writer says whatever he says”(1957:165). Whatever may be the extent to which the style of a creative writer is analyzed, ultimately it ends in the writer himself. So, the style, indeed, is the
man. It seems to be absolutely right in the case of Narayan. It is, in fact, a part of his perception inalienable from his vision of the world. While commenting on Narayan's way of writing William Walsh says: "His writing is a distinctive blend of Western techniques and Eastern material, and he has succeeded in a remarkable way in making an Indian sensibility at home in English art" (qtd. in Sharan, 1993:340).

Narayan's style is the style of a storyteller. The narration of ordinary events in the life of his characters is done in an unaffected prose. Events spring forth effortlessly one out of another as they happen in life. As a good storyteller Narayan designs his story in such a way that it has a beginning, middle and an end. In almost all his novels the end may be a solution to the problems caused by the events and at the end one may find the action cannot proceed further. And his narration is most of the time a quaint mixture of humour and irony.

It may be evident from Narayan's novels that he is not worried about his style as much as the content. His goal is to present it to the readers impressively and entertainingly. It would be worth listening to what Narayan has got to say about his style. In an interview with Susan E. Croft, he says: "I am very unconscious of style and I wish to make the style as unnoticed as possible — style should not be noticed. The idea must be more prominent than the style in which it is written" (1983:29). Here, one may be tempted to take the hint that Narayan would like to stick to a simple diction derived from oral tradition. Philip Raho's view is almost in accordance with the view of
Narayan. He holds the view that "All that we can legitimately ask of a novelist in the matter of language is that it be appropriate to the matter in hand. What is said must not stand in a contradicting relation to the way it is said" (1965:58). Commenting on the novels of Narayan, Verghese quotes the words of Somerset Maugham in order to substantiate that Narayan's novels possess all the qualities recommended by him for a good novel.

... a novel is to be read with enjoyment. If it does not give that, it is worthless.... It should have a widely interesting theme ....The story should be coherent and persuasive, it should have a beginning, a middle and an end, and the end should be the natural consequence of the beginning. (1971:134)

It has been already established in the previous chapter that the novels of Narayan are embedded with the thoughts imbibed from the Hindu Vedic scriptures and that he is genuinely interested in sharing spiritual wisdom with his readers and enabling them to get spiritually elevated. At this juncture one may be prompted to make an endeavour to study the techniques employed by him to attain this goal in a western medium like English.

5.2. Simplicity

One of the most outstanding techniques employed by Narayan in his novels to attain the above said goal is simplicity. As has been already stated, most of his themes are chosen from The Epics and Puranas, which are familiar to the Indian readers irrespective of their social status and religious background. And also he has employed a simple style clothed in humour and
irony. Though he writes in a simple language, one may not be justified if one jumps to the conclusion that it is merely because of his limited vocabulary. While acknowledging that he has got a limited vocabulary, one has to remember that he has got the objective of sending across to the readers certain messages, which he has acquired from the Vedic literature. Perhaps, that may be the reason why he has not attempted a difficult and complicated style. So one can say categorically that there is no conscious attempt on Narayan's part to make his style difficult or complicated at any time in his whole literary career, though it is evident that Narayan's style attains better maturity in the novels that follow *The English Teacher*.

While going through the novels of Narayan, one may not fail to observe that Narayan feels very comfortable with the English language. The merit of the language and his faith in it are evident from what he has told Susan E. Croft. 'Well, it has certain malleability. It's very interesting, and there's a subtlety and flexibility in English—it can absorb anything, and you can do anything with it' (1983:29). One may not deny the truth that Narayan follows what he says.

### 5.3. Words of Indian Origin

In order to make the English language more viable to suit his purpose, he has used several non-English words in his novels. Some such words used by him in the novels under study are listed below:

#### 5.3.1. The Dark Room

sari(11)
mami(20)
pooja(30)
dhoti (32)
Navarathri(32)
khaddar(79)
pyol(165)

5.3.2. The English Teacher
almirah (18)
Appa(20)
Granny(44)
Time-piece(49)
jutka(55)
anna(73)
mantras(84)
Swamiji(84)
Vak Matha(109)
brinjal(122)
Ashrama(168)
Sanyasa(168)
jilebi(182)

5.3.3. Mr. Sampath
shastras(51)
Aviyal(52)
5.3.4. The Guide

Maharaja (8)
Silk jibba(65)
Shikari(81)
Idli(81)
Dhobi (87)
Dasara(90)
Deepavali(90)
bonda(104)
sadhu(111)

Natya Shastra of Bharat Muni (122)

Pundit (122)

Sanskrit (123)

Ramayana (123)

Mahabarata(123)

Pallavi(124)

Mani(jewel) (125)

Nari (girl) (125)

saitan(156)

Bharat Natyam(180)

Sabha(192)

Ganesha (the elephant-faced god)(211)

Kailas(212)

karma(216)

vadhiyar(teacher) (226)

darsan(240)

tabala(241)

Namaste(the Indian salute) (242)

5.3.5. The Man-eater of Malgudi

Sathyanarayan Puja(11)

Seer (16)

pandal(16)
Phaelwan (16)
Upanishads (33)
beedi (52)
Shawl (56)
kavi (68)
Rakshasa (95)
Puranas (96)
asura (96)
Khaki (103)
Namaskaram (112)
Radha kalyan (134)
Dharma (158)
Pulav (160)
Vishnu (182)
Gajendra (182)
Kumbha mela (198)
Lungi (223)

5.3.6. A Tiger for Malgudi

sanyasi (9)
Yogi (9)
Tonga (32)
Pujari (38)
Sati (58)
Amma (104)
Vadai(134)
Vasana(166)
samadhi(174)

5.3.7. The Painter of Signs
Kural(17)
Janma (83)

5.4. Tamil Expressions Translated into English.

Narayan has not only introduced words of Indian origin into English, but also used some of the English phrases, which are direct translations of corresponding expressions in Tamil. Some of them are as follow:

5.4.1. The Dark Room
dining-leaf (2)
worshipping room (4)
kitchen politics (6)
tiffin business (10)
pooja room (43)

5.4.2. The English Teacher
nose-led (18)
in absentia business (152)

5.4.3. Mr.Sampath
house- hunter (9)
housing difficulties (14)
5.4.4. The Guide

close-haired saint (53)

one-horse jutka (61)
silk jiba and lace dhoti (65)
bush-coat and dhoti (65)
Wall-gazing (83)

5.4.5. The Man-eater of Malgudi

adjournment lawyer (5)

khadi shawl (56)
draft-Lawyer (57)
fuzzy-haired woman (111)

5.4.6. A Tiger for Malgudi

Tiger Hermit (9)

5.4.7. The Painter of Signs

devil may care attitude (20)

5.5. Redundancy
Redundancy is a feature found more in the spoken language, which enables the listeners to comprehend what is being uttered by the speaker. Languages vary in choosing the items to be used redundantly. English continuous tense forms and Tamil finite verb forms are some of the units that have redundant features. These redundant features actually enable the listeners to comprehend the speech even if they are careless at one point of time or the other.

While languages themselves possess redundancy, speakers and writers also use redundancy in their style. It is a tendency found enormously among the speakers of the regional languages in India. When Narayan shows this tendency, it is revealed that he is influenced by his mother tongue, Tamil. And this makes his style further Indian. Some examples are given below.

1) 'All right, all right', Ramani said contemptuously (The Dark Room (Dark Room), 2).

2) 'Charity! Charity!' Savitri was appalled by the amount of it that threatened one (Dark Room 181).

3) 'Oh, stop, stop all that, boy. Why has your father sent this letter to me?'
   (Teacher 106).

4) 'Oh, no, no, you are very sensible', I said (Teacher 118).

5) 'Ah! Ah! That's very good news.' (Sampath 122).

6) 'But—but—' Sampath hesitated (Sampath 195).

7) 'Hm! Hm! Never dreamed that anyone in our family would turn out to be a dancer's backstage-boy!' (Guide 168).
8) 'After all, after all he is my husband' (Guide 201).

9) 'No offence meant, no offence meant', he said with a great display of humility (Man-eater 133).

10) 'Friend! Oh! Oh! What sort of friend is he to file a complaint against you?' (Man-eater 80).

11) 'Yes, yes, immediately. Seventy-five rupees, less the advance please.' (Painter 136).

12) 'H'mm, h'm,' was all she said without stirring (Painter 174).

13) 'The director allowed a pause and suddenly screamed, 'Tiger! Tiger!' (Tiger 95).

14) 'Oh, come, come-- it's not worse than the whip. In Hollywood they are using it all the time' (Tiger 105).

5.6. Lexical Choice

5.6.1 Limited Vocabulary

Narayan is said to have a limited vocabulary. While acknowledging it, one may have to accept also that he utilizes it to the optimum level. This is one of the most outstanding features of Narayan’s style of writing. At times he employs a very effective technique of making the mob comment on a certain character in order to bring out certain qualities in that character. There is a very apt example in The Painter of Signs. Daisy, the family planning campaigner, goes to a ‘mountain village’ along with Raman. When she talks about the dire necessity of family planning, it is brought to her notice that there is an old shrine in a cave, where barren women go and get blessed with children. When the people ask Daisy whether she could
explain the mystery behind it, she simply says: ‘You should ask the priest of that
temple’ (1977:68). Though there is no reaction from the people to her rather
mischievous remark, the next day the temple priest confronts her and challenges
her remark. When Daisy and Raman were studying the possibilities of using the
blank outer wall of the shrine for family planning publicity by way of writing slogans
and painting pictorial mediums, the priest of the shrine gets irritated and asks
Daisy: ‘Why are you gazing on this wall?’ (1977:70). Further he claims that ‘Every
brick of this wall and every inch of it was built by me and belongs to me’ (1977:70).
At this stage the crowd confirms the statement of the priest. They say: ‘Yes, it’s
true. He dug the earth, made bricks and burnt them, and built this side-wall, little by
little. He is more than a hundred years old’ (70). The priest then asks Daisy: ‘Our
shastras say that the more children in a home, the more blessed it becomes. Do
you want to dispute it?’ (1977:70). Then he says: ‘I know what goes on everywhere
and in everyone’s mind. I sent my subtle self to your meeting yesterday. I know all
that you said’ (1977:71). Then the people in the crowd say: ‘He can see what goes
on even in Delhi… He can talk to plants and mountains and birds and animals and
they all obey him. He knows past, present and future….’ (1977:71). There is a
similar situation in *The Tiger for Malgudi*. When Master leads the tiger through the
busy streets of Malgudi, the people start commenting on them:

‘How could the Yogi have known that there was a tiger in the
headmaster’s room, and why should he have wanted to protect it?’

‘Probably they were family friends!’ They laughed at the joke.
'It may be no laughing matter. I was at the school and could overhear his conversation with the tiger as if it were his younger brother'. (151)

In both these cases, instead of indulging in lengthy descriptions Narayan makes the public come out with their impressions with very simple and straightforward sentences. So his limited vocabulary does not stand as an impediment to him.

5.6.2. Repetition of Lexical Items

Another device employed by Narayan is to repeat the same words in a sentence to give emphasis. It is another feature found excessively among the speakers of the regional languages in India. This practice helps the speaker to reveal his feelings and throw emphasis on them. And Narayan seems to be very fond of this device. Some examples are given below.

1) 'Lessons! Lessons! You are a great woman. Didn't you hear your father come home?' (Dark Room 17).

The repetition shows the speaker's contempt.

2) 'Do you want me to be telling you 'Come on, come on' at every step?'

(Dark Room 178).

The repetition shows the tone of reproach.

3) 'No, no, not to-day....'(Teacher 124).

The repetition shows something absolutely unacceptable on the part of speaker.

4) 'Yes, Yes', I said, opening the gate (Teacher 161).

The repetition shows the speaker's total agreement with something.
5) ‘Boy! Boy! He cried’ (Sampath 69).
The repetition shows that the speaker may be calling someone.

6) ‘Play back! Play back!’ Sampath shouted presently (Sampath 185).
What the repetition shows may be the urgency on the part of the speaker.

7) ‘Because, because- it doesn’t rain’ (Guide 101).
The speaker may be emphasizing the reason.

8) ‘After all …After all…Is this right what I am doing?’ (Guide 120).
The repetition may be showing the depth of the guilt of the speaker.

9) ‘….Father, Father, please let me go and watch the procession’ (Man-eater 202).
The repetition may be showing either the speaker’s attempt to draw the attention of the listener or his pleading for permission.

10) ‘True, true’, said the forester (Man-eater 31).
The speaker may be accepting some point of view in a conversation.

11) ‘The inspector said, ‘Come, come, take your seat’ (Painter 17).
The repetition seems to show that the speaker receives a person whom he expects.

12) ‘Good morning. I…I…just thought I might see you…long time…’
(Painter 117).
The repetition seems to show the embarrassment on the part of the speaker to face the person whom he addresses.

13) ‘Ah, ah! You are still here.’ (Tiger 130).
The speaker does not expect the addressee to be there.
14) 'Tiger! Tiger! It's here again' (Tiger 150).

The speaker may be wondering at the presence of the tiger.

It may be borne in mind that though the repetition reveals certain feelings of the speaker, knowledge of the context is essential to understand it fully well.

5.7. Use of Proverbs

Narayan focuses exclusively on Malgudi and its people and thereby writes completely from within the Indian milieu. So naturally he is motivated to introduce Indian terms to avoid as far as possible the English association or nuances of words. That may be the reason why he has translated so many proverbs from Tamil into English. He has translated not only proverbs, but also aphorisms. When he does so what he talks about assumes a local colouring and helps the readers to understand it better. L.M. Goud rightly observes that “Narayan has to resort to translation from Tamil into English to convey the culture of Malgudi; the microcosm of South India, as it is reflected in their beliefs and customs” (1974:91). Some of the proverbs translated from Tamil into English are given below:

1) 'The unbeaten brat will remain unlearned', said my father, quoting an old proverb (Guide 12)

2) He quoted a proverb to the effect that building a house and conducting a marriage were the two Herculean tasks that faced a man (Man-eater 57).
3) 'You may close the mouth of an oven, but how can you close the mouth of a town?' She said quoting a proverb (*Man-eater* 234).

4) '...when your cloth is caught in the thorns of a bush, you have to extricate yourself gently and little by little, otherwise you will never take the cloth whole?' (*Man-eater* 95).

5) 'He blesses with his hand, and kicks with his feet,' he moaned.

(*Sampath* 199).

### 5.8. Use of Aphorisms

1) 'What do you know of the fire in a mother’s belly when her child is suffering?' (*Dark Room* 51).

2) 'An empty vessel makes much noise' (*Guide* 236).

3) '...Keep your ears open and mouth shut, that'll take you far’, he said, hitting upon a brilliant aphorism’ (*Guide* 50).

4 'You don’t have to own a coffee estate because you like to have a cup of coffee now and then...' (*Man-eater* 38).

### 5.9. Depiction of God- Consciousness

It has been acknowledged all over the world that Indians constitute a God-conscious society by virtue of their rich spiritual wealth. And it happens quite often that through their discourse among themselves they reveal their piety. It has almost become the second nature to the Indians to refer to God by way of thanking Him for His grace, glorifying Him for His omnipresence and omnipotence, declaring their dependence on Him, expressing their apprehensions about the punishment that they may face in the event of
antagonizing Him and also showing their anxiety to be under His protection always. That may be the reason why most of the characters in the novels of Narayan are God-conscious. This feature of the consciousness is obvious from their day-to-day conversation among themselves.

The following examples may hold proof to it.

1) 'God is great. He will show us a way' (Dark Room 154).

2) 'You are a blessed being, my lady. God will protect you. The difficulty that has risen before you like a mountain will soon vanish like the dew....' (Dark Room 158).

3) 'May God grant that the sorrow which has risen before you like a mountain may soon vanish like the dew! May the God on the Hill dispel the pain in your soul!' (Dark Room 170).

4) 'I am living in God's house and He will protect me' (Dark Room 189).

5) 'God is the owner and I am his slave' (Teacher 25).

6) 'God will make you a big Professor one day....' (Teacher 28).

7) 'It is God's infinite grace that has given me this girl' (Teacher 64).

8) 'May God help you to see the end of your anxieties' (Teacher 85).

9) 'But the child, the child ....she will be looked after by God, and by everyone' (Teacher 151).

10) 'This would have been our greatest blow, but thank God, since yesterday she has grown calmer! ...' (Sampath 194).

11) 'God alone can rescue him', he muttered to himself as he saw the car turn into Ellam street (Sampath 195).
12) 'Oh, God, don't involve me again with these people', he prayed (Sampath 200).

13) 'Oh, God, save me from these people and give me strength to face them now' (Sampath 200).

14) 'Yes, what's done is God's will and we must leave it alone' (Painter 11).

15) 'Isn't by God's will that children are born?' (Painter 54).

16) 'God gives us children. How can we reject His gift?' (Painter 68).

17) 'Thank God, you are not a dictator' (Painter 67).

18) 'Be careful, you evil woman, don't tamper with God's designs. He will strike you dead if you attempt that' (Painter 71).

19) 'The gods, if they are there, will look into my mind and judge whether I am choosing the right path or not; if I am wrong let them strike me dead. I am prepared for it' (Painter 179).

5.10. Depiction of Faith in Stars.

Faith in stars is yet another device employed by Narayan to give an Indian touch to the content and descriptions in his novels. In India, mainly the Hindus, consult the almanac and the horoscope before doing anything important in their life, especially marriages. Narayan is of the opinion that "we believe that marriages are made in heaven and a bride and a groom meet, not by accident or design, but by the decree of fate, the fitness for a match not to be gauged by letting them go through a period of courtship but by a study of their horoscopes; boy and girl meet and love develops after marriage rather than before". ("English in India: The Process of Transmutation", 1979:21). As a matter of fact, Narayan himself doubts
whether he had lost his wife because their horoscopes did not match. In his autobiography, *My Days*, he says: “The loss of my wife was sudden and not even remotely anticipated by me—although my father-in-law had had his doubts while looking into my horoscope earlier” (1986:135). It seems that Narayan’s father-in-law was an expert in the study of horoscopes. Narayan’s words in *My Days* confirm it.

My father-in-law, himself an adept at the study of horoscopes, had consultations with one or two other experts and came to the conclusion that my horoscope and the girl’s were incompatible. My horoscope had the Seventh House occupied by Mars, the Seventh House being the one that indicated the matrimonial aspects. The astrological texts plainly stated that Mars in the Seventh House indicated nothing but disaster unless the partner’s horoscope also contained the same flaw, a case in which two wrongs make one right. (1986:108)

Since nothing is permanent in the material world, every human being is anxious about the future. And to know about the future one may rush to the astrologers and embrace astrological predictions as sacred sayings. They do it, for it is their strong conviction that the position of the planets at the time of one’s birth governs the future life of that individual. One may understand the strength of that faith from the words of an astrologer, whom Narayan wants to consult in spite of the fact that he was already consulted by his would-be father-in-law. He asked Narayan: ‘What do you want me to do? Am I Brahma to change your stars?’ (1986:109). When the people have such strong faith in astrology, they may not be bold enough to do
anything against astrological predictions. In *The Bachelor of Arts*, Chandran, the protagonist is unable to marry Malathithi, for their horoscopes do not match. In *Mr. Sampath*, the filmmakers of ‘Sunrise Pictures’ are very keen on conducting the switching-on ceremony of their maiden film ‘The Burning of Kama’ when the planets are beneficial to them. ‘A committee of astrologers had studied the conjunction of planets and fixed the day for the inauguration ceremony. There had been a regular conference for fixing the correct moment, for as Somu explained to the others; we cannot take risks in these matters. The planets must be beneficial to us’ (1949:131-32).

When the people of Malgudi approach Raju about the drought, someone in the crowd says: ‘The astrologer says that we shall have early rains in the coming year…’ *(Guide 1958:92)*. One can infer from these words that people give enormous importance to astrology.

In *The Painter of Signs*, when the lawyer gives orders to Raman to make his nameboard, he insists on the letters being slanted to the left. When Raman asks him what exactly makes him to be so insistent, he says: ‘It’s my astrologer again, who believes that a left slant is auspicious for my ruling star, which is Saturn’ (1977:5). Further, he insists on having the nameboard “on Thursday before eleven”(1977:4). When Raman demands the reason, he says: ‘My astrologer says so….’(1977:4).

In *The Man-eater of Malgudi*, an astrologer is consulted for a date to launch the poet’s *Radha Kalyan*. Since a very good date is available only after five months, he chooses three dates as ‘good’, ‘not so good’ and ‘half good’. As the poet is very
anxious to launch his work as early as possible, the astrologer says: ‘This is as good a date as the best one, but do you know why it's classed not so good? You see, there is a slight aspecting of Jupiter, and the poet’s ruling star is —, and it might not prove so beneficial after all. Jupiter’s aspects remain for four and a half hours; that will be until 5.25, and it may mean a slight setback in one’s efforts, that’s all’ (Man-eater 1962:143-144). The events on the day of launching the book and afterwards proved that the astrologer was right. Thus as a result of employing these techniques, it may appear to the readers that Narayan is describing things and events very familiar and intelligible to them.

5.11. Style Variation

Since Narayan has chosen the English language as the medium, it is only natural that all his characters speak in English. But one may not be in a position to deny the fact that there is a conscious attempt on his part to change his style making it befitting in the context. In The Dark Room, when Savitri goes to the dark room and sulks after being hurt by her husband’s chauvinistic attitude, her daughter, Sumati, goes to Janamma, her neighbour and mother’s friend, and seeks her help to bring her mother out of the dark room and her melancholic mood. Since Janamma is enjoying a short nap at that time, Sumati hesitantly leans over her and gently calls her and begins a conversation:

‘Mami! Mami!’

‘Oh, Sumati! Come on, child, what do you want?’

‘Mami, you had better come and see Mother at once’
'What's the matter with her?'
'I don't know'
'Is she ill?'
'I don't know. Perhaps.'
'What is she doing?'
'She may be sleeping. You must come at once and ask her to get up and bathe and eat.' (1938:58)

This short conversation reveals the following features of Narayan's style:

1) The influence of the mother tongue is very conspicuous, for it is more or less like a conversation going on in the Tamil language.

2) The conversation reveals that both Sumati and Janamma are Brahmins. It is evident from the way the child addresses Janamma, 'Mami! Mami!' and how Janamma responds to the call of Sumati as 'Oh, Sumati! Come on, child. What do you want?' The Tamil word Mami, a kinship term from the Brahminical repertoire refers to "aunt" and addressing the younger woman interactant in a conversation as "child" (English equivalent of the Tamil word kulandai) is also a Brahminical feature. The way of addressing and the words of love, affection, concern and closeness affirm that Janamma is very close to the family of Sumati. Brahmins generally were not moving very closely with people of other caste in the Pre-Independence period. The words of Ponni, wife of Mari, confirm it. Ponni said: 'I see you are a Brahmin and won't stay with us. I will ask someone of your own caste to receive you' (1938:137).
3) The conversation is marked by the familiarity of a domestic problem.
4) The conversation may evoke sympathy and curiosity in the readers.

Through a brief conversation between the priest of a temple and Mari, a blacksmith, locksmith and umbrella repairer, who has been doing burglary as a side occupation, Narayan brings out the caste discrimination that was prevalent in the society during the Pre-Independence period.

Mari stood before him and said 'My salutations to you, my noble master, '

'Who are you?', asked the old man, half closing his eyes in his effort to catch the identity of his visitor.

'I am Mari, my master, your humble slave'.

'Mari, you are a vile hypocrite', said the old man.

'What sin have I committed to deserve these harsh words?'

'I sent my boy thrice to your place, and thrice have you postponed and lied. It was after all for a petty, insignificant repair that I sent for you'.

'Nobody came and called me, master. I swear I would have dropped everything and come running if only the lightest whisper had reached me. Whom did you send?'

'Why should I send anyone? After all some petty repair—I thought I might have a word with you about it if you come to the temple; but you are a godless creature; no wonder your wife is barren. How can you hope to prosper without the grace of Muruga?'

'Yours are words of wisdom. I promise that hereafter I will come to the temple twice a week and bring him a coconut once a month. Now, here I am awaiting your command.'
The old man was appeased by this submission and said, 'It is not ten minutes' work for a workman like you. Wait a minute.'

'I obey your command', said Mari. (1938:164-165)

From the tone of the passage, it is evident that the priest is far superior to Mari in social status, profession and background. Narayan evokes that effect by virtue of using expressions like 'salutation', 'noble master', 'your humble slave', and 'awaiting your command'. Another conclusion one may arrive at is that a person of lower caste has to be very submissive to a person of higher caste. And even if a person of higher caste contradicts himself, he may not be questioned. As a matter of fact, the priest of the temple contradicts himself by telling Mari that he had sent his boy thrice to his house and then asking him why he should send anybody at all to his house.

Narayanan depicts quite strikingly the misery of an orthodox woman through the reflections of Savitri before she makes an attempt to commit suicide by jumping into the river.

One definite thing in life is Fear. Fear, from the cradle to the funeral pyre, and even beyond that, fear of torture in the other world. Afraid of a husband's displeasures, and of the discomforts that might be caused to him, morning to night and all night too.... Afraid of one's father, teachers and everybody in early life, afraid of one's husband, children, and neighbours in later life—fear, fear in one's heart till the funeral pyre was lit, and then fear of being sentenced by Yama to be held down in a cauldron of boiling oil ....(1938:116)
This passage is packed with various aspects that indicate the miserable existence of an orthodox Indian woman and strengthens the view that when Narayan describes women and their problems he follows a style that may evoke sympathy in the readers.

5.12. Prose Lyric

Narayan can be poetic too in his descriptions, if he intends. The following passage from *The English Teacher* may substantiate it.

The casuarina looked more enchanting than ever. Purple lotus bloomed on the pond's surface. Gentle ripples splashed against the bank. The murmur of the casuarina provided the music for the great occasion.... My friend shut his eyes and prayed: 'Great souls, here we are. You have vouchsafed to us a vision for peace and understanding. Here we are ready to serve in the cause of illumination'.... The casuarina murmured and hushed, the ripples splashed on the shore. A bright star appeared in the sky. I almost held my breath as I waited. There was such a peace in the air that I felt that even if nothing happened this was a rich experience—a glimpse of eternal peace. (1946:113)

The occasion depicted here is that Krishna, the protagonist, is in the company of a medium who tries to communicate with the spirits, among whom Krishna's wife Susila is present. It is her wish that she should communicate with her husband. Perhaps Narayan may be at his best when he portrays the serenity and eeriness of the place that they have chosen for their metaphysical exercise.
Though Narayan does not indulge in long grandiloquent descriptions here, one may not be in a position to deny the beauty of the description, which he has achieved by employing cute and short sentences. And also it is worth noting here that the kind of prose used by Narayan in *The English Teacher* is different from that of his other Pre-Independence novels namely *The Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The Dark Room*. Commenting on the language used in *The English Teacher*, Srinivasa Iyengar says: “The story of their wedded life is a prose lyric on which Narayan has lavished his best gift as a writer” (1962:367). Further, he says: “The description of Krishna’s married life—the first few years of happiness, the excruciating agony during the weeks of Susila’s illness, the ‘Last Journey’ to the cremation ground—is one of the most moving and flawless pieces of writing in modern English fiction. Not a word is wasted, and not a word rings false” (1962:369).

5.13. Language used in Conversation.

Narayan practises economy not only in narration, but also in conversations. His linguistic expertise and craftsmanship in writing dialogues are praiseworthy. He can make sentimental, moving, impressive and touching dialogues as the occasion demands. For example, the dialogues between Krishna and his daughter are very moving. After Susila’s sudden demise, the room in which she spent her last days as a patient is kept closed. Being very curious about it, the child innocently converses with her father:

‘The door is still closed, father. Is she bathing still?’
‘H’m. If the door is open, she may catch a cold....’
‘Don’t you have to go to her?’

‘No....’

‘Is she all alone?’

‘There is a nurse who looks after her’.

‘What is a nurse?’

‘A person who tends sick people’

‘You don’t have to go and stay with mother any more, ever?’

‘No, I will always be with you’. (Teacher 1946:102)

When Susila’s illness gets worsened day by day, the elders become more and more preoccupied with nursing her. At that time the child gets automatically bored. To make it further worse, she is instructed not to touch her father. The child is too small to understand that one should not touch a person who nurses a patient unless one washes oneself properly. Narayan depicts the pathetic plight of the child through her conversation with her father.

My daughter, who had been standing in the doorway asked: ‘can I come in father’?

‘Yes, Yes, this is not a sickroom,’ I said. I had forgotten for a moment I had asked her to follow me in.

She sat down on the edge of the mat, and asked: ‘Is this far enough’?

‘Yes, You mustn’t touch me, that’s all, till I have a thorough wash at night.’

‘Does mother’s fever climb on your hands and stick there?’

‘Yes’

‘Won’t it get into you?’

‘No’
'Why?'

'Because I am an elder ....'(1946:88-89).

Another feature of Narayan’s style of writing is the ability to highlight the nature of the characters through short dialogues. In *The Guide*, when Raju returns to ‘Peak House’ after leaving Marco in the cave, Rosie enters into a brief conversation with him, which reveals the true nature of Marco and Rosie.

‘You have returned alone. I suppose he is wall-gazing?’ She said.

‘Yes’, I replied briefly.

‘He does that everywhere’

‘Well, I suppose he is interested, that’s all’

‘What about me, interested in something else?’

‘What is your interest?’

‘Anything except cold, old stone walls’, She said. (1958:83)


According to *Webster’s Comprehensive Dictionary*, ‘humour’ means “the capacity to perceive, appreciate, or express what is funny, amusing, incongruous, ludicrous, etc; specifically in literature, the expression of this in speech or action”(1999). In simple words humour is something, which is capable of making people laugh.

According to *A Reader’s Guide to Literary Terms*, "The word *humour* is sometimes limited to gentle and sympathetic laughter and contrasted with *wit* (q.v.), which evokes intellectual and derisive laughter"(1961:87). In the case of Narayan, it may be justified to say that though most of the time humour is limited to gentle and sympathetic laughter, at times it may evoke intellectual and derisive laughter too.
In that sense, perhaps, Narayan may be the greatest of the humorists among the novelists in Indian Writing in English. It seems that he aims at a didactic process by exposing and ridiculing human follies and weakness through entertainment and amusement. That may be the reason why it is said that Narayan is essentially a comic artist. According to Ramesh Srivastava,

> The greatest contribution of Narayan is his humour. In this respect he has given to the Indian literature in English what Mark Twain had given to the American. Humour is a gift that flourishes in a native tongue but shrivels up with the touch of a foreign language. But with Narayan it flourishes in a foreign tongue and tends to disappear in a native tongue. His humour is a magnet that attracts every reader, a wind that sows the seeds of pleasantry, a light that brightens a thousand faces and a refreshing cool shower of rains that kindles the drooping spirits of people and fills them with a promise of new life.

(1981:199-200)

Narayan writes in such a way that his gentle humour is closely woven into the texture of his prose. This feature of his writing is so fascinating that even his worst critics may acknowledge it. The following extract from *The Man-eater of Malgudi* may prove the above-said feature of his writing.

> His office was above a cotton warehouse, or rather a bed-maker's shop, and cotton fluff was always flying about. Clients who went to him once never went there again, as they sneezed interminably and caught their death of cold; asthmatics went down for weeks after a
legal consultation. His clients preferred to see him as he lounged about the premises of the district court in search of business, and he tackled their problems standing in the veranda of the court or under the shade of a tamarind tree in the compound. But he liked his inexperienced clients first to meet him at his office and catch a cold. I tried to dodge his proposal, but he was adamant that I should meet him in the narrow room above the cotton shop. (1962:78)

5.14.1. Lexical Choice and Humour

The dialogue between Ponni and Mari in The Dark Room is quite amusing as well as ironic. When Savitri asks Ponni how she will react to a situation if her husband develops an illicit affair with another woman and neglects her, Ponni says:

'Sister, remember this. Keep the men under the rod, and they will be all right. Show them that you care for them and they will tie you up and treat you like a dog.'

'What do you mean?' Mari protested.

'When have I treated you like a dog?'

'Don't talk now', Ponni commanded.

'Don't butt in when women are talking. Stay under the tree. I will call you when I want you'. (1938:136)

Mari obeys his wife and goes out of the scene. In the Indian society generally men may dominate women. But, here the irony is that Ponni dominates her husband. Mari’s plight is, indeed, very pathetic. But one has to acknowledge
that what Narayan tries to depict here is not something totally strange in the domestic circle of the Indian society. And the fact that he depicts it humorously with enormous amount of realistic touch is commendable.

Narayan has also got a marvellous capacity to observe even minute things of day-to-day life and to depict it very humorously. For example, when Srinivas asks Sampath what his wife will say if he (Sampath) were made suddenly invisible, he says: ‘If she were in her normal mood she would probably break down, but if she were in her ten a.m. mood she might say: This is another worry, How I am to manage with an unseen husband God alone knows. But please tell me where you are; don’t surprise me from corners’ (Sampath 1949:143-144). When Srinivas becomes curious to know about the ten a.m. mood, Sampath says:

Every day at ten a.m. she is in a terrible temper; just about the time when the children have to be fed and sent to school and shopping has to be done and some lapse or other on my part comes to light, and all sorts of things put her into a horrible temper at that hour, and she will be continuously grumbling and finding fault with everyone. She is always on the brink, and if I don’t have my wits about me we might explode at each other damaging. (1949:144)

Though Sampath talks humorously about the mood and behaviour of his wife at ten a.m., he may not be in a position to deny the agony of a housewife, who
is placed in a similar situation as that of his wife, during that peak hour of household affairs.

5.14.2. Satiric Humour and Language Use

Satire generally means "ridicule of an idea, a person or type of person or even mankind" (A Reader's Guide, 1961:194). In his novels, Narayan satirizes people of different strata of society like fake sadhus, hypocrites, greedy businessmen, moneylenders, house owners, producers of obscene films, credulous simpletons, government officials and husbands and wives. But his satire is too mild and gentle to decide whether he satirizes or ridicules exposing the people in the society for the amusement of the readers. As a matter of fact, Narayan is basically a humorist and not a satirist. Yet, there are so many occasions in his novels where he sounds satiric.

In Mr. Sampath, while commenting on the preliminary advertisement layout of the movie, 'The Burning of Kama', Srinivas refers to a particular advertisement with the caption ‘Golden opportunity to see God himself’ (1949:175) and tells Ravi: ‘God has never had a worse handling anywhere’ (1949:175). By this statement Narayan might have meant that people play with the concept of God. And this statement must be acknowledged as a thought-provoking one.

In The Man-eater of Malgudi, when Nataraj's neighbours get fed up with the insanitary conditions caused by Vasu, the taxidermist, and complain to him, he requests Vasu to shift from his (Nataraj's) attic to some other place of his convenience. But Vasu gets annoyed and sues him stating that he has
harassed him and attempted to evict him by unlawful means. Nataraj approaches an old lawyer, who is well known for his ability to prolong the case for the maximum possible period of time. He is well known in Malgudi as 'adjournment lawyer'. Nataraj's experience with the lawyer is very funny as well as agonizing. Narayan describes very realistically Natartaj's experience through a conversation between them.

He sighed deeply. 'Of course, you have given him no sort of receipt?'

'Receipt? What for?' I asked

'For the rent, I mean. I suppose you have been sensible enough not to take a cheque from him?' I was appalled. He was falling into the same pattern of thought as a dozen others, including my wife. I declared, ' I have not rented him the house.'

'Have you taken a lump sum?' he asked.

'Look here, he is not my tenant'

'Whose tenant is he then?' he asked, cross-examining me.'

'I don't know. I can't say'. I was losing my equanimity ....'

The man was pursuing his inquiry. ' If he is not your tenant, what is he?'

'He is not a tenant but a ...friend', I said, almost unable to substitute any other word. He was quick to catch it. 'Friend! Oh! Oh! What sort of friend is he to file a complaint against you! This is a fairly serious offence according to the present Housing Act. Why could you not have straightaway gone through the usual formalities, that is ...'
'Stop! Stop! ' I cried. ' I swear that I gave him the attic free, absolutely free, because he asked for it.'

'If I were a judge, I would not believe you. Why should you let him live with you?
Is he a relative?'

'No, thank God; it's the only thing that is good about the present situation'

'Are you indebted to him in anyway?'

'No, On the contrary, he should feel himself in debt to me, and yet he doesn't hesitate to have me hanged!' I cried. (1962:80-81)

Nataraj's agony becomes unbearable when the lawyer asks him his fees immediately despite the fact that the lawyer had not yet paid Nataraj the bill on account of printing invitation cards for the marriage of his daughter. So Nataraj says: ' I thought since ...since you have ...you might adjust your accounts' (1962:82). Then the lawyer exclaims: ' Oh, no, absolutely different situations. Don't mix up accounts, whatever else you may do' (1962:82). Here Narayan appears to be directing his gentle satire quite humorously against lawyers who prove to be very greedy and selfish by making the life of the clients more miserable.

In the novel, *The Painter of Signs*, Raman wishes to go to the temple of 'the Goddess of Plenty'. On his way to the temple, the old priest stops him and interrogates him about his purpose. Then Raman eulogizes him and tells him: 'Just to hear you discourse on life and other matters. You are like an ancient rishi, a rare person to meet. When one meets a great soul and hears
his talk, and attains merit, so say the shastras!' (1977:75). These words please the old priest greatly. Here, Narayan may be trying to throw light on the fact that generally human beings are susceptible to flattery. The priest is not an ordinary person. He claims that the goddess came to him in a dream and commanded him to build a temple and install her. But even such a transcendental person falls as a prey to flattery. Pleased by the words of flattery, the priest tells Raman: 'Follow me. I can depend upon wild animals to listen to reason, but I am not so sure of influencing human beings' (1977:75). Here Narayan seems to say that animals are more sensible than human beings.

When Raman stands in front of the image, which is decorated with flowers, the old priest urges him to pray and express his desire. Raman always contemplates establishing the 'Age of Reason'. But now, standing in front of the image, he could neither say that he wants to establish the 'Age of Reason' nor think about any boon to ask of the Goddess. But yet he notices "the benevolence in the eyes of the image and a desire to impart grace" (1977:77). So he mumbles: 'My Daisy be mine without further delay. I can't live without her' (1977:77). Raman's hypocrisy is exposed here. He does not practise what he preaches. Here, Narayan might be laughing at people like Raman in the society.

It may be interesting to note how Narayan describes in The Dark Room the tendency of Shanta Bai to look down upon Indians and things of Indian origin. One day, Ramani and Shanta Bai go fo a film. After reaching the
theatre, she looks at the poster and exclaims: ‘A wretched Indian film! I 'd have given my life to see a Garbo or Dietrich now’ (1938:90). Then quite reluctantly, she gives her consent to see the film and says: ‘Anything is better than nothing’ (1938:90). The film is on a popular episode from The Ramayana, in which Hanuman sets fire to Lanka. Inside the theatre she keeps on commenting on the film. She whispers: ‘what rubbish the whole thing is! ... Our people can’t produce a decent film. Bad photography, awful acting, ugly faces. Till our film producers give up mythological nonsense there is no salvation for our films.... Let us get out. I can’t stand this anymore’ (1938:91).

If one goes through this narration describing Shanta Bai's reaction to an Indian film on puranic episode and her attitude towards the Indian actors and technicians, one may not help but have a sarcastic smile on one's face. Here, Narayan appears to be making fun of the people who are crazy about foreigners and foreign things without understanding the genuine merit of the things of Indian origin.


Narayan is blessed with an enviable talent of depicting awkward situations in a humorous way. It is evident in almost all his novels. In The Man-eater of Malgudi, one day Vasu, the taxidermist, comes to Nataraj's press and takes him in his jeep to the Mempi forest against his wish. When Vasu comes to his press, Nataraj is busily engaged in proof-reading of the wedding invitation of the adjournment lawyer. But Vasu manages to take him along with him and drives the jeep very rashly and enjoys the discomfiture of the villagers...
and passers-by. He laughs at Nataraj when he tells him that his shirt is open at the chest without buttons. That means, Nataraj is completely at the mercy of Vasu, for he cannot even walk back to his press wearing a shirt without buttons. Vasu enjoys Nataraj’s tragic plight and tells him that nobody will bother about it in the jungle. It is not only that Nataraj’s shirt does not have buttons, but also that he does not have a single coin with him. So he very politely asks Vasu to lend some cash. When Vasu proves to be indifferent he gets irritated and asks him ‘Have you or have you not any loose coin on you? I’ll return it to you as soon as I am back home’ (1962:40). Then Vasu responds in a sarcastic vein: ‘So you think we are going back home.eh’ (1962:40). At this stage Nataraj gets terribly frustrated and he recalls his experience: ‘I was struck with a sudden fear that this man was perhaps abducting me and was going to demand a ransom for releasing me from some tiger cave. What would my wife and little son do if they were suddenly asked to produce fifty thousand rupees for my release?’ (1962:41). Then being enamoured by the presence of a tiger somewhere in the forest, Vasu simply drives away after leaving Nataraj in front of Muthu’s tea stall. Nataraj wants to leave the place for his hometown as early as possible and he manages to board the bus with the help of Muthu, the tea stall owner. Muthu asks the conductor to give Nataraj a seat in the bus on post payment of the bus fare at Malgudi. Nataraj is placed in such an awkward situation that he says: ‘He looked at me with sour suspicion ....He demonstrated with his hands the act of wringing a neck. I’d like to do this to anyone who comes up with such a proposal. If our inspector checks mid-way,
it'll end my career, and then I and my family will have to take a begging bowl and go from door to door' (1962:49). Any way the conductor gives him a seat. Though Nataraj’s predicament is very awkward, his innocence and helplessness provoke laughter.


Irony is a device by which a writer “may construct a discrepancy between an expectation and its fulfilment or between the appearance of a situation and the reality that underlies it” (Reader’s Guide 1961:106). Narayan employs this device very effectively in almost all his novels. In *The Dark Room*, Savitri leaves home very bravely and makes an abortive attempt to commit suicide. Then she tries to support herself and be totally independent. She gets employed as a servant in a temple of an old priest for just half a measure of rice and a quarter of an anna a day. In the night when she is about to be left alone in the temple, the old priest suggests: ‘If you are afraid to remain here, you may come to my house. You can spend the night with the womenfolk in my house’ (1938:188). Then Savitri tells him: ‘I am not afraid of anything.... I am living in God’s house and He will protect me.’ (1938:189). But her brave words do not keep her spirit alive for a long time. When she is left alone in the Shanty, she grows nostalgic and broods over her sad plight: ‘I must see them; I must see Babu, I must see Sumati, and I must see Kamala. Oh.... But what about the fiery vows, and the coming out at midnight?’ (1938:189-90). Savitri wants to assert herself and fight against the infidelity of
her husband. But she proves to be too weak to achieve it. So she gives up the fight and returns home. Here the situation is humorous as well as ironical.

5.14.5. Wisdom-packed Humorous Statements

In *Mr. Sampath*, Srinivas talks about a great universal truth when he says: 'I don’t see much difference between a ghost and a living person. All of us are skin-covered ghosts, for that matter' (1949:17). Perhaps, what he means might be that a human being is a spirit soul and not the body. The ghost cannot have the body. But it has the soul.

When the old landlord visits Srinivas’ house in the early morning, Srinivas offers him a cup of coffee. Then the old man tells him: ‘You forget, sir, that I am a very old man and a sanyasi, at that; I should never indulge in all this, though I’m inclined that way. It is not good for my soul’ (1949:119). The old landlord does not mean what he says and after uttering these words he accepts the cup of coffee offered to him and gulps it down. Though the contradiction provokes laughter here, there may be a lot of wisdom in what the landlord has said. It is said that if one wants to purify one’s soul one has to renounce all the sensuous pleasures which include even coffee and tea.

In *The Guide*, Marco tells Raju with a friendly smile: ‘If a man has to have peace of mind it is best that he forget the fair sex’ (1958:71). Here the intention of Narayan may be to send across a piece of truth to the readers that of all the sensuous feelings sex is one which is very difficult to be controlled and till one conquers it one may not enjoy peace of mind.
In *The Painter of Signs*, though Raman, the protagonist, who is obsessed with sex, wishes to establish that man-woman relationship is not indispensable and there are so many more important things in life than marrying. According to him, “If Adam had possessed a firm mind, the entire course of creation would have taken a different turn” (1977:45). When Raman, a hypocrite of the first order, pronounces these words, it becomes naturally comic. However, it contains wisdom in the sense that if Eve had not influenced Adam when she was tempted by Satan, the arch-enemy of God, the humanity would have been saved from the consequences of the first sin committed by Adam and Eve. Here, Narayan seems to say that right from the birth of Adam and Eve, men have been under the influence of women.

5.15. Narayan’s Syntax

Though the basic structure of Narayan’s sentences remain generally confined to the subject+ verb+ object \ complement pattern, one may not deny the fact that Narayan has succeeded to a remarkable extent in entertaining and enlightening his readers in a medium which is alien to him. And one may not deny also that the above-said device employed by him in his style of writing aided him to a very great extent to achieve his objectives. Sharan observes accurately:

“The Indian colouring imparts a naiveness and a unique charm to his style. The run of his language is easy and natural. He has given a ‘native’ stamp to his prose without in any way impairing the grammar of the queen’s language. In fact, his novels are a
triumph for Bharat English. His grace and felicity of expression
leave an indelible impression on our minds". (1993:381)

While the choice of lexical items characterizes the style of an author,
the choice of syntactic structures marks his idiosyncratic style. As has
elaborately been dealt with in the foregoing sections, Narayan's choice of
lexical items is simple and nostalgic, and his choice of syntactic structures is
characteristic of his style. His syntactic structures are simple, straightforward,
elegant and bereft of too many embeddings, which quite often hinder the
process of comprehension.

An attempt has been made to process statistically the author's writings
with a view to identify the syntactic structures, which he uses quite frequently
in his writings. For this purpose two of his novels The Dark Room written in
Pre-Independence era and A Tiger for Malgudi written in Post-Independence
era have been chosen, and a preliminary syntactic analysis has been made.
Pages have been chosen at random from these two novels and a statistical
analysis of the construction in them has been done. The analysis is mainly
about the use of simple, complex and compound constructions by the author.
A simple sentence is defined as a construction having a finite verb irrespective
of the presence or otherwise of subjects, objects, adjectives and adverbs in it.
A complex sentence is one, which has an incomplete construction (normally
called as subordinate clause) in addition to the simple sentence and a
compound sentence is a construction having two or more simple sentences
combined together by some conjunctive or other linguistic device. The table
below presents a statistical account of the syntactic structures found in the works of Narayan.

**Table showing the syntactic structures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Simple construction</th>
<th>Complex construction</th>
<th>Compound construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Dark Room</em></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Tiger for Malgudi</em></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the analysis it becomes clear that Narayan uses compound constructions more frequently than complex and simple constructions. The most preferred conjunctives used by the author are ‘and’, ‘though’, ‘before’, but, etc. Both the works chosen for the study portray the same trend in the choice of syntactic structures. It has to be remembered here that there has been a gap of about forty-eight years between these two novels, but the syntactic choice of the author over the period has remained unchanged. The compound sentences used by Narayan are simple (not in the technical sense) without any complicated embeddings and they are mostly conjoined by the common conjunctive ‘and’, thus offering the readers a style easy to understand and elegant to read. Phrasal and clausal embeddings, a feature that dominated the later half of the twentieth century hardly find a place in the writings of Narayan. The Indian society during the times of Narayan was dominated by illiterates and the percentage of literacy was abysmally low.
Among the less number of literates, a percentage of persons who were well-versed in the English language might have been still less. And even among those persons who were well-versed in English how many of them possessed the habit of reading a newly developed genre in English? It should have been still less. And that might have probably prompted the author to go in for simple and elegant syntactic structures, which are not complicated by embeddings at various levels. His care for sustaining and improving his readership could be attributed as the foremost reason for choosing this style. A detailed account of the syntactic features of the author may, perhaps, throw more light on his idiosyntactic patterns. This type of analysis may be taken up in the future.

5.16. Conclusion

The foregoing analysis of Narayan's style both at the lexical and syntactic level reveals his love and attachment for Indian way of life. The device of English as his medium of expression – strange to most of the Indians – has never deterred him from depicting the Indian way of life in his own style effectively. The readiness with which he borrows foreign features and makes them appear native ones has helped Narayan very much in establishing himself as an author of repute. The more we probe into him, the more insights we gain into his expertise in the efficient use of language.

It is worth remembering here how Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India had complimented R.K.Narayan while addressing an audience recently at Oxford University. Commenting on one of the most important 'legacies of the Raj' he said:
.... In indigenising English...we have made the language our own. Our choice of prepositions may not always be the Queen's English; we might occasionally split the infinitive; and we may drop an article here and add an extra one there. I am sure everyone will agree, however, that English has been enriched by Indian creativity well and we have given you R.K.Narayan and Salman Rushdie. Today, English in India is seen as just another Indian Language, ...(qtd. in Hasan Suroor, 2005:12)