Chapter-5

Individual Novels: An Intensive Study
According to Manu and traditional Hindu ethics, one enters into the third Ashrama (stage of life) when he crosses the age of 60 and becomes a grandfather. In such a condition the physical powers of man are reduced. It is then that man departs to the forests to prepare himself for the true life of the spirit. The main purpose of this going to the forest is to escape from the bustle of life into solitude of the forest and to meditate upon higher issues away from worldly anxieties. This action denotes the choice of a state of detachment from the worldly values such as ambition, success and happiness. When one’s bodily powers wane, it is time to depart to the forest and prepare oneself for the true life of the spirit. Detachment is that exercise which awakens spirituality. We see the detachment and the awakening of spirituality especially in the climaxes of R.K. Narayan’s novels. Narayan’s heroes make efforts in their daily living to know the self in relation to other people and the world. In some cases, the renunciation is a conscious decision, for example, “Jagan’s decision to go away shapes itself after a long reverie in which he relives his experiences from the day he picks his bride to the bleak present”.

Jagan’s renunciation is “charmingly freckled with an appealing human flaw”. The detachment motif takes on other shapes in other novels.
In *The English Teacher* the final resolution of Krishnan’s effort takes the forms of spiritualistic communion with his dead wife and a kind of freedom from the responsibilities as parent and teacher. He yields up his little daughter to his parents as part of his move to search for inner peace and harmony. Thoughts must “always be followed by efforts directed towards conquering obstructions and inertia”.

The novel ends with Krishna’s success in achieving direct contact with Susila.

In *The Financial Expert* and *Guide*, the central characters gain self-control with an emphasis more pressing than before. Unlike the earlier heroes who begin a journey in the pursuit of spiritual improvement and awareness, the heroes have something about them of a Pilgrim’s Progress. His heroes Margayya, Raju and Jagan are worldly-minded people. During the journey in life there take place extraordinary events which shake them loose from their worldly attachments. *The Financial Expert* is a story of false ideas and fears which occupy the human mind and disturb it continually. Margayya is determined to make money, aided by both holy and impious means. When the Puja performed by him produces no results, he begins to think doubtfully whether he is not a victim of a practical joke. But Lakshmi favours him after all.

He is always busy in counting the money. Gradually his passion becomes excessive and impossible. His son
Balu’s collapse is caused by Margayya’s excess greed for money. Money spoils his son, isolates him from his wife and ruins his health. In a blind helpless rage he suddenly attacks Dr. Pal who now leads Balu astray. Margayya had become insolvent. Pal gets his own back by spreading the rumor that Margayya has become insolvent and the next morning all of Margayya’s clients start to withdraw their money. Again he starts his business but this Margayya is quite different from the earlier man. The brash self confidence is gone. What is more important, the resilience of character is still there, perhaps even increased with age and experience.

Guide is Narayan’s first effort at dealing with the theme of salvation through self realization and detachment. Raju’s life symbolizes the journey of the soul from the worldly level to spiritual heights and a final redemption. The soul remains shackled by worldly desires and attachment for some time. Finally, it gets to its destination and attains salvation and spiritual heights culminating in a final redemption. Raju plays many parts. To begin with he is seen as the only son of a doting mother, a gregarious, happy-go-lucky young man, and a favorite of his peers. He helps a rich visitor, Marco in his archealogical researches, gets involved in the tangle of a relationship with Rosie who soon becomes Raju’s beloved. Rosie also realizes that with Raju’s help her ambition of becoming a dancer can be fulfilled. But his natural tendency to behave in a certain irresponsible way without reason finally betrays him into a criminal
action and he is charged with forgery. Coming out of the jail, he wants no connections with the past but 'sets up as a sort of ascetic or Mahatma’ as a result of an accident of mistaken identity.

In the village there was famine due to drought. Due to the pressure of situation Raju is forced to undertake a fast to end the misery of villagers. He tries to tell the truth to Velan so that everyone may be aware of his reality that he is not a saint.

"I am not a saint, Velan, I am just an ordinary human being like anyone else. Listen to my story, you will know it yourself."

None tries to understand that part of his life and in the end he dies as a martyr. Although he was released from jail even then he was frustrated. He does not like to have any relationship. Without much melodrama or emotionalism R.K. Narayan establishes Raju’s mood of withdrawal and inward bound vision. In his reluctance to confront the old faces and location, Narayan depicts the preparedness for change and reform. Velan’s arrival is the catalysis, which sets into motion the process of Raju’s movement towards becoming an improved human being. He wants to give a new start his life but fate does not allow him, “it is all Karma driving the soul to the Goal”.

Past Karmas and doings decide the future. It helps the soul to reach its destination. As Raju observes the twelve day fast in which he is not personally interested,
honestly he does not expect any reward for it. It is this Nishkam Karma due to which he is rewarded with the opportunity of dying as a martyr. The rain as it pours down Raju’s body is a though it is the purification ritual-the final forgiveness.

Raju is destined to undertake a fast to end the dreadful drought. His soul is led forward, beyond his own volition. The fact is that the acceptance and carrying out of the fast quickens the spiritual advancement of the soul. Narayan describes this phase in powerful yet understated terms. For the first time Raju was doing a thing in which he was not personally interested. The fourth day of his fast he seemed lively. “He went down to the river; stood facing up-stream with his eyes shut, and repeated the litany. It was no more than a supplication to the heavens to send down rain and save humanity”. Now the soul is fully purified through fasting. The redemption through death and the awakening of the purified and inspired soul is suggestively described by Narayan at the end of the novel.

In *The Bachelor of Arts* Narayan portrays the dilemma A.N. Kaul says, “a considerably large section of Indian society striving to live its daily life in a definite historical situation”. Narayan represents a clear picture of Indian history and the life led by Indians in the 1930s and 40s. Through the theme of Gandhian thought Narayan represents the racial and economical exploitation and a sense of inequality.
The topic of the debate in which Chandran participates in *The Bachelor of Arts* is: ‘Historians should be slaughtered’ Chandran initially introduces the theme based on racial and colonial conflicts with the argument that students should represent the correct panorama of Indian history. British rulers have represented it according to their choice and naturally with the outsiders’ misconceptions.

On the other hand, in Swami’s case he directly strikes on Mr. Brown, the Principal of Albert Mission College. He keeps on gazing at Brown’s pink face and says,

“He is not here out of love for us, but merely to keep up appearances. All Europeans are like this. They will take their thousand or more a month, but won’t do the slightest service to Indians with a sincere heart. They must be this heavy amount for spending their time in the English club. Why should not these fellows admit Indians to their clubs? Sheer colour arrogance.”

The treatment of evil in human nature by different writers is interesting. Anand employs external evil and portrays black villains, thoughtless antagonists and indifferent types. Narayan seeks the internal evil. He also identifies self-realization and pure action as the means of purifying the soul. One can even say that Narayan’s fictional world may contain cads, rogues, liars, good-for-nothing follows but never villains.
His heroes represent the various developing phases from mundane to the spiritual starting with the hero’s inclination towards deviance, his repentance, his self awareness, regeneration and finally salvation. Both Narayan and Anand successfully blend philosophy and human drama in highly enriched tones, which Narayan uses as an apparently simple yet artistically complex symbolism; Anand works with direct strokes of astute realism. Narayan “portrays the ambitious flight of the self in pursuit of physical or material gratification and finally presents a tranquil soul frustrated and devoid of ego, yet hardly ripe for salvation”\textsuperscript{10}. Anand uses the child or the child-like protagonist while Narayan uses the corrupted, spoiled grown-up individual representing the recalcitrant, wayward and self-centered child-state caught in the maze of competing and conflicting attachments.

Margayya appears like a child when we examine the relationship of the father and the son. Narayan lays great stress on human relationships. As he says, “I value human relationship very much, very intensely. It makes one’s existence worthwhile- human relationship in any and every form, whether at home or outside. I think, I have expressed this philosophy in my work successfully”\textsuperscript{11}.

“He has the rare endowment of seeing common characters from within, and revealing them on their own pace and of looking at common things, that lie round us and, about which he can impart some random truth. He
has the essential artistic sensibility by which he values life and he sees the most essential thing as a kind of consecration”.12


Narayan presents human characters but does not analyse the psyche in clear terms. He uses the didactic and descriptive manner in his writings. Narayan’s use of language reflects small flashes of light which makes his words more meaningful and straightforward.

P.S. Sundaram says, “what makes Narayan the writer he is, and makes it worth our while to write about him, is the zest he so obviously has in life and all its creatures, his modernity, his irony, his sense of humor, the complete absence of pomposity and pretence. Whatever else he may or may not be, he is absolutely authentic”14.

It cannot be denied that R.K. Narayan’s writings are replete with Indian sensibility and with the harmony of style and subject. His novels seem to be very real due to his objectivity and detachment, which lend a gentle irony to his narratives.
“Narayan has a penetrating eye for significant details which he provides his readers with a sustained self-restraint and disciplined approach and style”\textsuperscript{15}.

Narayan has often been compared to many western writers especially after Graham Greene compared him to the great Russian comic fictionists like Chekhov and Gogol. Narayan’s fiction preserves its distinctive character and originality in a sustained manner. It is his comic detachment, as distinct from the Russian masters’ obsessive commitment that gives him his creative perspective of life-tolerant, dispassionate, genial and compassionate humanitarianism. The basic humanity of the vision accepts life in its totality. This is a classical art, profound in its simplicity and warm in the objectivity.

R.K. Narayan is the most notable of the Indo-English Novelists of 20\textsuperscript{th} Century. His novels have great importance due to the images of real life in this materialistic world. Each of Narayan’s novels is better than the former because he perfectly uses his eye and simultaneously involves his mind and heart.

R.K. Narayan is often referred to as a ‘pure novelist’ and is considered superior to Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. William Walsh finds “pure and disinterested art”\textsuperscript{16} in R.K. Narayan.

It is true that Narayan remained uninvolved with the political and social issues of his day. In an article Narayan himself maintained that it was very difficult to
escape from the surroundings when the whole country was busy in the struggle of freedom. He examines the psychological factors closely; yet a detached observation was the stuff of his fictional forte. While the novelists and story writers in India were depicting the effects of British Raj and the psychological background of the Indian character or the Indian way of life, Narayan remained aloof from mainstream politics and political statements. He started his career as a newspaper reporter for a paper *The Justice*. At that time Indian society was passing through the era of turmoil. He could not remain unaffected by the events of the time. His writing for the newspaper may be regarded as apprenticeship for fiction writing. The social and political issues of the thirties yielded a large part of material for his novels. Still, he managed to keep his point of view unobtrusive and his treatment of plots unprejudiced.
The English Teacher:

Narayan’s novel *The English Teacher* has a great value thematically and technically. Upto now Narayan had written three novels and three collections of short stories. He had become a mature and experienced writer. He was around thirty six year old. Somerset Maugham comments that at this age author’s creative gift reaches on its height. It is an autobiographical novel like Dicken’s *David Copperfield*, Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers* and Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*. It is based on the actual happenings and incidents of his life. It is a story about Krishna’s emotions. He met harsh fact and needed to face the death of his beloved wife. This novel “is a mature work of a mature writer”\(^\text{18}\).

In *My days* Narayan himself confesses: “More than any other book, *The English Teacher* is autobiographical in content, very little part of it being fiction. *The English Teacher* of the novel, Krishna is a fictional character in the fictional city of Malgudi, but he goes through the same experience I had gone through, and he calls his wife Susila, and the child is Leela instead of Hema. The toll that typhoid took and all the desolation that followed, with a child to look after, and the psychic adjustments, are based on my own experience.... The dedication of the book to the memory of my wife should to some extent give the reader a clue that the book may not be all fiction”.\(^\text{19}\)
This novel specially deals with the theme of man-woman relationship on both the planes of domestic and spiritual life.

Narayan stated in this novel that there are two states of life (i) Primary materialistic life (ii) spiritual life. When Krishna is able to establish the spiritual communion with his dead wife he knows the real meaning of death,

"Death is only the vanishing point of the physical framework in which a personality is cast and functions, that same personality is unperceived before a conception, and will be lost sight of again at death, which we repeat is a vanishing point and not the end ..."²⁰

Death is not only the end of this materialistic life but also the starting point of the spiritual life. So the theme is about the search of identity, which is the goal of life. Human relationship on the earth and beyond it, allow us to have the total view of ourselves evaluating the life from childhood to old-age. Krishna was upset due to his wife’s physical death but he was healed by the telepathic communion with his wife especially when she tells him that “she existed in a finer and more refined state of pure spiritual existence.”²¹

Krishna felt lonely living in the hostel as an English teacher at Albert Mission College. He spent his days eating, working, speaking and walking etc. He says, “I should cease to live like a cow... all done to perfection, I was shore, but always leaving behind a sense of something missing.”²²
Krishna was very much attached to his wife, baby and his village too. Letters were very exciting things for him, so he says, “My father’s letter brought back to me not only the air of the village and all my childhood”.

Narayan had knowledge of Vastu. Krishna was eager to settle his family because he was fed up with his hostel life. He tried his best to search for a perfect house. A house “which faces south, for its breeze, keeps out the western sun, gets in the eastern, and admits the due measure of northern light that artists so highly value”.

Krishna is a loving husband and a caring father. He is tense about how his wife would manage to get down from the train with an infant because the train stops only for a short time. Casting one look of his wife he noticed every minute detail “fresh and beautiful, her hair shining, her dress without a wrinkle on it, and her face fresh, with not a sign of fatigue”. He neglected his father in law too. Narayan portrays Krishna and Susila as a unique pair who loved each other so passionately that they reach to spiritual heights. One day he was checking a box in which there were past memories such as the empty bottles of scents which he had given his wife during the first two years of their married life.

The bottles were empty but on smelling these empty bottles he felt the presence of his wife. “The lingering scent in them covered for a brief moment the gulf between the present and the past”.

He felt excessive joy. Suddenly his daughter brought him back to the earth asking him what he was doing. His
wife also loved him a lot. When he asked her through the telepathic communication, how she spent her time, her wife answered that the greatest joy exists there on feeling the Divine Light. She does not have any assigned work and duty here. "We have ample leisure. We are not constrained to spend it in any particular manner. We have no need for exercise as we have no physical bodies. Music is ever with us here, and it transports us to higher planes".  

"I will accompany you, stay up with you till you go to bed and fall asleep thinking of me..." 

His wife told him that if he wants to check her presence, he should pluck about ten Jasmine flowers, and keep them near his pillow. When he would wake up in the morning feel that there was no smell because it was evidence of her presence as before going she took away the scent with her.

Krishna used to feel her presence even in the dark night. "The distance and loneliness were nothing to me. She was with me. I quietly enjoyed the fact without stirring the slightest thought." 

They were the ideal couple in this life and in the life after death. After his wife's death Krishna became fed up. One day he came in contact with a strange man; and with his help he established a communion with his dead wife. Suddenly he felt a charm in his life and his days became full of surprise and joy. Gradually he used to go to his daughter's school, there he met the head master of the school. He was a
very interesting person. Krishna felt glad to see the head
master treating the children sympathetically with a lot of
affection. He used to believe in the 'Leave Alone System'
according to which we have to leave children free. Krishna
does not like the prevalent education system with a lot of
prescribed books. "In search of mental peace in order to
establish a direct communion with his dead wife sees in the
head master’s 'children's school' an ideal retreat from his dull
and sad life".30

Narayan showed the sensitive nature of the innocent
children and their effect on society. Even their quarrel
teaches us;

"this quarrel was the most enchanting thing
because they quarrel without a touch of
bitterness. But we adults are not like them.
We should learn from them how to live
happily in this society. Children teach us to
speak plainly without a slight touch of
varnish. They don't know buttering anyone.
They do not use harsh words. Due to our
education system we have been deprived
from our culture".

Krishna, the hero of the novel says,

"I was going to explain why I could no
longer stuff Shakespeare and Elizabethan
metre and Romantic poetry for the
hundredth time into young minds and feed
them on the dead mutton of literary
analysis and theories and histories, while
what they needed was lessons in the fullest
use of the mind. The education had reduced
us to a nation of morons, we were strangers
to our own culture and camp follower of
another culture feeding on leavings and garbage”.

Narayan showed through this novel that the head master and his wife both were different from each other. They live unhappily in “a terrible domestic condition”. His wife was not well educated. She used to blame him for not taking care of his family. “Not for him such things as wife, children, home and so on. These boys are fatherless”.

Krishna comes to know that in a fit of dejection the head master has left his house and family for good and started devoting himself completely to the education of small children. Krishna was already much disgusted by the system of education prevalent in schools and colleges.

At this stage two major changes occur in Krishnan’s life which form the crux of the novel. Krishna establishes a direct communion with his wife and takes the shelter in the head master’s children’s school for escaping his dull and boring life. Sending his daughter to his mother he resigns his job in the College. When he returns to his house alone, after attending the party which was arranged on the occasion of his departure from the college and goes to bed, he dreams of his wife. “It was a moment of rare, immutable joy, a moment for which one feels grateful to Life and Death”. The plot of the English Teacher can be divided into three parts – The life led by Krishna before the arrival of his wife, the life led by him in her company and the phase after her death.

The third part of this novel is written in the first person narrative the autobiographical detail rests behind a thin and
transparent fictional curtain. The tone is one of oral narration direct and simple. Krishna says, "I called Singaram our servant. He had been a hostel servant for forty years and known all of us as undergraduates and now as teachers- an old man who affected great contempt for all of us, including our senior professors and Principal. He spoke to us with habitual rudeness. Somehow he felt that because he had seen all of us as boys, our present stature, age and position were a make-believe, to which he would be no party. "Singaram", I called, and he answered from somewhere, "you will have to wait till I come. If you hurt your throat calling me, don't hold me responsible for it ..." In a few minutes he stood before me, a shrunken old fellow, with angry wrinkles on his face."  

As an omniscient author he observes every minute detail that was interesting; for example, the requirement of his wife for four trunks-

"She required four trunks for her sarees alone! Women never understood the importance of travelling light. Why should they? As long as there were men to bear all the anxieties and bother and see them through their travails! It would teach them a lesson to be left to shift for themselves. Then they would know the value of economy in these matters. I wrung my hands in despair. How was she going to get out with the child and all that luggage!"  

The narrative is clearly about the writer's own experiences of life so he is able to gain the sympathy of the
reader. There are many things, which are impossible to believe right away, but the reader always remains with him.

About 'the use of the first person narration in the first person singular; one can say that “this device makes the narrative not only all the more authentic, but also a record of the most deeply-felt personal thoughts, feelings and experiences”.

The narrator’s diary is an important strategy through which the hero is shown as recalling the information.

“Here is an extract from my diary: The child has been cajoled to sleep in the next house. The cook has been sent there to keep her company. Two hours past mid night. We have all exhausted ourselves, so a deep quiet has descended on us (moreover a great restraint is being observed by all of us for the sake of the child in the next house, whom we don’t wish to scare). Susila lies there under the window, laid out on the floor. For there is the law that, the body, even if it is an Emperor’s must rest only on the floor, on Mother Earth”.

Narayan used very simple language with a limited range of vocabulary shunned intensity of emotions and poetic exaggeration in his writings.

Even the irrational is clothed in the language of the rational mind. As Sushila speaks to him, our senses are ready to accept the impossible as very possible. “Our life is one of thought and experience. Thought is something which has solidity and power, and as in all existence ours is also a life of aspiration, striving, and joy. A considerable portion of
our state is taken up in meditation, and our greatest ecstasy is in feeling the Divine Light flooding us ... We've ample leisure. We are not constrained to spend it in any particular manner. We have no need for exercise as we have no physical bodies. Music is ever with us here, and it transports us to higher planes... Things here are far more intense than on earth; that means our efforts are far more efficient than yours. If by good fortune we are able to establish a contact with our dear ones who are receptive to our influence, then you say that that person is inspired. And a song or melody can establish a link between our minds, for instance, how sad that you should have neglected your veena. If you could take it up once again our minds could more easily join. Why don’t you try it? 

Narayan tried to show the feelings and emotions of a human heart in all its simplicity. Genuine emotions were presented. Krishna remembers that his wife liked the Jasmine and Rose garlands. “The garland hung by a nail right over my head. The few drops of water which I sprinkled on the flowers seemed to have quickened in them a new life. Their essences came forth into the dark night as I lay in bed, bringing a new vigour with them. The atmosphere became surcharged with strange spiritual forces. Their delicate aroma filled every particle of the air, and as I let my mind float in the ecstasy, gradually perceptions and senses deepened. Oblivion crept over me like a cloud. The past, present and the future welded into one."
Narayan used language for his expression of vision of life. He successfully presented feelings, thoughts and experiences beautifully. About the English language Narayan himself stated,

“English has proved that if a language has flexibility any experience can be communicated through it, even if it has to be paraphrased sometimes rather than conveyed and even if the factual detail is partially understood ...”

“We are still experimentalists. I may straight away explain what we do not attempt to do. We are not attempting to write Anglo-Saxon English. The English language through sheer resilience and mobility, is now undergoing a process of Indianization in the same manner as it adopted U.S. citizenship over a century ago, with the difference that it is the major language there, but here one of the fifteen languages listed in the Indian Constitution. All that I am able to confirm, after nearly thirty years of writing, 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”.

He blames the entire education system which increases indiscipline among students. Arrangement of attendance and compulsory presence in the classroom cannot make them disciplined. “In a sober moment perhaps I would reflect on the question of obedience. Born in different households, perhaps petted, pampered, and bullied, by parents, uncles, brothers- all persons known to them and responsible for their growth and welfare, who was I that they should obey my
command? What tie was there between me and them? Did I absorb their personalities as did the old masters and merge them in mine?"\(^43\)

Krishna feels that today teaching is taken as a profession for the sake of money making. It is spoiling the future of our nation. How can such teachers be able to produce civilized citizens? The 'leave alone system' is the best through which we will be able to transform the learners into "wholesome human beings".\(^44\)

Narayan was not in favour of the examination system and compulsory attendance. He says,

"My educational outlook had always differed from those of my elders and well-wishers. And after five or more decades, my views on education remain unchanged, although in several other matters my philosophy of life had undergone a modification. If a classification is called for I may be labeled 'Anti-educational.' I am not averse to enlightenment, but I feel convinced that the entire organisation, system, outlook and aims of education are hopelessly wrong from beginning to end ..."\(^45\)

"In *The English Teacher* the problem of detachment is examined in increasingly close relation to work and dominant ambitions".\(^46\)
The Financial Expert:

*The Financial Expert* was published in 1952. It is Narayan’s ‘sixth novel which deals with the story of the rise and fall of the central figure, Margayya. Actually this name was given to him by his admirers. This novel is full of ironies. His name itself is full of irony. Margayya –, Marg-the way, Ayya - The master; in other words the path finder. It is ironical indeed to see that he himself does not know the right way, throughout his life Margayya works hard but at the end he becomes insolvent. He used to fill the loan and application forms to help the poor villagers and to earn money for himself to borrow them at $4\frac{1}{2}$ percent and lending it to others at $7\frac{1}{2}$ percent.

*The Financial Expert* is the story of an ambitious and clever man who is ‘Financial Expert’, the hero Margayya who tackles all kinds of the financial transactions successfully. His real name is Krishna but he is popularly known as Margayya his nick name, which is very symbolic when its literal sense is considered ‘one who shows the way’. He shows the way to all those who are in financial trouble. “He is such a financial wizard that he keeps the accounts of his numerous clients on the tips of his fingers and helps them to draw unlimited loans from the Co-operative Bank”\(^{47}\). One day as he was meditating on the choice of some business, the presence of Dr. Pal surprised him. He was a journalist and author. Dr. Pal advises him to buy his manuscript of *Bed-life* for a small sum of twenty five rupees. Being deceived by Dr. Pal’s proposal Margayya holds a vision of his bright future.
full of money. Due to the successful publication of the book Margayya becomes one of the richest men of the town. Now he draws more clients day by day by charging them a high interest of twenty percent. Dr. Pal who was not a successful journalist also joins him and he helps to bring numerous clients for him from amongst the needy people. Although Margayya now turns fabulously rich even then he is not satisfied.

His only son Balu now starts going astray. His daughter in law tells him that Balu had taken to gambling, drinking and such other vicious habits and that Dr. Pal is at the back of all this mischief. Margayya beats Dr. Pal with his sandals and Dr. Pal turns his bitterest enemy. So he spreads rumors among the people that Margayya has become insolvent. Many people come to take their money back. As the novel closes Margayya is seen preparing to restart his old business under the bunyan tree with the tin box.

_The Financial Expert_ is a masterpiece of R.K. Narayan. This theme also has universal appeal. The story of _The Financial Expert_ is like that of king Midas who was blessed by a golden touch but was never contented. “Margayya is an embodiment of greed for wealth. All his thoughts and activities are governed by the sole motive of accumulating more and more money.” Margayya is not only eager to amass riches but when Margayya meets Balu’s teacher he asks him about Balu and to thrash him if he commits any mistake. He thinks he understand the psychology of teachers. “If you see a policeman ask him to catch the thief, if
you see a monkey ask him to go up a tree and if you see a teacher ask him to thrash his pupil". Margayya was supposedly a storehouse of commonsense and knowledge. Many are the truisms he spouts and much is the logic he propounds. 'Man may be civilized and respected if he has money'. He will not be respected even by his wife and his mother who bore him also rejects him in the absence of money. So money is the origin of everything. According to Margayya a person who is rich can buy knowledge so he was very much obsessed by the importance of power and money “A man whom the Goddess of wealth favours need not worry much. He can buy all knowledge he requires. He can afford to buy all the gifts that Goddess Saraswati holds in her palm”.

Like Midas of the old story Margayya thought that he alone was blessed by a golden touch could buy all the knowledge.

There are three strains in the novel:

(1) Margayya determinedly proceeds to acquire wealth to get a higher position in the society. He sees wealth as power and respect.

(2) Margayya’s love for his son Balu and his desire to see him highly educated is the strain where R.K. Narayan comments on parenthood and its egotistical desire for the children’s glory seen as an extension of the parent’s personality.

(3) The contrary relationship of Margayya with his brother and sister-in-law.
This is a part of narrative where R.K. Narayan describes the situation where joint family system is breaking up all over India.

The whole story moves around these three points. In part – I Margayya, the hero is a money lender and grows into a big business man. He borrows money at a small interest, $4^{1/2}$ percent and lends it to the needy at a higher interest $7^{1/2}$ per cent. He earns money for himself. But his spoilt child Balu throws his account book into the gutter and makes it impossible for Margayya to note it down again. He also loses the details of money due to him from those that he lent it to.

His embarking on Lakshmi Puja and other forms of attempts to gain wealth show his desperation and his diminishing faith in himself.

In Part – II the result of Puja is before him and he becomes a wealthy man of the town. This is an ironic turn. His moral depravity and dependence on underhand means is indicative of the imminent punishing scheme of destiny.

Part – III is about Balu. It is also about the turn-about of Margayya’s fortunes and the whip-lash of fate, an injury to his selfhood where it hurts most. Margayya had wanted that his son should be highly educated and so he had admitted him in a school and arranged a private tutor for him too. But Balu did not pass his SSLC. As the disappointed Margayya says “Every little idiot has passed his S.S.L.C. exam but he can’t”\textsuperscript{51}. As
time passes Margayya realizes that now no school will admit his son. Then Balu flees to Madras.

The interesting feature of this writer’s art is his studied dispassionateness. R.K. Narayan’s own personality is not involved any where in his narratives. He looks at things from a distance so he is able to narrate the things as they are without any subjectivity. We see objectivity and detachment throughout all this novels.

As R.K. Narayan says of Margayya, “He drew a lot of distinction between ‘Wealthy’ and ‘Rich’ .......... Riches any hard working fool could attain by some watchfulness, while acquiring wealth was an extraordinary specialized job”52.

Narayan describes the situation of 1939-45 when men indulged in money making through black marketing. In the story we see that being a wealthy man of his town, he acquires a new kind of life but he remains as he was in the beginning – He does not like to live in luxury as he says –

“The best way to call was to shout “Boy” and keep shouting till the boy’s ear drums split and he came running. All this tinkling calling bell stuff was a waste of time. You were not a shepherd playing on a flute calling back your flock!”53

The whole novel moves around the theme of money, which is merely a false attachment. In his obsessive desire to acquire more and more money Margayya consults a temple
priest to know ways to become the richest man of the town. The priest offers milk. When Margayya pushes away the tumbler, the priest says that he should not push away the tumbler of milk, “Milk is one of the forms of Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth. When you reject it or treat it indifferently, it means you reject her”.54

The priest tells him to arrange for a red lotus, pure ghee, and milk drawn from a smoke coloured cow. He goes through these arrangements and sets forth for 40 days japa for winning the favour of Goddess Lakshmi.

The priest tells Margayya that Saturn is the most powerful entity in the world. So he had to be pleased and satisfied with prayers. He can make one the ruler of the world or plunge one into the ocean of misery. So Margayya should go to the temple and circumambulate its corridor thrice on every Saturday.

Margayya asks if it would be effective and produce results. The priest replies that a Sanyasi needs to be detached from worldly possessions. When Margayya asks the priest about the advantages of Mantras and performing Puja he says that since he is a Sanyasi he has no need all these worldly satisfactions.

“The Shastras lay down such and such rituals for such and such ends. Between a man who performs them and one who doesn’t, the chances are greater for the former. That is all I can say. The results are..... you may have results or you may not... or you may have results and wish that you had failed”.55
The Policeman says to Margayya that he is doing his duty here as policeman dealing with wrong doers and political criminals for twenty years. At this Margayya comments, “As they say in Bhagwad-Gita, God helps those who do their duty”.56

Although he had better knowledge of good or bad and right or wrong even then he always indulged in wrong things for money. He was foolishly attached with money and detached from his duties and responsibilities towards his son.

Margayya’s ego and possessive hold over his box is so massive that he uses abusive language to the bank secretary when he touches the box. Becoming excited he commented—“Things have come to this, have they when every earth-worm pretends that it is a Cobra and tries to sway its hood”57 implying that the Secretary is as lowly as a earthworm. He himself is of course a Cobra swaying its hood having the power to touch the box.

The route to riches is traced by Narayan in full ironic tone. Margayya becomes rich with the help of Dr. Pal who is a journalist. Pal offers him his book to publish and this gets Margayya a lot of money. Having become rich Margayya becomes acutely self conscious about everything. His German umbrella is a valued symbol of his special status. He does not like to offer this umbrella even to a person who was suffering from pneumonia. The novel traces his increasing egotism that follows after his enhanced rich status. He gradually becomes more rude and ruthless. Money is his obsession.
“People went to horrifying lengths for its sake, like collecting rent on a dead body”.58

He wants more and more money to keep up his reputation and his son Balu so that he will be respected by everyone. He is much conscious about his reputation. When the Secretary sends his peon to call him he comments, “Tell your Secretary that if he is a Secretary, I’m really the proprietor of a bank, and that he can come here and meet me if he has any business.”59

He used to think that the Secretary treats him insolently due to his financial condition like this. He wants to show that he is also equal in status as he. Due to his inferiority complex he behaved abnormally. He thinks to himself that if he had been dressed like the Secretary he would never have to snatch the paper from my box but “I looked like a way-side barber”60

He thought that money everything will bring us respectability naturally, “Everything else will come to us naturally if we have money in our purse”.61 “If money was absent men came near being beasts”.62

It is only money which helps a man to be civilized and reputed.

Every rupee seemed to him as a seed for generating another rupee. It was like the sky which was full of endless stars and within each star there was an endless sky.

Margayya wanted more and more money. The book business seemed to him a business which was fit for youngsters like Balu. During the conversation with Dr. Pal he
expressed his ideas about money. Money is the greatest need of life but people do not know how to increase it. When we plant a sapling it is necessary to arrange water, air and sunlight so that it can grow and survive to provide us flowers and fruits. In the same way we should know how to increase our money. The people who do not know to take care of it eat the plant itself.

Margayya was like a fanatical mountaineer who was eager to reach the top of the Everest. At the top he did not feel that he had reached the top. In the same way Margayya wanted to be the richest man. Although he earned a lot even then he wanted more and more money.

Margayya was very attached to his son Balu. In Lal’s office when he was served Jalebis and other coloured sweets and coffee, he thought it would be good to carry a bit of this sweet for Balu at home.

He wanted that his son Balu should be highly qualified but he always got zero marks in his progress card. After becoming rich first of all he took charge of the school. He was so attached to his son that he was often unreasonable. When Balu told Margayya that his Science teacher used to beat the students, Margayya remarked,

“You go and tell him that he is merely a miserable science peon and nothing more, and if he tries to show off I will cut off his tail”.

He bought a table lamp with green shade because it is good for eyes. He also bought a car for his son to go to school.
in, so that people will say “Well, there goes Margayya’s son. Lucky fellows, these sons of businessmen”.64

Margayya wanted that his son should be highly qualified and became a true follower of God. Getting up early in the morning first of all he should perform his prayer, then turn to other things such as breakfast. One day, noticing Balu finishing his prayers hastily, Margayya commented-

“God is not like your drill class, to go and dawdle about half-heartedly. You must have your heart in it”.65

Maragayya told Balu he was prosperous due to his prayers which he preformed concentrating his mind on the Goddess. Balu taunted him, “I know it is a different Goddess you worshipped. It is that Goddess Lakshmi”.66

Due to the overdose of love, affection and money Balu now became obstinate. He used to roam on the roads, till late night. When Meenakshi the mother of Balu talks to Margayya about their son, he becomes frustrated and answered, “He is not my son”.67

“A boy who has a utter disregard for his father’s feelings is no son. He is a curse that the Gods have sent down for us”.68

Margayya wept on getting the news of his son’s death. He did not know how to react. His mind went on piecing together the picture of his son as he had last seen him. He felt angry thinking about the exams. He exclaimed, “Examinations: they were a curse on the youth of the nation, the very greatest menace that the British had brought with them to India”.69
Margayya wanted that his son should be a moral individual and a civilized child. When he demanded ghee with his food he told him. “learn to be contented with what you get”.70 It showed that he knew every moral law but himself did not follow it she loved her son very much then she narrates a story of Gora kumhar a potter and a devotee of God Vishnu. He did not care his family. At meal his son demanded Ghee like Balu. His mother went to the next door to fetch Ghee leaving the son in care of his father who was stamping on wet clay.

After that he got into a mystic ecstasy and started dancing without noticing his son. His son crawled under his feet. When his mother returned she saw that her son was stamped with mud.

Getting the news of Balu’s death Margayya started thinking about his business how it would go on in his absence. When he found his son alive he decided to marry him off with the richest person’s daughter. Finally, with the help of Sastri, he selected a girl who was the daughter of the owner of a tea estate. When Sastri told him about the status of bridal side he pretended to be idealistic and answered “I don’t believe in it Sastri.... It is not right to talk of status and such things in these days. You know I’m a man who has had to work hard to make money and keep it. But I never for a moment feel that I am superior to anyone on earth. I feel that even the smallest child in the road is my equal in status”.

Margayya was afraid of the thought that any one should know that he belonged to the family of corpse bearers. At the
same time he consoled himself that his financial condition overshadowed everything.

He did not like to acquire property. He wanted only money and money to fill his tin box. There was no use of this property, which was made of brick and lime or mud.

Margayya believed in horoscope; so he called an astrologer who declared that the horoscopes of Balu and Brinda were like soap and oil hence there was no match between the two.

He tempted the priest that he would pay him one rupee more if he would match the horoscope, but the priest said,

“The seventh and ninth houses in your son’s horoscope are... are not quite sound. The girl’s marriage possibilities are the purest. The two horoscopes cannot match- they are like soap and oil”.72

At the climax of the novel Balu returned home. Margayya became very happy clutching the baby to his bosom. But looking at Balu he was very much disturbed because he had lost all his radiance which was present when he had money.

In the beginning of the novel it is disclosed that Margayya had three sisters so his father gave everything in dowry for his sister’s marriage and nothing is left for both of them.

“Five cart-loads of paddy came to us every half year, from the fields. We just heaped them up on the floor of the hall, we had five halls to our house; but where has it all
gone? To the three daughters. By the time my father found husbands for them there was nothing left for us to eat at home!”

After the death of his father the sons started quarrelling and became involved in litigation and divided everything among themselves.

“Everything that could be cut in two with an axe or scissors or a knife was divided between them..... But one thing that could neither be numbered nor cut up was the backyard of the house with its single well”. The water well fell to Margayya’s share but people insisted that Margayya should allow the well to remain common property “the well acting as a blockade between the two brothers”

Margayya felt elation due to the combination of burning oil of lamp, flowers and candle which were offered to God performing Puja. Margayya felt detached from all worldly worries such as the problem of Arul Doss, the bank secretary, money and his son who dropped his red note book into a gutter, ..... “The faint, acrid smell of oil seemed to detach him from all worries for a moment”.

The Hindu Devis Saraswati and Lakshmi are described as jealous goddesses, “when Saraswathi favours a man, the other Goddess withdraws her favours”.

Both are the rivals of each other. If goddess Lakshmi favours a man then he will be the richest man but all his good qualities disappear because he only thinks about money which is the root of all evils. On the other hand with the favour of Goddess Saraswati a man will be full of knowledge
of right and wrong. But it is impossible for him to be the richest man.

Narayan described Vinayak Mudali Street near a temple which contained an image of Hanuman, the God of power. Here Narayan gave many details about Hanuman. The God pressed one foot on the very spot where the temple is situated now. He sprang across space and ocean then landed in Lanka (Ceylon) to destroy Ravana who was the most powerful king with ten heads and twenty hands.

This novel discusses the theme of sex Dr. Pal mentioned Vatsyayana’s work ‘Kama Sutra’, the science of love. This book was based on this science so that every man and woman who understood it might be happier in this world and got all the worldly pleasures Pal described it as a work of sociology.

Dr. Pal told Margayya that in this world there are two things that occupy men’s mind every moment. They are money and sex. Margayya felt embarrassed and said that there were many things to think about such as the problem of his son. Dr. Pal answered how can you think about his son without thinking of his wife.

Dr. Pal told Margayya he is not fond of money, “I treat money as dirt”.78

At this Margayya is shocked. He knows how sensitive the Goddess Lakshmi is. If a man rejects a tumbler of milk she fled away without granting grace to the devotee.

Narayan’s characters are realistic and life-like and the heroes are immortal. R.K. Narayan himself said in one
interview, “My focus is all on character, if his personality comes alive, the rest is easy for me”.

Using his skill as a novelist, he picturized the characters of Margayya and Dr. Pal successfully. Margayya was an apostle of money and Pal was an apostle of sex.

Narayan picturized two types of women characters as
i) typical Indian woman; and ii) butterfly-like woman-

Meenakshi is a typical Indian woman she waited for Margayya in the kitchen spreading out two leaves. She felt pleased doing so like a typical Indian wife.

When Margayya returned with his son Balu, everyone was eager to know what had happened. Margayya told his brother to talk later when the boy would be out of hearing. At this his brother’s wife became angry and said –

“Even if their house is on fire, let us not go near them again”.

On becoming insolvent Margayya wanted that his son Balu should start his own business of filling the loan and application forms for the villagers under the same banyan tree with the same tin box, which was his ancestral property. But Balu refused, and Margayya himself started his business with the same social status as he had in the starting of his career as a financial expert. Narayan described Margayya in a round circle as in the starting we see, he conducts his business under the bunyan tree and at the end of the novel he is back on the same location with his shabby clothes and a tin box. But this Margayya is quite different from that money manic Margayya of the early pages. Now he is
completely changed. Money has no value for him. He has become aware of the reality of life and the difference between attachment and detachment.
The Guide:

Narayan wrote this novel between 1956 and 1958 when he was in the United States of America. At that time there was a severe drought in Mysore and all rivers and tanks had dried up. The Municipal Council had organized a prayer and Brahmans stood knee-deep in water and other people fasted and chanted Mantras continuously for eleven days. On the twelfth day it rained and everyone felt relief all over the countryside. This event afforded an idea to R.K Narayan to set the story of this novel. During his sojourn in America he stayed in Berkeley for three months and started writing this novel.

Raju, the hero is the son of a petty burgess who has built a house and which is opposite to his old house and a shop away from the city and near the bullock cart stand by Trunk Road. He sells peppermint, fruit, tobacco, betel leaf and parched gram to the wayfarers.

After the death of his father Raju develops the shop to increase his business of book selling which also provides him a chance of reading different types of books. This ancillary knowledge comes useful to him when he comes in contact with the tourists from the various corners of India who were on sightseeing trips at Malgudi. Soon he was transformed from Raju to 'Railway Raju' and then came to be known Raju as Guide. He was hired by tourists to show them the various sights of the neighbouring Mempi Hills and the caves. After some time he quit his book selling business, handing it over
to his assistant, a railway porter’s son and took up the more attractive career as guide.

Raju was at the peak of confidence and pride in his job as a tourist guide, when he met Rosie who was lovely and pretty. Although she belonged to the family of Devadasis she was brought up in a different atmosphere by her mother. She got her M.A. degree in Economics due to her mother’s efforts. Unfortunately she was married off to a person who was a scholar and completely different in nature from Rosie and devoted to his work in studying the paintings and ancient art. Her life was one of discontented luxury.

Raju, who falls in love with Rosie the moment he sees her, exploits the differences between her and her husband. He arouses in her an acute awareness of her talent and passion for dancing and holds before her a vision of a bright future to be a great dancer. But when she informs her husband that she is going to start her career as a dancer with the help of Raju, her husband was very sharp and smells her betrayal and adultery. Finally he decided to leave Malgudi for Madras and settle in his hometown, abandoning his unfaithful wife to her own lot. Left alone with no alternative, Rosie turns to Raju. Her career as a stage dancer is launched. Raju arranges her shows in cities and towns of South India. Now their life is completely changed and they live in a stylish manner in a double storeyed house with a car and a number of servants. Her popularity now reaches its peak. While they are leading a happy life, there occurs an incident. Rosie’s husband sends a form for her signature so
that she can release her jewellery box. Raju does not tell Rosie and signs it himself in Rosie’s name. Soon he is charged of forgery by the police and sentenced to two years imprisonment.

After the prison term is over, he takes refuge in an old temple by the river. There he meets a peasant called Velan who seeks his advice mistaking him for a holy saint. Somehow Velan’s domestic problems are solved. Soon Raju becomes famous as a holy man among the peasants. Once in the district when the crops get scorched and the cattle begin to die for want of grass and water; the peasants go to him for getting his help asking him to pray for them. They request him to perform a penance to the Rain-God. Raju finds no way out in such a critical condition. He takes Velan into confidence and narrates to him the story of this past sinful life. Raju expects that it will lower him in the eyes of the simple and honest peasant who will rebuke him for deceiving them. Perhaps Raju even hopes that Velan will drive him out of the sacred temple and then, he would be saved from the dangerous ordeal of Swamihood and the fast. Velan however promises to keep it a secret. Finding no alternative reluctantly Raju is forced to undertake a fourteen-day fast, which gets worldwide popularity.

Velan’s deep empathetic understanding of Raju’s confessional rests on R.K. Narayan’s insight into the Indian attitude to sin. For Velan it suffices that Raju has repented. He sees a true Swami in front of him. Raju’s confessional can
only deepen Velan’s faith in Raju and he will further respect him for his moral courage and his later spiritual growth.

This novel is rich in narrative technique. It also delves into the cultural ethos of the nation. Velan had come from Mangal village and was going to visit his sister and his daughter was also married to his sister’s son. He says “I often visit my sister and also my daughter; and so no one minds it”\textsuperscript{81}. In India people do not like to stay or eat at a sister’s or a daughter’s house. In the Hindu ethical sense a kanya (girl child) is goddess Lakshmi. All men are debtors of the kanya so how can any father eat at her kitchen? The Kanya has to be given all that one can give and one cannot take away anything from the girl child.

The descriptive details are charming and evidence the keen power of the author’s observant eye. Narayan describes Rosie in very minute detail. “She looked just the orthodox dancer that she was. She wore sarees of bright hues and gold lace, had curly hair which she braided and beflowered, wore diamond ear-rings and a heavy gold necklace”\textsuperscript{82}

Likewise, Marco’s picture is very clear “he dressed like a man about to undertake an expedition with his thick coloured glasses, thick jacket, and a thick helmet over which was perpetually stretched a green, shiny water proof cover, giving him the appearance of a space-traveller”\textsuperscript{83}.

The first turning point of Raju’s life comes as Rosie arrives at Malgudi station. He is much attracted to her so neglecting his job as a guide he busies himself in walking or talking with Rosie. From a tourist guide now he turns into a
lovers. Before the arrival of Rosie he was very much dedicated to his work. He "felt at home on the railway platform". Vignettes of Indian customs, attitudes and beliefs are embedded in the narrative.

Narayan's protagonist Raju starts his morning with prayers to God and then work. He says "I washed myself at the well, smeared holy ash on my forehead stood before the framed picture of Gods hanging high up on the wall, and recited all kinds of sacred verses in a loud, ringing tone".

Velan's simple faith in Raju the Swami is not unattended by expectations of good results. The faith is consolidated by proof of the Swami's extraordinary powers. Every one accepts him as a saint and a benefactor. Velan's recalcitrant wayward sister comes to her senses. After getting married she comes to bow before him. She tells every one, "he doesn't speak to anyone but if he looks at you, you are changed". People used to say, "It is our good fortune that this great soul should have come to live in our midst" with a touch of Irony, Narayan reports that his hero Raju is not ungrateful. He was thankful for all that was provided as edibles fruits and food by the villagers.

Narayan's hero Raju has a deep ingrained knowledge of philosophy. His preaching style is attractive and can win people over. On the side of Irony, even in his sainthood Raju was self-centered and arrogant. He called the villagers 'fools'. He told them if you brought food for me, leave it here and leave me also in peace because "all things have to wait their hour". It is philosophically correct because everything will
happen at the right time. Suddenly he would changed his mind saying that now he had to attend to the children to finish their lesson and so he would talk to them another day. Raju preached philosophically, asking them “to think independently, of your own accord and not allow yourselves to be led about by the nose as if you were cattle.”

Raju philosophically said that everyone has the passion of sainthood but it needs to be awakened. “The essence of sainthood seemed to lie in one’s ability to utter mystifying statements. ‘until you try, how can you know what you can or cannot do?’

Raju had no personal limitations. He allowed his influence as Swami to become total. He used to prescribe herbal medicines and solved the disputes and quarrels over the decisions of ancestral property with a spontaneous diplomacy and easy wisdom of a confident leader.

A man came to Raju to discuss his problem about his sister’s marriage. As he departed he tried to touch the feet of Raju; then philosophically Raju said, “He will destroy us if we attempt to usurp His rights.” We cannot bow our head to anyone. We can only touch the feet of God. No one can deserve such respect.

Everywhere Indian culture and Indian life is seen in R.K Narayan’s novels when Raju is offered food he makes the first offering of the edibles to God “it is His first. Let the offering go to Him first; and we will eat the remnant. By giving to God, do you know how it multiplies, rather than divides?”
Narayan’s writings are also enriched by Buddha’s teaching. As this materialistic world is full of problems. No one is happy in this world. Raju’s childhood memories, mothers stories and random readings help him in dealing with the villagers. He says to a harried devotee, “if you show me a person without a problem, then I’ll show you the perfect world”.

“If you show me a single home without a problem, I shall show you the way to attain a universal solution to all problems.”

Raju’s repertoire of philosophic text also included narratives from great men’s preachings. Once he narrates the story of a woman who went wailing to the great Buddha holding her dead baby to her bosom Buddha said, “Go into every home in this city and find one where death is unknown; If you find such a place, fetch me a handful of mustard from there, and then I’ll teach you how to conquer death”.

It means that death is definite and certain. Everyone and everything, which is born has to die. So you have to accept it.

“The thing to do is to start from a corner and go on patch to patch. Never work from the top to the horizon.”

Narayan was also familiar with child psychology so through his characters he presents his thoughts As Raju says. “The unbeaten brat will remain unlearned’ said my father,”. His father used to teach him Tamil alphabet practising with slate. Raju’s memories of his father are sharp and clear.
Whenever his father saw that customers had arrived in the shop but the boy had not learned his lesson then he would comment— in an aphoristic manner “I have better things to do of a morning than make a genius out of a clay head.”

Narayan represents a really great picture of the Indian panorama of life. When Raju went to market with his father. He clambered in the bullock cart and enjoyed himself. “The bells around the bulls’ neck jingled, the wooden wheels grated and ground the dust off the rough road; I clung to the staves on the sides and felt my bones shaken. Still, I enjoyed the smell of the straw in the cart and all the scenes we passed.”

In Indian villages people used to sit around a platform in the centre of the village, discussing the rains. There was also a brick pyol which was built around the ancient Peepul tree. The Peepul tree was anointed with oil and worshipped. There children played chasing each other and people solved the local problems while women were carrying loaded baskets such description creates a real picture of rural India before our eyes.

Every evening Raju’s mother like a typical Indian woman had to wait for her husband when he used to come after closing the shop.

Narayan’s novels comment on family relationships of father and son, husband and wife. Raju never dared to disturb his father whenever he was busy with his companions at night but gently coughing and clearing his
throat reminded his father of food and time so that he could be made to turn in. Everyone respects and understands the temper of each other. The father would say, “Tell her to place a handful of rice and buttermilk in a bowl, with just one piece of lime-pickle, and keep it on the oven for me.”

Rosie was caring for her husband like an Indian wife. Narayan characterized Rosie a modern woman with little touches of the Indian traditional wife. When Macro did not take the food she also did not touch it. She tells Joseph to serve him and she would eat alone in the kitchen. She also forced Marco and Raju to eat first and said, “I will be the last to eat, like a good house wife.”

Raju’s mother was very attached to him. Usually she ran her fingers through his hair and scratching the nape of his neck started a story. She was also caring when she left the house because of Rosie. Her parting words to Raju were “Don’t fail to light the lamps in God’s niche” “Be careful with your health”. Narayan minutely observes the mother-son relationship. When young Raju went to school his mother fed him early and filled the tiffin for afternoon. She carefully arranged his bag and dressed him up and combed his hair. Father was also caring. He was a disciplinarian. He always kept an eye on him. His father felt proud that his son used to go to school.

Education is a major theme of R. K. Narayan’s novels, education of children being a matter of great concern of parents in those days. Young children like Raju used to feel proud to get admission in the fashionable mission schools.
But in *Guide*, Raju’s father never liked this because he thought, “It seems they try to convert our boys into Christians and are all the time insulting our gods.” For Raju’s father the Indian school was the best under the sun.

Railway Raju used to feel proud as a guide and told his mother that it was better for him to be known even in Lucknow instead of handing out matches and tobacco. He used to think of himself “as a part-time shopkeeper and a full-time tourist guide.”

He was very sharp and whenever he got the glimpse of a tourist he attended on him alacrity and asked him frankly whether he would like to go to hotel in a taxi or a jutka. He was confident that he could manage everything within a time limit because he knows every corner of Malgudi historically, scenically, from the point of view of modern developments, pilgrims, temples etc. ‘what is your taste Sir?’ In his career as Guide he had learnt that everyone had different tastes. “No two persons were interested in the same thing. Taste, as in food, differs also in sightseeing.”

Raju’s picture as a lover is very well portrayed shown by Narayan. He found that Rosie was so lovely and elegant. “She did have a figure, a slight and slender one, beautifully fashioned, eyes that sparkled, a complexion, not white, but dusky, which made her only half visible as if you saw her through a film of tender coconut juice.” Flattering Rosie he forced her to come out with him. He would add “who would decorate a rainbow?”
According to Raju, Rosie is a perfect woman with perfect beauty. He felt that his life was blank without her. Rosie was also described by Narayan as a snake woman. Both the turning points of Raju’s life come to him due to Rosie’s entrance and departure. When Rosie met Raju at Malgudi station he was very much attracted towards her beauty and youthfulness. This was a journey of Raju’s life from a tourist guide to a lover. Rosie’s departure from his life helps him embark on his journey towards Swamihood.

Nature is also described beautifully in *The Guide* “the jungle stretched away down to the valley, and on a clear day you might see also the Sarayu sparkling in the sun and pursuing its own course far away.”

Rosie loved the natural landscape but her husband had no interest. Both had different tastes.

Raju told Marco “what a treasure you have in your hand, without realizing its worth-like a monkey picking up a rose garland!”

Marco was not attracted by Rosie’s beauty. He married her only to have someone to look after him. Caste system was at its peak in the fifties and Gandhiji tried to abolish it. Marco belonged to a high-class family and was highly qualified. He only wanted to marry a graduate girl so he advertised in the matrimonial columns: “Wanted an educated, good-looking girl to marry a rich bachelor of academic interests. No caste restrictions; good looks and University degree essential.”
Raju’s uncle also commented on Rosie when she came to settle there. “Are you of our caste or class? No? Then what are you doing here? Go away”.

Rosie rides on two boats. Whenever her husband is out she enjoys herself with Raju and when she returns to her husband she wants to be a good Indian wife. One day she scolds Raju and tells him to go and leave her alone. Raju’s surprised comment is “This woman who had been in my arms forty-eight hours ago was showing off. Many insulting and incriminating remarks welled up in my throat”.

Marco always commented ironically on Rosie’s dance. He never liked her to dance. He called her dance a “street acrobatics” and said “we watch a monkey perform, not because it is artistic, but because it is a monkey that is doing it”.

Rosie realizes her sin, that she developed a relationship with Raju in the absence of Marco. Raju’s mother commented on Rosie, “she is a real snake- woman”.

Raju also realizes that he had committed a mistake. “I felt a regret at the rift that had developed between me and my mother”. She wrote a postcard but in return he only sent money to his mother.

She also calls Rosie “saithan” (a devil). When Raju misbehaves with his mother, she says it is not you but the saithan within you (means Rosie) who forces you to do all this.

Raju thought of Rosie as his own property when she changed her name to Nalini. He never liked her to talk to
other people for long “I liked her to be happy- but only in my company.”\textsuperscript{118} It was Raju’s attachment with Rosie which leads Raju to his ruin.

Raju tried to hide his lapses regarding money from Rosie but it was impossible for him. He told himself, “Nothing in this world can be hidden or suppressed. All such attempts are like holding an umbrella to conceal the sun”\textsuperscript{119}

Rosie changes her sides in the face of Raju’s treachery. She is regretful of her own choices and comments about Marco, “He tolerated my company for nearly a month, even after knowing what I had done”.\textsuperscript{120} Rosie realizes her mistake, and when Raju talks to her about her rich possessions her name as a famous dancer, Rosie tells herself “I feel like one of those parrots in a cage taken around village-fairs or a performing monkey”\textsuperscript{121}. Now she completely realizes her mistake and enters into a real world where she understands what is right for her.

Here Narayan shows the philosophy regarding desires and expectations. Once they are achieved they have no value. Rosie’s case was the same.

Neither Marco nor Raju had any place in her life.

Rosie faced a lot of problems. She is characterized by Narayan as a woman of modern India, Rosie’s path was not strewn with roses but full of thorns. Raju’s own life has been one of evolutions through gradual growth of self-awareness. Surrounding by ordinariness of life Raju disregarded ‘good’ in its serious worth. He performed evil acts because he treated ‘good’ with indifference. But in the village of Mangala, he was
supposed by goodness, trust and faith. The ‘evil’ of self-interest slowly waned away. It was the first time when Raju was not personally interested. Due to Velan’s half-witted brother’s misunderstanding Raju was forced to preserve the fast. At the end he thought to himself that if it can bring comfort to the village he should do what was needed, "If by avoiding food I should help the trees bloom, and the grass grow, why not do it thoroughly?"  

When an English man James J. Malone asks Raju 'how do you like it?' Raju answers, "I am only doing what I have to do; that is all. My likes and dislikes do not count." 

In Guide Narayan again engages with the philosophy of Karma. That man should think only about his doings and duties not about his own or personal likes and dislikes. Raju really turns into a complete real detached saint, who is attached to the only reality that is karma and detached with the false fancy and expectations that are the reasons of sadness.
The Sweet Vendor:

In *The Sweet Vendor* Narayan explored various themes such as Gandhiana, education, and Indian tradition, life-view based on *Bhagwad Geeta, Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* etc. In short we can say it is a story of *Maya* and *Karma* both interconnected. If we are betrayed by *Maya*, we will not be able to fulfill our real *Karma* (responsibilities). On the other hand if we fulfill our responsibilities we will never be betrayed by Maya. Bruce F. MacDonald has commented about this novel: “Narayan explores a psychological theme which is intimately Indian, yet is also profoundly human in an international sense”.

The novel starts like this “Conquer Taste and you will have conquered the Self”. This sentence is enriched with the advice of sages. Although Jagan himself does not know, the full implication, he follows it. Indian scriptures and Gandhian views all have great value for him. It is his strong belief to follow all the advice without knowing why it has been given.

Jagan is a true worshipper of Lakshmi. His spiritual and practical life is blended with each other as the smell of incense stick with pure ghee. He is eager to fulfill his duties in both the parts. Every morning he “offered prayers first thing in the day by reverently placing a string of Jasmine on top of the frame; he also lit an incense stick.... and imperceptibly blended with the fragrance of sweetmeats frying in ghee, in the kitchen across the hall.”
Jagan followed the philosophy that we should help and serve others in life. Mali and Jagan both have contrasting views. Through both the characters Narayan presented conflict between tradition and modernity. Mali does not like to study. He tore his book and put it into the fire. Jagan told his cousin to stop him because “books must be treated respectfully, being a form of the goddess Saraswati? How could this boy ever pass his B.A.?"  

Jagan is sailing in both the ships. He is attached to his son Mali and his concern for Indian Goddesses. Mali wanted to go America to learn the art of novel writing. At this his cousin tells Jagan about the story of Kalidas who never went to school or college but under the blessings of Goddess Saraswati he wrote Abhigyan Shakuntalam. In the same way Mali will be the next Kalidasa.

Jagan arranged furniture made of bamboo and Margosa leaves for his daughter in law. She was a German girl. She does not know what is Margosa Jagan said, “Margosa is the ambrosia mentioned in our Vedas”.  

Jagan also told Grace: “Vedas have emanated from God’s feet”.  

Jagan was very much attached to his son Mali. He feels proud at the height and weight of his son. Jagan himself prepared nutritious food for his good health. Knowing the ideas of Mali regarding writing novels, Jagan also tried his best to support him narrating the stories of Panchatantra. Although Mali was not inclined to understand his father. Even then every morning he left a five rupee note for his son.
This was the only connection which remained. Jagan asked his cousin that now a days Mali is upset, but “I have never upset him in all my life”.\textsuperscript{130}

At the end of the novel Mali was caught in a trap. He was driving the car and the Police arrested him with a bottle of alcohol in his car. Jagan asked his cousin, who visited Mali in jail, “Did you give him anything to eat? He must have been hungry”.\textsuperscript{131}

Jagan believes in Gandhian philosophy. He was in favour on non violence. He used to wear leather shoes. “The leather he uses for his footwear has come from animals which have died a natural death.”\textsuperscript{132} He does not like to slaughter animals for his own benefit.

He also uses the pure ghee and cow’s milk for making the sweets. Jagan spins charkha daily for his loose jibba and dhoti. He always used Margosa twings to clean his teeth. He did not like to have a toothbrush made of pig’s tail bristles. It is not good to put it in our mouth every morning. Using Morgosa his father had not lost even a single tooth at the age of ninety. So he calls it “Sanjeevini”.\textsuperscript{133} Jagan wanted that his son should follow his Gandhian theory of simple living and high thinking.

Narayan also portrayed the picture of the panorama of India. He calls the beggars, “a disgrace to the nation”.\textsuperscript{134} Dowry system is also described. Jagan’s wife was always pinched by his mother due to the gold belt. Jagan told his mother, “This is the latest fashion; nowadays the girls do not want to be weighed down with all that massive gold”.\textsuperscript{135}
A conflict between tradition and modernity is presented by Narayan. Mali returns with Grace who is not his wife. Both of them used to live together. Due to this Jagan was annoyed. Jagan did not like the idea. How can you live with a girl with whom you are not married. Jagan says, "She was living in sin and talking casually about it all".136

According to our holy scriptures we should follow Dharma and following it we have to enter in Grhasta Ashram with a ceremony of marriage. In defiance of Jagan's views Mali advised the people of India to start beef eating so that the problem of useless cattle may be solved. At this Jagan says, "The shastras defined the five deadly sins and the killing of a cow headed the list".137

Jagan says, "money is an evil".138 All the trouble in this world comes due to it. So it is the origin of all troubles. We can live without it happily. He was very much conscious about the poor people. Some poor children were watching at the sweet counter. Captain shouted at them but Jagan told, "give them each a packet and then send them away".139

Theory of Karma is also represented in this novel. Jagan prepared a flat and made arrangements of food for his son Mali and Grace.

He tells if they do not like it they can live and eat anywhere. It is his duty to arrange for the comfort of his family. "One can only do one's duty up to a point. Even in the Gita you find it mentioned. The limits of one's duty is well defined".140
The theme of this novel moves around the relationship of father and son. Depicting the relationship of father and son Narayan critically visualized the East-West conflict as it influenced the way of living and thinking of the two generation. O.P. Mathur writes: “It is in *The Vendor of Sweets* that the East-West Polarisation is dramatized powerfully with all its ironies and tragic implications through the two major characters Jagan and Mali in their exaggerations, and conflict”.141

The eastern way of life is changing in the face of the western way of life. Specially the Hindu way of life based on ritual and holy scripture with their values unaffected by time was also changing. Tara Malhotra also comments:

“Jagan’s altruistic pose, his Benthamite zeal for public service, and ostensible high regard for Gandian tenets bespeak a Pecksniffian hypocrite, we have not to scratch deep to discover a very ordinary person with the most ordinary person with the most ordinary feelings and foibles”.142 The strength of the hero is his belief which he acquired from the reading of *Bhagwad Gita*, his prayers to Goddess Lakshmi and his empathy towards Indian culture and tradition too. He projected his own rules of living in this world all of them were based on Gandhian ideology and the teachings of Lord Krishna. He wanted that his son should be well educated as well as cultured and well mannered but inspite of Jagan’s intense care and affection he has turned into an obstinate and self centred son. He does not try to understand the feelings of his father. Although both have to
live under the same roof the relationship between them only remains a formality. He always thinks about the betterment of his son Jagan had the ambition of an Indian father, but Mali shattered all. He did not allow his son to go to Africa because he is an ardent follower of Gandhi and Indian tradition.

“Did Valmiki go to America or Germany in order to learn to write Ramayana?”143

Jagan’s traditional ideas were clashed with Mali’s writer feelings and way of living. Indian traditions and values play no role in Mali’s life. Harry Puckett says:

“The essence of Narayan’s work lies in the ironic interplay between two worlds, the personal and cultural conflicts arising from this interplay but also the moving and unexpected nobility of everybody life”.144

Like every Indian father Jagan reacts negatively when Mali confesses his decision to go to America. But Jagan excitingly reads Mali’s letter rather than the Bhagwad Gita. He was fascinated with America. He always used to think and talk about western people and the buildings of America etc. Here Narayan clearly showed the conflict between modernization and westernization. Mary Beatina comments: “Narayan recognizes the problem of modernization and westernization after which he leaves to his readers the resolution of the problem. Without taking sides, he portrays how the struggle as experienced by Chandran, Raju and Mali.”145
Mali appreciated the western ideas strongly. The problem of starvation can be solved in India by eating beef. In one of his letters to his father he suggests: I want to suggest why do Indians not start to eat beef. “It will solve the problem of useless cattle in our country and we would not have to beg food from America. I sometime feel ashamed when India asks for American aid.”

Jagan spoke about the importance of a cow but Mali was not ready to understand him. The novel also comments on the conflict of moral values. According to A.N. Kaul:

“Jagan is upset by the values of the man and woman of the new generation, with whom his own cherished notions of marriage and morals seem to count for nothing. He is agitated by the thought that he has been fooled by the young people and that the house which has remained unchanged for generations, has now this blot to carry”.

Jagan fails in regaining the peace of mind so he decides to go into the woods and live the life of retirement. Mali’s rough behaviour was responsible for Jagan’s declaration of retirement. Dr. R.A. Singh says:

“Self realization compels him to break away with his son and his long cherished notions of marriage and moral. He escapes from the chains of the vicious world of his son”.

The clash between Indian spiritualism and western materialism is presented by Jagan and Mali. Both have no reverence each other so they always think in contrast of each other.
Jagan is a sweet meat vendor but he himself does not like the tasty edible. He prepares for himself saltfree food and drinks the water which was kept in the mud vessel. "I don't drink more than four ounces of water a day', said Jagan, 'and that must be boiled at night and cooled in a mud jug open to the sky". Jagan tells Grace that he prepares his food himself. "he ate to live only on what he could cook with his own hands... salt free and sugar free food".

Grace was a German girl but she knows very well the rules and duties of an Indian woman she tells, "as it is a Friday, I have remembered my duties as a Hindu wife. I have also washed the door-steps and decorated the threshold with white flour".

Mali decided that Grace should go back. At this Jagan told him, "but a wife must be with her husband, whatever happens".

This sentence reminds us the incident of Ramayana when Ram goes into the forest for fourteen years. At this Sita said that it is her dharma to stay with her husband even in sorrow and happiness, punishment and reward.

At the end of the novel Jagan decides to go to forest for Vanprasth Ashram. This is the third stage of human life, all for being: Brahmacharya, Ghrashta Vanprastha and Sanyasa Ashram. It is the only novel of Narayan in which he showed that his hero is going to shelter into the forest at the age of sixty. Narayan was also sixty years old whom he wrote the novel. "One enters a new life at the appointed time and it is foolish to resist".
According to the *Vanprastha Ashram* he left all his responsibilities for his son, “I’ll leave you in charge of the shop, It’s yours, Take it”.$^{154}$
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