Characterization

From plot-construction to characterization is to return from fictional incidents and situations to the "familiar world of human personality." The relationship between the author and his character is not as we are to other people, his relationship to him is "god-like." So, creation of a character in a work of art is mostly an expression of the hidden creative power of the author, and it is beyond one's grasp what mysterious power does help him to create and enliven a character, the fact that may prompt many to opine that the subject of character creation cannot be a technique in a novelistic form. This sort of concept cannot be brushed off altogether, but it is also true that for him who writes fiction regularly by taking his craft seriously character creation is not a hidden magical power, it is a conscious, careful method to render his people a dual aspect—"life-like and art-like." So, without going deep into the mystery behind character creation, it is better to search for the methods that the writer employs in his work to reveal the thoughts and moods of his persons in which are embodied his life values.

Twentieth century heard very often the declarations concerning the death of character. Many modern novelists like D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf denied various features considered to be the hallmarks of characters, they rejected the notion of stability modelled on a traditional view of Man and replaced it with the conception of change and diversity. The schools like Formalists, Structuralists, and individual critics like Barthes, Ferrara in tune with Aristotle subordinated character to action holding the view that characters are necessary only as "agents" or "performers" of the action. "What is obsolete in to-day's novel," says Barthes, "is not the novelistic, it is character; what can no longer be written is the Proper Name." But against this view, critics like E.M. Forster and B. I. for Evans subordinated action to character. Forster even went to quarrel mildly with Aristotle. For them, twentieth century novels are in fact the sum total of growth and development.
of personality it is 'exploration of the human personality.' At a later period, some diehard critics of character like Propp, Tomashevsky and Barthes reversed their views, and held the opinion that characters and actions are always in a reciprocal relationship, one determines the other and the two can never be separated. When Tomashevsky says, "Character is a guiding thread which makes it possible to untangle a conglomeration of motifs and permits them to be classified and arranged," and Barthes says that sequences as independent blocks are recuperated "at the higher level of the Action (of the characters)," they acknowledge the dominance of character over action in modern narratives.5

However, without being a party to the controversy whether character is more important than plot or vice-versa, it can be well said that in any literary work, especially in fiction, plot and character are inseparable, and it is almost difficult to discuss these two components in watertight compartments. In critical studies when action becomes the centre of attention, character study gets subordinated and when the interest shifts to character, action takes a back seat. In full agreement with Rimmon-Kenan we may take it as "legitimate to subordinate character to action when we study action . . . (and) equally legitimate to subordinate action to character when the latter is the focus of our study."6

With Narayan, the origin of a story is seldom an affair of plot; it is the representation of certain persons. The first form in which a tale appears to him is as the figure of an individual whom he wishes in action and who, he believes, must do something interesting in the scheme of life. For him, "... a novel is about an individual living his life imagined by the author,"7 and his (the author) "main concern is to focus on a central character from whose point of view the world is seen and who tries to get over a difficult situation or succumbs to it or fights it in his own setting.8 Thus giving the "Character in situation"9 primary place in his composition, Narayan "portrays the diverse experiences of an average human existence-dreams, anxieties, actions, frustrations and fulfillments or failures. Narayan's protagonists defy western parameters because, as Margarate Berry observes, "Western realism of characterization rests on a believable complexity of qualities of virtues and vices, strength and weakness. Narayan's characterization have a complexity of a
different kind—a complexity of roles, of lilas, derived from Indian classical literature.  

However, Narayan does not focus merely on a clash between the role and personality, nor does he present role as the only means of realizing personality; instead, he concentrates on how role and personality interact, sometimes reinforcing, sometimes conflicting, but always affecting each other dynamically. His protagonists are not what Narayan tends to make us believe that they are "an unchanged, unchanging, old self . . . (and) cannot be transformed;" they do change, but their change is in their realization of the futility of their persuasion after illusions of life, their change is at their psychic level. "They conflict and change as the story progresses," as Harvey says while defining the protagonist, but the conflict is more inward, the change is more internal. In their struggle, in their conflict with the hurdles of life, they get freed from their "hysterics," "illusions" and move towards attaining a sort of awakening that may be taken as the growth and development in them.

The present chapter aims at studying what methods does Narayan employ in his novels to reveal the moods, the illusions and passions of his fictional beings, and how far these methods do help him to transmit his world views through his characters. The study will also show how the methods so used have become effective or if they have remained inadequate in exploring the individual personality. It will also help us to trace the gradual development of the skill of the author in the method of characterization.

Swami and Friends, The Bachelor of Arts and The English Teacher are a trilogy that depicts the chief character in various names at different stages in his life. Swami is Chandran and Chandran is Krishna, each changing his name at different times and in different set ups. In these novels Narayan follows, with little variations, identical methods of characterization to focus on the growth and development of the main character. Swami and Friends and The Bachelor of Arts belong to the Germanic bildungsroman kind of novel that focuses specially on the development of an individual character, mainly in his youthful years. These two early novels written mostly in episodic form take the help of episodes and incidents related to the life of the protagonist to reveal him and to trace his growth.

Swami and Friends is episodic in construction, and with the help of small episodes the
novelist discovers different shades in Swami's character like his innocence, ignorance, impulsiveness, fear, fantasies, and his confusion with the inscrutable adult world. Each of these traits distributed over different chapters when joined together gives a wholesome picture of Swami. The episode like Swami's unusual clash with the scripture teacher highlights his innate impulsiveness and his cultural trappings, while the episode of inexplicable hostility of his friends towards him reveals the dimension of feeling and conflict in his mind. An apparently casual sentence records, "This was perhaps Swaminathan's first shock in life" (31). Subsequent episodes like Swami being duped and bullied by the coachman's son, his joining the nationalist movement and his burning the home spun cap under the mistaken belief of it being foreign made, and his stoning the glass panes of his school building suggest the immense hold of his plastic mind on his activities. These incidents also expose Swami's belief in supernatural elements, his fear for the adult world and his youthful irresponsibility. By presenting the ant scene or the scene where Swami prays gods for turning pebbles into coins the author brings out basic innocence and simplicity in his young hero.

Narayan adopts here both descriptive and dramatic methods to reveal his characters. It is his strategy to put such characters side by side who are both complementary and contrasting to each other. He places Rajam beside Swami; Rajam with his "socks and shoes, fur cap and tie, and a wonderful coat and knickers" (14) looks like "a European boy" (176) while Swami dressed in with his tucked khaddar dhoti and khaddar cap looks very Indian. Rajam has a dominant tone airing English life style and unorthodox colonial temperament while Swami is deeply rooted in Indian cultural tradition and abhors all that the British system stands for. In their respective views, albeit silently, towards English rule and English way of life Pankaj Mishra finds the clash between two systems-western and eastern, colonial hegemonism and anti-colonial protest. Juxtaposing these two opposite characters in their divergent views Narayan reinforces the deep cultural moorings in which Swami is trapped. But the two are not only contrastive, they are also complementary, as most of Swami's actions outside the family fold are in terms of Rajam's attitude to him. Apart from this descriptive method, Narayan applies the dramatic method to reveal his young hero's apparent little or no change in his outward behaviour. "What a boy you are" exclaimed
Rajam, "You are always in some trouble or other whenever you go. Always, always-" (149), or "You have no sense, Swami. You are a peculiar fellow" (149). In spite of these opposite temperaments and attitudes, Swami's attachment to Rajam "was more human" (67) as we find the same approach in the opposite characters in the later novels of the author.

A framework that Narayan selects to delineate his characters is the family system. Narayan says to Wolsely, "I fear that the rich subjective life of an individual against the background of that institution, the joint family system, is a subject that has not been properly tackled . . . There is wonderful material here . . ."15 Swami's essential goodness, his finer feelings, his simple jealousy, his impulsive nature are revealed through his interaction with his grandmother and the infant brother. Moreover, by the subtle method of placing Swami and Rajam in their contrasting family atmospheres, the author portrays traits of their respective characters. Swami is grounded more strongly in Indian cultural tradition through the benign and warm influence of his grandmother who tells him stories of Harischandra and other heroes of Indian classical literature. But the novelist is significantly silent on Rajam's family environment except offering occasional glimpses to it that leave an impression of impersonal family atmosphere in his home.

Swami's character has been largely realized in his interaction with a set of friends who are psychological projections of his youthful mind. Though these characters frequently appear in the novel, they never stand on their own, they do not leave any clear impression of themselves without in relation to Swami. The set of friends like Mani and others are the symbolic representation of the egoistic dreams of Swami, they represent the irresponsible youthful spirit in him and instil a sense of buoyancy in the young hero.

In a novel locale or environment is not a separate element; it is an indispensable part of its total body fabric. It has an intimate relationship with the thoughts and feelings of a character. An author uses it as a medium to reveal the inner working of a character's mind. As such, an author always endeavours in his work to effect a "fusion"16 between his work and his setting.

Narayan paints his characters on a little canvas, the canvas is Malgudi, a small fictional town whose landscape serves as a background to indicate the thoughts and moods, aspirations and
frustrations of its people, but at the same time it helps them to explore life's meaning. With Narayan Malgudi locale is the expression of human will, it is a "massive determinant," not what Robert Liddel says, the locale "is merely incidental." When we go through Narayan's works, we get the feeling that it is precisely Malgudi-"the named, identified, concrete, exact and exacting-gathering spot" that constitutes the real essence of Narayan's novels. In his works, the description of the locale is always brief and precise, it aims at creating proper atmosphere, either by comparison or by contrast, for action or for contemplation.

In *Swami and Friends* the locale and the character do not fuse, they remain separate. The scene on the river bank where Swami and Mani are waiting for Rajam to arrive, or the scene across the Trunk road where all the three are sitting together are merely external, they do not serve as an aid to action. However, towards the end, the locale plays an important role in shaping Swami's action and revealing his personality. It plays here a malevolent role leaving a dreadful experience in the character. Swami runs away from the Board school and walks across the Mempi forest road, the road with its "white ball-like wood-apple, green figs, and the deep purple eugenia" (155) attracts him like an enticing witch only to make him frightful at night with the noise of fluttered wings of night birds having "an uncanny ghostly quality" (153).

Narayan uses the device of irony to inform his characters. By shortening the full name of Swaminathan to Swami the author tinges it with irony. "Swami" evokes in us the impression of a spiritual head while in the novel we encounter a young boy with a plastic mind. This dissimilarity between the name and the traits creates an ironic effect, and more we enter the text, more we encounter this. To quote Rimmon-Kenan, "Rather than stressing similarity, analogy can also emphasize contrast between name and trait, frequently creating an ironic effect." But the ironic effect produced so does not present Swami in a negative light, rather the use of irony, to quote M.K. Naik, "serves as merely a technique of amused and tolerant observation expressing of a 'superior satisfaction.'"

Narayan's method of characterization found in the novel is inadequate as he fails to dramatize much of the ego bloated sense of Swami in the company of his set of friends or of his
wounded self, and the cause of this can be largely attributed to the episodic structure of the work.

The Bachelor Of Arts depicts the experience of an adolescent who is at the crossroad of the shadow line between carefree youth and responsible manhood. Chandran, the protagonist represents that stage in human life, what Erik C. Erikson calls the stage of "Identity versus Role Confusion." Chandran is the Bachelor of Arts. By generic use of the definite article to specify and universalize the character, the character becomes an allegoric reduction, the only member of a class. To quote K. Chellappan, "The definite article can also be justified in the sense that the character is part of an environment shared by us and the character, who is reduced to a quality or profession; he is also extended in the sense of being representative of men in a particular aspect."22

Narayan employs the method of psychological analysis to record Chandran's attempt to come to his own and to carve a niche for himself in the world, an attempt found in every adolescent faced with a psychological revolution. The episode of his success at the college debate where he vigorously assails the historians despite he himself being a student of History fills him with unconceited pride much common among adolescents, and with this sense of victory he "dramatically stretched his arm across the table and shook hands with the Prime Opposer" (6). The adolescent stage in the life of a man is the most challenging where an individual has a compelling desire to defy parental authority and assert his own identity, but at the same time he behaves like a child afraid to encounter the parents. In the words of Dr. T. A. Harris:

Through the troubling years of adolescence, when young people sometimes seem to turn a deaf ear to the words of their anxious parents, there is nevertheless a hunger to hear and experience reassurance of Mum and Dad's love and concern.23

Chandran's journey through this adolescence stage with his concern for his parents and teachers and his desire to insist upon his individuality is found in his response to two situations. One, in his decision to visit a late film show just after his new found confidence in himself despite having full knowledge that his father was against it,
He realised that what he usually did was a piece of evasive cowardice worthy of an adolescent. He was not eighteen but twenty-one. At twenty-one to be afraid of one's parents and adopt sneaky way! (11).

and the other, in his encounter with his History teacher Raghavachar. At his summon to his chamber, Chandran becomes scared and falters in front of the door, but on the next moment

He suddenly pulled himself up. Why this cowardice? Why should he be afraid of Raghavacharya or anybody? Human being to humanbeing. (26)

The same sense of defiance, characteristic of an adolescent, is again found in his love relation with an unknown girl. He falls in love with an imaginary girl and the manner of his falling in love shows the true image of a growing self with its defiance to the outside world:

"Why should we be cudgelled and nose-led by our elders?"

Chandran asked indignantly. "Why can't we be allowed to arrange our lives as we please? Why can't they leave us to rise and sink on our own ideals?" (71)

Chandran's deep passion for Malathi and the resultant longing are born of his excessive wild imaginings to the point of love sickness. To reveal the extent of involvement of Chandran in his imaginary love, Narayan adopts the technique of psychological realism like focusing on the reveries and fancies of the character, a method used frequently by modern novelists. Chandran's wishful thinking about his lady love ("Probably she was going to bed; blessed to those pillows (71)")

his desire to possess her ("could he not just dash into the house, hide in the passage, steal up to her bed at night, crush her in his arms, and carry her away?" (71)

his colourful reveries about the progress of marriage negotiations, his melancholic mood at the disapproval of his mother suggest the mad degree of love of a love-lorn youth reaching sometimes the point of sickness.

Narayan depicts a fine moment in the life of Chandran that reveals the depth of his passion and the dimension of his mood at the loss of his object of love. He uses the tune of the pipe working a crescendo in kalyani raga and the sound of vigorous drum beatings on the occasion of Malathi's marriage as an environment to reveal the mental condition of Chandran. The tune of the
pipe and its accompanying symphony creates a depressive mood in him, and the duress of it becomes so unbearable for him that he shouts, "Will nobody choke the piper? He is murdering the tune" (92). At his failure in love, like most adolescents, Chandran contemplates to commit suicide, but at the next moment he takes sanyasihood only to realize later that "Women were like that, they enjoyed torturing people" (112). Chandran takes consolation by passing the buck of his troubles solely to Malathi absolving his own role in it, a puerile, emotional attitude common among his age group.

Chandran's self awareness that "... Love and friendship were the veriest illusion" (123) is not realized in isolation but through his interaction with other characters. His friends Ramu, Veeraswami, Mohan and others afloat his sense of friendship, and the same set also pricks it bringing him down to the solid real world. Kailash opens up his eyes to all ugliness of the city life and the life out of Malgudi. He plays the task of a ficelle in pushing Chandran to take the role of a sanyasi in which garb he (Chandran) feels himself "a cad, a fraud and a trickster" (111).

One of Narayan's most favourite methods of characterization is naming his protagonists after mythological characters what Rimmon-Kenan says, "analogy is based on literary or mythological allusions," and modelling them on those prototypes to reveal them either through ironic treatment or by plain perception. Chandran is the other name of Sasanka, the mythical character who was madly in love with Tara, the wife of his guru, a love that is out of ethical bounds, and hence is impossible to be actualized. Chandran's pining for Malathi and his desire to marry her is out of socially sanctioned rules, it is unethical since society believes in and adheres to star concurrence for marriage to be performed.

Behind his next novel The Dark Room a definite purpose of the author works. The novelist is pre-occupied here with an idea and to illustrate that idea the author creates such characters who can serve his purpose. Thus Narayan's choice of method of characterization here is something different from his earlier two novels and it is also different from his next novel The English Teacher. Stages through which Swami, Chandran and Krishna pass are just three stages in a man's life- boyhood, adolescence and adulthood. When seen these three novels sequentially, the reader can
clearly perceive the journey of an individual from attachment to detachment in life. Hence it will be rewarding for us to study *The English Teacher* first, and to take up *The Dark Room* next.

Krishna in *The English Teacher* takes further the theme of Chandran's growth towards maturity. In Krishna, there is a subtle development, a development towards mental stability and a growth, growth towards spiritual maturity achieved through utter realization that "There is no escape from loneliness and separation . . . a profound unmitigated loneliness is the only truth in life" (218).

Krishna in the beginning is a romantic, oppressed at times by a melancholic temperament. He is always overloaded with a sense of something missing. He is a poet and writing poetry is his passion. It is the essence of his individuality. Poetry to him is a tool for singing the glowing beauty of Susila, for overcoming the tyranny of dejection; it is his heart's expression, it is a means for him to reveal much of his vision towards life and surroundings.

Krishna is an extension of the novelist's own self, he is the fictional life model of the author. Narayan enters his life, views him from within and understands him fully. Thus Krishna is drawn up, what Bennett and Roy say, "to create a character for one's very identity in fiction." Narayan had passed through such trials and tribulations after the death of his wife which he subjects Krishna to pass through. Thus by projecting his ownself into Krishna, the author uses the method of objective correlative. By means of detailed description of the agonies and sufferings of Krishna and his response to it, Narayan makes an attempt to "weave(s) a cultural, social, economic and emotional complex from which the individual emerges with his dreams and aspirations on his way to salvation."

Narayan's description of the setting helps him to give expression to the character's mystical and spiritual experience. The ever flowing Sarayu soothes Krishna's heavily oppressed mind, the moonblanched green field of Malgudi arouses poetic passion in him, while the Iswar temple helps him to discover the divine like quality in Susila. Malgudi's landscape crisscrossed with rustling casuarina and the Vakmata temple standing on the bank of a lotus pond provide Krishna necessary atmosphere to establish an exact communion with the other self of his wife. Thus the Malgudi
locale helps him recover his emotional stability and attain spiritual bliss

A character's interaction with other characters reveals much of his personality. In Narayan's work, this interaction and interrelation among the characters lead to highlight the character traits of the respective characters. Krishna in the novel is not realized in isolation, he is put beside other characters, and his individuality is expressed in his interaction with them. He and Susila placed in the context of their domestic setting express themselves, one, through overstatement and the other, through understatement. Krishna's exuberance of love for Susila expresses his deep passion for her while Susila in her silence illuminates romantic aura surrounding her husband. Susila in her temporal self was a passive follower of her husband while in her after life she becomes an active path finder for him. Susila achieves a kind of spiritual attribute in her association with Krishna. By half revealing and half concealing her, by presenting her through different stages of "closeness and distance,"27 by associating her with "light and shade imagery,"28 Narayan renders a kind of mystery to her (Susila's) character. Krishna repeatedly associates Susila with jasmine and its fragrance that suggest her ethereal quality, her divineness and her spiritual beauty. He sees her eyes shining with "unearthly brilliance," and this description has been made deliberately to sing her glowing beauty. For Krishna, Susila is an embodiment of Wordsworth's poem: "She was a phantom of delight/When first she gleamed upon my sight." "phantom" and "gleam" are the images of shade and light attributed to Susila which suggest the difficulty in understanding her, they also express her brilliance that glows like the celestial bodies.

It is Narayan's technique to realize his chief characters through their interaction with some ordinary, eccentric figures. The nursery school headmaster is such a figure who facilitates a college teacher's journey to emotional equilibrium. The nameless headmaster serves as a catalyst to hasten Krishna's search for a harmonious existence. He also serves as a foil teaching him to endure the physical loss of his (Krishna's) wife and treat family life as a hurdle on the way of attaining the freedom of mind. Like Dr. Sankar who obliquely hints Krishna to take a detached view of Susila's sickness and death, the head master by taking an indifferent attitude to his own impending death suggests Krishna to think in an identical way to attain peace in his loneliness.
The Dark Room is conceived of the author's "obsession" with the philosophy of "Woman as opposed to Man, her constant oppressor" (MD 118). To illustrate this theme, the method of characterization demands a set of characters of opposite sex in their opposite attitudes, opposite value judgements and opposite response to a given situation, what Rimmon-Kenan says, "Reciprocal characterization in the contrasted behaviour." As such, the main characters designed in the novel are a married woman and her husband. They are pitched against each other, each holding fast to her/his views on man-woman relationship. But, since the author's aim is here to make the novel "a testament of the Woman's Lib movement" (MD 118) he makes Savitri the protagonist and focuses her viewpoint on wife-husband relation. She is pitted against her husband Ramani, and through her the novelist reveals the pains and poignancies of a "wife in an orthodox milieu of Indian society" with loss of "all notions of her independence" (MD 118). In order to demonstrate Savitri's place in her family set up, some other characters belonging to similar and dissimilar background are brought in. In fact, none of the characters in a novel can grow independent of other characters, as Harvey observes, "... the characters do not develop along single and linear roads of destiny, but are so to speak human cross-roads..." they evolve and reveal themselves through contrasts, parallels and analogies to other characters. Savitri is placed carefully against a number of minor portraits who, in their contrast with her in different degrees, provide us a fairly complete picture of the position of a woman living in an orthodox environment of Indian society. Savitri is a high caste woman belonging to the middle class society. She is contrasted first to her two friends, Gangu and Janamma of similar background, and second to Shanta Bai, a woman of different background having different approach to life. She is again linked to and contrasted to Ponni, a low caste and low class woman.

Savitri stands pathetically in between Gangu and Janamma, her two close friends who represent two opposite ends of a traditional female set up. Gangu enjoys full liberty in her domestic environment and Janamma believes in the unquestionable loyalty to her husband. Savitri's own self is somewhere in between these two. She is unwilling to lead an unregulated life like that of Gangu, she also disagrees with Janamma in her leading a life of abject submission to the whims of her...
husband.

Savitri is also contrasted to Shanta Bai, a woman above traditional kinship bonds, who at her own choice leaves her husband, pursues her life free from the shackles of family bonds. She lives in the world of Omar Khayyam, imagines herself "as wind along the waste" (151). Savitri's coyness, her belief in the traditional womanhood and her sense of fulfilment in family life are contrasted with Shanta Bai's immorality, her frivolity and her views on family set up. Savitri exposes the "comic illusion" that Shanta Bai always nurtures while Shanta Bai's whole range of shallowness is presented as if to underline the positive qualities and depth in the character of Savitri.

The author reveals Savitri's precarious position in an orthodox society by putting her beside Ponni, a low class, low caste woman living outside the periphery of Malgudi. Ponni unlike Savitri enjoys maximum freedom in her family, she tames her husband, argues with and prevails upon the temple priest, subdues the shopkeeper. She is the symbol of female prowess and Savitri is that of female weakness. By deliberately setting an amazonic figure like Ponni against Savitri, Narayan makes Savitri's weakness, her pathetic condition in an orthodox family surrounding explicit.

Narayan presents Savitri through a complex of roles that often conflict with one another. It is a method of the novelist to present "a character through a complex of impersonations, 'roles' or 'masks'". Savitri's role as a woman, with her fierce sense of freedom, conflicts with her role as a wife, and both these, in turn, conflict with her role as a mother. This last role triumphs over all her other roles, she succumbs to the call of her duty as a mother, and returns home swallowing her pride as a woman.

Modern novelists incline more and more towards psycho-analysis as a method to explore the unconscious state of a person. "The psycho-analytic," observes Boaz "has shown that dream is an expression of the unconscious process of the mind; in fact, one of the best ways of understanding one's unconscious is to analyse his dreams." Freud's dream theory has greatly helped us to understand the complicated process of the development of the wish in the human individual. Radestock following Freud also says that dream is the "fulfilment of wishes." This dream quality is "frequently used in early narrative to reveal mental process and provide motivation and is (are)
wonderfully suited to characterization which is poised between the mythic and the mimetic. In *The Dark Room*, the central theme as it is that Savitri's drama of life is formed and set at her wish unfulfilment because of her being neglected and ignored by Ramani, Narayan captures this element through a delicate moment in the life of his protagonist. Savitri with all her ornaments, glittering dress and elaborate make-ups awaits whole night for her husband who is under the spell of the "other woman." But he does not return, and Savitri, on being tired sleeps. In her dream she dreams of her husband embracing her and swearing that all the gossips about his flirtations are unfounded. The dream reveals the intensity of Savitri's longing for her husband's love and affection.

The setting in the novel is not merely incidental, it is closely associated with the growth and development of Savitri's character. Narayan develops and delineates her which is not at all possible with mere dialogue but by some way of visualising the character against a background. The environment of two dark rooms, one of the family kitchen and the other of the temple shanty have been used by the novelist to project the inner drama of Savitri. Savitri has a very limited freedom in her domestic environment since her independence is trampled by her overbearing husband. The dark room in her house where she sulks most often to protest against her husband's cruelty reflects the gloominess, loneliness and dejection in her. It is the objective correlative of the psychic darkness of Savitri like "The Old Playhouse" of Kamala Das. The temple shanty, another dark room which provides Savitri a brief shelter, arouses in her a sense of insecurity and desolation, stirs in her the concern for her children. Both these dark rooms stand in contrast to her yearning for freedom and her resolve to live a life of her own. Interestingly, when one dark room forces her to move outside the home in search of freedom, the other sends her back home cleansing her wrong notion. Again, Savitri's assured sense of leading an independent living in the temple precinct is matched with the afternoon scene of the temple surroundings with its cool air, mango shade and sparkling afternoon garden that conform to Amiel's observation that a landscape is a state of mind.

Like similarities of fictional names with literary or mythological characters suggesting identical character traits, contrasts can also be underscored. In the *Mahabharata*, Savitri is the symbol of a wife's devotion to her husband but in *The Dark Room*, Savitri revolts against her husband, and
the result is a clash which ironically underscores the perversion involved in Savitri's rebellion.

While creating Savitri, Narayan shows his technical ability in filling the mould of type with individuality. One feels the presence of double self in her, the woman as she is and the woman she imagines or wishes to imagine she will be. Her character is an instance of a social type individualized. From Ramani's point of view she is theatrical and from Ponni's angle she is pathetic, and this variability in her is possible only because of the problematic quality in her character.

Since Narayan designs this work to highlight a social problem in its opposite value systems, he makes Ramani a foil to Savitri. To present his protagonist in a favourable light, the author deliberately makes Ramani a grotesque figure. His actions like hooting the car incessantly, his cruelty in slapping his son, his inhumanity in driving his wife out of home in the dead of night are some of his external actions that inform his personality. His speech charging Savitri with holding a stage-show or his accusation of her as an ingrate is an expression of the coarseness in his taste. As Rimmon-Kenan observes, "A character's speech, whether in conversation or as a silent activity in mind, can be indicative of a trait . . . (and) what one character says about another may characterize not only the one spoken about but also the one who speaks." 37

By the time Narayan began to write Mr. Sampath, his idea about human personality had undergone a massive change following his attainment of emotional equilibrium. From Mr. Sampath, Narayan laid more emphasis on individuals who are morally interesting, and more dynamic. He portrayed them highlighting their dominant traits, a literary quality for which James much admired Turgenev. James wrote in 1884:

The germ of a story with him was never an affair of plot—that was the last thing he thought of; it was the representation of certain persons. The first form in which a tale appeared to him was as the figure of one individual or a combination of individuals, whom he wished to see in action, being sure that such people must do something very special and interesting. 38

In this phase of the writer's literary career, the protagonists show more vigour, they exhibit more
singlemindedness in their pursuit after their objects and they are more resourceful. These characters while chasing their goals show more eccentricity, more ambiguity and more steadfastness till they are stripped off their excesses and illusions. In their intense search for true self underlying the false they pass from ignorance to knowledge through self questioning and self analysis. So, along with the change in the design of human personality, the method of characterization also undergoes a great change. Narayan from now on employs sharper tools like corresponding his characters to archetypal figures to inform their personality or adopts subtler psycho-analytic method to define them.

Mr. Sampath is the first Narayan novel to induct a dual consciousness. Its two main characters, Sampath and Srinivas, represent opposite attitudes and conflicting personalities in whom Walsh sees "the baffling and ambiguous Mr. Sampath and the open, ingenuous Srinivas." Both of them when taken as a whole underline allegorical image of Man as found in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Sampath and Srinivas, one representing sensuality and the other austerity, one realizing himself in the action and the other in the contemplation, remain always complementary to each other as if to bring a sense of totality in human personality. This method of characterization becomes a pattern for the novelist when we observe the su-ra-asura dichotomy in The Man-eater of Malgudi, openness vrs. secrecy in Talkative Man or in a subtler form, pull and push between the hedonistic and the scholastic life values in The Guide. Narayan creates these oppositional types as if to measure the dimension of strength and weakness in each through "perspective of depth."

Sampath’s vigour, his guile and his resourcefulness become sharper and more vivid when he is put beside Srinivas, a man of contemplation. They are shown from different points of view with their "contrary and co-existing personalities, functions and modes of being." As the story progresses, as the characters unfold themselves, a desirable balance is found in Srinivas, but this delicate balance is absent in Sampath informing his hypocrisy and trickery. Arrival of Shanti on the scene though causes slight momentary aberration in the moral world of Srinivas, it spells total doom for Sampath disturbing his assigned life roles. Sampath’s lust, his furious energy are illustrated by bringing him in contact with different characters. Shanti enkindles passion lying low in
him, the old man brings out his resourcefulness and ingenuity while Ravi shows his skill in balancing the opposite forces.

Personality of many a character of Narayan get revealed in their action and interaction in the family atmosphere. Contrasting background in family environment illustrates a character’s mood and motive. In Sampath's family we find a motley crowd of children, neglected and disordered while Srinivas has only one son, well looked after but restrained. Sampath's wife is inarticulate, she is a passive witness to her husband's waywardness, whereas Srinivas's wife is articulate, she shares joys and sorrows of life with her husband and is ever alert to his physical and mental well being. Domestic scene of Sampath indicates his non-serious, frivolous attitude to life while Srinivas's family life suggests his disciplined and ordered views on life.

Sampath is a real life character what Maugham says "original." Narayan picks him up from the streets of Mysore, uses "recall and hearsay" to "turn fact into fiction" with lightness and touch. To draw characters from living persons is "the universal custom. From the beginning of literature authors have had originals for their creations." To quote Maugham:

We know very little even of the persons we know most intimately; we do not know them enough to transfer them to the pages of a book and make human beings of them. People are too elusive, too shadowy to be copied; and they are also too coherent and contradictory. The writer does not copy his originals; he takes what he wants from them, a few traits that have caught his imagination, and therefore constructs his character. He is not concerned whether it is likeness; he is concerned only to create a plausible harmony convenient for his own purpose.

This real life character Sampath is made to look art-like by making him analogous to different epic personalities, a method Narayan uses very often to illuminate different traits in his characters. Narayan's Sampath is a close parallel to epic Sampathi, the son of Arun, the charioteer of Sun god who in his inordinate ambition to know the god's world transgresses the ethical boundary and makes an abortive attempt to fly past heaven only to be scorched by the fury of Sun god for
crossing the limit. Sampath like Sampathi oversteps his usual role, so he is demolished by the anger of Ravi, the other name of Sun god. Sampath is thus made analogous to archetype Sampathi. Sampathi in the myth is also a defender of women honour as he fights against Ravana to save Sita while Sampath is an assailant of woman's honour. Srinivas also corresponds to the name of godhead Shiva. Shiva is the god of vigorous action who also symbolizes destruction. But Srinivas is a man of non-action. This contrast between the mythological hero and his counterpart, as Rimmon-Kenan observes, "sheds ironic light on the latter."44

In a work of art environment has an intimate relationship with the personality of a character. It manifests his mindset and reveals his personality. In the novels of Narayan where main motif is the gradual revelation of individual personality environment plays a significant role. It serves as a means to express one's "inner reality." The setting of Sampath's printing house reveals his mind. A curtain painted with a purple lion attacking a spotted deer that divides his office chamber and the printing room suggests his aggressiveness and his preying spirit. Sampath with his alluring and multi-colour personality preys upon soft targets like Soma and the old landlord, hoodwinks Ravi by promising him to get his imaginary love. This suggestive information about Sampath is more pronounced in his regular donning of a scarf around his neck and a fur cap that evoke the image of a live cobra and the matted locks of Shiva (a role he is to later play) respectively. The cobra is a primeval symbol of violent lust and passion while Shiva is both the embodiment and destroyer of it. Thus the appearance of Sampath with his dress evokes two opposite images in the mind of a reader, as Bennet and Royle say, "Physical appearance (outside) works as a sign of character (inside)."45

Sampath's character does not undergo any major change in the story, he remains incorrigibly the same old self, sometimes adding more colour to his personality. Thus he fits to Harvey's cards whose distinguishing feature is "his relative changelessness, combined with a kind of freedom..." Cards who correspond almost to E.M.Forster's "flat" characters are interesting in themselves because they are the vehicle of carrying an author's vision. What Martin speaks of flat characters is appropriate for Sampath. Martin says, "Even flat characters who have no new vi-
sions to offer, it is often the very intricacy and inevitability of their connections with the reality they inhabit that makes them interesting." Narayan's object here is not to subject Sampath embark upon the quest for self or discover himself by intense self questioning, but to juxtapose him and Srinivas so as to effect a change in the views of the latter on the nature of the world. This juxtaposition also helps him (the author) to affirm that co-existence of seriousness and frivolity is the way of the world.

Narayan often says that character is life to his work and it forms an integral part to the design of the book. Hence, he always makes serious efforts to present a character as faithfully and realistically as possible. But as Ian Watt recognizes, "the accurate transcription of actuality does not necessarily produce a work of any real truth or enduring literary value." It is never possible for a novelist to put the whole of a character into a book; he must take the process of elimination and selection of such traits that can serve well his purpose. With this end in view Narayan selects only a few traits of his character, endeavours to conventionalize them by portraying them as vividly as possible.

In The Financial Expert, the focus lies, from the beginning till the end, on the protagonist Margayya without any diffusion of interest. Narayan selects only two dominant traits in him and cleverly intertwines these two, i.e. protagonist's singleness of mind in acquiring money, and his desire to see his only son climb the social scale. Narayan reveals his character by the method of presenting him both in his isolation and in the context of his social environment.

In isolation the protagonist Margayya relapses into wild imaginings, fantasy, reverie, and these serve as devices to depict, decipher and probe into the hidden motives and submerged intentions of the character, what Forster says, to find out "the hidden life at source." Narayan's predilection for use of these elements is not for the first time found here, it has been suggested in his earlier novels like Swami and Friends where we see Swami indulging in wishful thinking of turning pebbles into coins or in The Bachelor of Arts where Chandran nurtures wishful thinking of marrying Malathi. But in those novels these are muted, tangential while here these mould the nature and personality of the character.
Margayya having born to a family of corpsebearers assumes a chosen self at a certain stage in his life. This assumption of a new identity is part of his constant endeavour to redefine his self. Margayya's painful struggle to shed off the stigma attached to his ancestry is a part of his strategy to cut off relations with his brother or to find an alliance for his son with an aristocratic family. His fear, his anxiety of being discovered of his lineage finds expression when he reflects:

Though he and the rest were supposed to be good caste now, if matters were pried into deeply enough they would find that his father's grand father and his brothers maintained themselves as corpsebearers (150).

Through Margayya's overstretched imagination, Narayan helps his reader know about his protagonist's excessive desire to see his son perched on the higher social scale, an obsession that goes side by side with his deep concern for the safety of his son. At the ordinary level of his mind, money takes always precedence over everything, but when it comes to the wellbeing of his son, the latter competes with the former. This concern for his son is firmly entrenched in his deeper psyche, a fact that the author brings out with the help of a hallucination. Margayya in his bid to acquire more riches meets the priest of a temple and when the priest leads him to the dark inner side, he dreads if he (the priest) would next ask him to cut off his son's head to appease the goddess of wealth. He imagines wildly that Balu would be drugged and taken in a sack to a corner where human bodies are kept hidden. This fear turns into a hallucination, and in his sleep he lets out a cry "Aiyo! Aiyo!" so as to distract Balu from tiptoeing towards the sack.

If much of Margayya's idea fixed about money and his son is realized through wild imaginings and fantasies that form part of his psyche, his rise and fall happen in the context of his social environment. Chance and accident, without doubt play a role in the buoyancy and collapse of Margayya's financial empire yet it is through human agency that the invisible hands of destiny cause topsy turvy in his life. Arul Doss and the Secretary stir in Margayya the sense of the role of money in life, the priest like a catalytic agent enkindles the hope in him of the possibility of getting it and Dr. Pal representing the archetypal fantasies of money helps him to acquire it. He like the evil self of Margayya corrupts him by inducing in him the idea of acquiring more and more money through
unethical and questionable means.

"Fictional names do seem to be meaningful; they contribute to the meanings of sentences in which they occur." By naming his protagonist Margayya after obliterating his original name Krishna, Narayan makes him an ironic figure. Margayya which means the one who shows the way to others is himself lost in the mad pursuit after his object. He loses his moorings in life, cherishes illusions and neglects his basic duty towards his family.

Building stage by stage Margayy's rise to success, making him persuasively alive "by the accumulation of detail, not by discursive explanation," and then pulling him down suddenly to the level of earth, Narayan successfully creates in him a kind of tragic figure. To quote Biswal:

There is an elemental sadness about him throughout and even in his moments of supreme success, he betrays the pathetic helplessness of a bewildered father. Margayya's faults and foolishness are treated by Narayan's ironic technique not from the standpoint of strict moral judgement, but with an affectionate understanding of life's predicament.

As a consequence, the bitter bite of irony yields place to a mild disapproval of a tender stroke of the tragi-comedy.

The Financial Expert and The Guide are superb in their associating the characters and the events with the setting in which they occur. Narayan has a constant awareness of the inseparableness of people from the natural reality in which they appear. Margayya sitting under a large banyan tree opposite the building of the Co-operative Bank with his umbrella nearby, his accounts book lying in front, is like a photograph; the character and the setting remaining inseparable, the picture evokes in us a kind of imaginative appeal. This informs the power and subtlety with which Narayan makes us see the character in his setting. Let us remove the setting, much of the appeal of the character is lost.

Sometimes the inside environment plays an ironic contrast between the appearance and reality. In Margayya we find an allegorical clash between the goddess of learning and the goddess of wealth. His obsession with the sense of wealth is well illustrated in the unusual environment in
which he is placed for long forty days. For these forty days Margayya's prayer room with its scent of incense, camphor, sandaldust and jasmine, is filled in with a feeling of holiness. But the inside of Margayya is full of worldly thinking, how to acquire more and more money through the help of supernatural agents. This contrast between the holiness of environment and profanity of the character heightens the ironic implications of the interior self of Margayya.

In Sriram, the chief character in Waiting for the Mahatma one does not find the strength of Margayya, one finds him weak in motivation. Narayan fails to present him sharply and vividly because, as I think, Sriram is put against a complex, serious social and political background with the overhanging influence of the domineering figure of Mahatma Gandhi. This lack of balance between the background on which the action of the novel takes place and the levity of character’s motivation results in the creation of a weak character.

Sriram is realized mostly in relation to Bharati. He is vegetative in nature without any clear cut notion in life. He is set against Bharati, a strong minded girl of action who has her own convictions. Sriram's blind passion for her almost erases his individuality and engineers in him a reversal of role. Bharati becomes his guru, he turns her disciple; his whole being acquires meaning only when he does something in relation to her. But once she leaves his orbit and withdraws from him all her influence, Sriram commits such actions which negate all for which Bharati stands. The moment she comes back, Sriram returns to his reformed self. Sriram is painfully aware of this loss of individuality when he candidly confesses about Bharati's role in his life. Sriram's deep and sentimental attachment to Bharati is brought out in his association with Gopad who serves as a foil. Sriram's interaction with him reveals his petty sexual jealousy.

As Sriram is realized mostly in relation to Bharati, Bharati is realized in relation to Sriram. Her association with Sriram brings out the womanhood lying dormant in her, that behind the exterior of a hardened disciplinarian wedded to a mission in life, there lies a primordial instinct, the instinct to care and be cared for.

With the help of fantasy and reverie of Sriram the novelist unfolds his protagonist's romantic idiocy and obsession with sex. His reverie of breaking the jail like Monte Cristo and his wishful
thinking of teaching the art of it to all the followers of Gandhi suggest his romantic idiocy and his refusal to come to terms with reality. Sriram's sex obsessive mind is unmasked through his constant stare at the portrait of a European lady and in his scanning of the faces of various women under the cover of dark sunglass.

Protagonists' serious efforts to find out the meaning of life through self examining and self questioning continue more vigorously and more forcefully in The Guide. Raju like Narayan's earlier characters Savitri and Margayya places himself in the whirlpool of life, then he endeavours pathetically to extricate himself from it. In his struggle he searches his identity, discovers himself and moves towards self realization. The path of self awareness for him is not smooth, it is criss-crossed with many a trouble, it is more complicated than for any other character of Narayan. In Margayya, we find an obsession with money and filial love, but in Raju, it is sex, a more complex human passion. Margayya's obsession does not disturb much the moral order but Raju's open defiance to the sanctity of the institutions like marriage and family and his betrayal of the innocent faith reposed on him by Marco and the simple villagers strike at the very root of the moral world. Raju's character becomes more and more complex and he gets more confused due to his gradual moral awareness during his desperate struggle to assert his individuality. The novelist is here less interested in telling the story of a love triangle by presenting a psychological analysis of the cuckold husband or neglected wife or the lover when caught; his aim is deeper, more probing and more religious. He tells not about the "detection of crime and punishment but of sin and expiation," to borrow T.S. Eliot's words used in another context, and Raju is the main character in this drama of life.

Raju's character is realized through a multiple of roles, from a shop keeper to a Swami, that he takes up voluntarily in course of his life's career. Through his varied roles he earnestly searches for the meaning in life and this search is unfolded before us in two ways; one, by self analysis made by the protagonist and the other, by the observation of the third person narrator. The method of double narration, Raju telling about his past and the narrator telling about Raju's present, helps in showing Raju in his "totality." Raju's confession to his sin, his remorse and repentance make him
"life-like" while narrator's narration of his path of expiation and progress towards salvation makes him 'art-like.'

Raju's trouble starts, in his own confession, from the time he emotionally gets involved in Rosie, the involvement that also arouses jealousy in him for her husband Marco. Marco is "a queer cold abstraction of a man" and Raju is vivacious, bubbled with warm feelings and swayed with instinctual way of living; both serve as ironic foil to each other. Narayan places these two characters side by side as if to measure the depth of each, more particularly of his protagonist. Marco in his coloured glass, thick jacket and a thick helmet does not hesitate to walk along Rosie with her bright hued, gold laced saree, diamond earrings, gold necklace and deflowered curly braided hair. But Raju wishes to hide himself from Rosie in his usual khaki bush-coat and dhoti; "a horrible unprepossessing combination" (58), he feels. Ever since Rosie arrives at Malgudi, Raju discards his old set, wears a silk jibba and a laced dhoti, grooms himself so well that her mother is even to remark, "Ah, like a bridegroom!" (58). Again when Rosie returns to him; he, for his unshaven chin, feels shy of appearing before her, a feeling that makes him run to the tailor to stitch a few dashing bush-shirts, and then he uses face lotions and perfumes of all kinds to look smart and smooth. This consciousness about dress and appearance in Raju coming out from his subliminal self unveils the extent of his infatuation with Rosie.

In The Financial Expert the large banyan tree under which Margayya is seen sitting and doing his financial transactions serves as the contours of a permanent landscape and once the landscape or the location is removed, the character loses its thrust. This spatial context in relation to Raju also carries a lot of significance for him. Raju's self chosen role after the end of his jail term gets reinforced with the setting against which he is positioned. Raju donning the thread of a Swami and sitting on a stone slab in the precinct of a temple, away from human habitation, becomes holy in the eyes of the innocent villagers who find a godhead in him. It is mainly due to the location in which he is placed that he gets his new role. "Location pertains to feeling; feeling profoundly pertains to place . . . " and the landscape of the temple is very much internal as an evocative design. It evokes the idea of holiness in Velan and in the villagers, the idea that sets the action rolling.
during the present life of Raju. Change the scene, it will mark the change of heart. For Raju, temple may be an impersonal background but for simple rustics it is the symbol of their faith, it is an external manifestation of their idea of god. Raju is an extension of this external landscape.

Throughout the novel the symbols of cobra and crocodile are so often used in relation to Raju that these two almost become associated with his character. Narayan used the symbol of cobra that stands for passion for the first time in Mr. Sampath. Srinivas is struck by the handbag of Shanti that carries a grim object like cobra and it seems to him a symbolic appendage to a beautiful woman. This symbol is extended to Rosie and gets associated with her in such a complex way that it evokes different responses from Raju at different times. Raju's association with Rosie that engineers his moral fall begins with her cobra dance in its crudity while his dissociation with her begins with the same dance in its grace. Raju at first falls a prey to the initial symbol of the animal, suffers a moral slip and later with his looking at the animal from an angle of divinity, he frees himself from the evil charm of Rosie. In his later life Raju gets associated with crocodile, a creature that stands for guile. As the presence of a crocodile in the river which thrived long in the imagination of the village folk becomes a reality with its dehydration, Raju's mythical consciousness of redeeming mankind by an act of self-negation formed during his listening to the story of Devaka in his childhood that remained submerged for long surfaces during the unveiling process of his soul at Mangala.

The novelist associates these two archetypal creatures with Raju as this method of Associative principle helps him show how his (Raju's) passion and his deception ultimately get purged through his path of ego negation and self fulfilment.

Raju's character reveals itself splendidly through his poetic moments. "Our feelings of the moment do not lie in what she says so much as in our sense of her who is saying it," says Virginia Woolf while commenting upon the technique Tolstoy adopted in revealing the character of Natasha. Narayan captures the poetic moments in the life of Raju to reveal his romantic temperament. Raju is not himself a poet like Krishna but he is more poetic, more romantic and more ecstatic. His entanglement with Rosie from the very first sight makes him exuberant with love feelings and he beholds her a vision like "half-visible," indicating the extent of charm she spells upon him. Raju
waxes poetic in her presence and his lovelorn heart sings, "... life is so blank without your presence" (165). Raju's poetic consciousness is closely associated with his romantic temperament and this is that of the dreaminess of a lover. The novelist brings out this trait in Raju by associating him with the external world of nature. The nature in its varied hues, the peak house glowing at the purple play of colours in the late afternoon, sun going down the distant Mempi forest under a clear sky, all meet him as world that look extraordinarily new. Raju becomes lyrical at the beauty, finds a common idiom with Rosie that prompts even a cold, unromantic figure like Marco to comment, "Hey Raju, so you are a poet too" (68).

A character reveals himself exquisitely when his/her mind working at its innermost recess gets unfolded. Narayan has subtly and methodically delved into different levels of Raju's mind to reveal his desire, his existential dilemma and his moral awareness. At the Mempi peak house, "the golden touch of Rosie numbs his sense, makes his "head reel for a moment . . . Everything disappeared into a sweet, dark haze, as under chloroform" (68) and it stirs his sub-conscious state where is seated his deep longing for Rosie. Narayan also uses here the technique of double consciousness to focus on the inner conflict of Raju arising out of the clash between his primitive instinct and his moral dilemma. In the peak house the "golden touch" of Rosie makes him mad to have physical union with her, but simultaneously a part of his mind goes on saying, "No, no. It is not right. Marco is her husband, remember. It is not to be thought of" (69). Even when Raju is deeply absorbed in Rosie's snake dance for the last time, his mind reverts to his mother and is filled in with pity and remorse for her. Again, although Raju in the temple precinct, in the midst of his fast, adopts diabolical means to satisfy his hunger yet he honestly thinks of sacrificing his life, if need be, to save the mankind. This double personality in Raju with his moral awareness and agonizing failure to hold on to it makes him a tragic figure.

Characters' action and interaction in the story help them grow and in the process of this growth they get themselves revealed. Rosie-Maro duo like archetypal angels engineer Raju's moral fall. Rosie like the temptress nagakanya, the image she carries with her cobra dance, allures Raju to commit the cardinal sin of moral debauchery, and Marco like an evil spirit tempts him to
betray the faith reposed on him by Rosie. Velan like Christ resurrects him by listening his confession to his moral fall. This Christian symbolism is reinforced with Raju's flopping down in water and Velan holding him as if he (Raju) were a baby, symbolizing the process of completion of Raju's baptism from a life of sin to a life of self sacrifice. This subtle fusion of Hindu and Christian allusions employed to delineate Raju's character makes him more complex and more interesting.

If Rosie meets Raju's emotional fulfillment and physical gratification, Velan answers to his spiritual needs. Rosie arouses drossness in him and Velan helps him remove it; he turns Raju into a semi-divine object, encourages him to don the thread of an image. Velan in his role of a passive listener to Raju's life of moral decay helps him find an inner spiritual certitude. Only after making a clean breast of his sin, Raju with a pure soul, a good soul undertakes the penance for the deliverance of the villagers from god's scourge. In a reversal of role, Velan becomes the spiritual guide to Raju and propels his submerged individuality to embark upon a struggle to achieve an independent identity. Raju's character thus becomes sharper and more vivid with his confession, introspection and self criticism in relation to Velan.

Role of rustics, both in their individual and collective capacity, in moulding and shaping the chief character is felt from the beginning of Narayan's work. In The Bachelor of Arts the rustics made Chandran realize his facade and forced him to shed off the borrowed garb of a sanyasi and return to the fold of society. In The Financial Expert, collective pressure of the rustics on Margayya formed in him an imaginary substitute satisfaction about the sense of money. In The Guide also, the rustics in their innocence and simple faith exert such pressure on Raju that it makes him for a partial realization of self. Collective will of the rustics makes him more and more conscious of his inner strength, it slowly and steadily succeeds in diminishing the process of ego formation in Raju and metamorphoses him to an archetypal Swami. The village folks who are apparently guided by Raju, in fact, guide Raju to attain a life of sublimation.

The Man-eater of Malgudi embodies Narayan's idea of the problem of Evil in the modern day context. To explore this idea, to make it explicit and then to resolve the problem, the author conceives a set of characters that are opposite to each other. Vasu is created to serve the purpose
of the novelist to elaborate his views on evil. He is an abstract character, fits into the garb of classical prototypes while the character of Nataraj is designed in a way so as to inform the novelist’s views on goodness. Since the character of Vasu is chosen to make it stand for something in the world of ideas, he is doomed in advance to be mechanical and artificial. It is worthwhile to mention here that Vasu is presented to us as seen through the eyes of Nataraj, the symbol of goodness, and since he (Vasu) fits into the idea of evil of the novelist, he remains an allegorical figure. So in him we do not find rich psychological realism or inner conflict or "roundness" that makes a character "life-like" and real.

Nataraj and Vasu are opposites in their relation with human beings or even with animal beings. Nataraj, in his own confession, can never be a successful enemy to anyone. Any enmity worries him day and night. This is well set against Vasu's bullying with his pahelwan guru and later in his dealings with his benefactor Nataraj. In their relation to the animal life they are also opposites. Nataraj feeds the ants rice and sugar, he never takes food without first distributing pieces of bread among the crows, but Vasu goes on destroying animal life killing even pet cats, cubs and eagles. Nataraj protects nature, Vasu rivals it; “Nataraj is the symbol of 'pro-life' and Vasu is the symbol of 'anti-life.'”

Commenting on this obvious opposite traits in Vasu and Nataraj, Naik says:

The interplay between Vasu and Nataraj indicates a larger theme: namely the contrast between two diametrically opposed attitudes to life, each shown to be disastrous in its own way. It is a contrast between the demonic, self-centred egotism of Vasu and the ineffectual, self-effacing altruism of Nataraj, between the temerity of Vasu and timidity of Nataraj.

Nataraj is not only a contrast to Vasu, he is also complementary to him. As evil allures instantly, Vasu attracts Nataraj immediately, and this peculiar relation between the two has been emphasised to show as if Nataraj provides humane feeling to Vasu and Vasu provides the sensual pleasure of life to Nataraj, thus completing the sense of totality in Man.

To measure the intensity and dimension of Vasu's devilishness, Narayan casts, apart from Nataraj, a nameless monosyllabic poet and a harmless journalist Vasu's strong arm tactics shown
to them and his total rejection of their ideas and ideals in a threatening manner bring out the violent and fiendish nature in him.

While discussing the methods of characterization that the novelists have been following from the beginning of the novel until modern times, David Daiches mentions two conventional methods; one of complete initial portrait followed by events which confirm the portrait and second of emergence of the complete picture from the action. About the first method, Daiches says:

In some novels we are given a descriptive portrait of the character first, so that we know what to expect and the resulting actions and the reactions of the character provide a filling-in and elaboration whose justness we can appreciate by comparison with the original portrait.\(^{59}\)

Narayan's sketch of Vasu's character fits into the above observation. Vasu is presented with all his ugliness, with all his repulsive traits, and Narayan here "makes use of classical notion of physical ugliness as a measure of moral turpitude"\(^{60}\) Nataraj sees first Vasu's head peeping through the curtain as if it is detached from the body which suggests the bodiless heads of Rahu and Ketu, two ogres of Indian classical literature. Vasu has in him a queer mixture of 'tamas' and 'rajas' elements that make his "asurika" propensities. He is a "large man, about six feet tall, "looks (ed) quite slim, but his bull-neck and hammer-fist reveals (ed) his true stature." (13). He has a "tanned face, large powerful eyes under thick eyebrows, a large forehead and a shock of unkempt hair, like a black halo"(13). This physical portrait invites the reader to know his inside, because as Bennette and Royle observe, "... in order to know another person-let alone ourselves-we must decipher the outer appearance."\(^{61}\) This outer appearance fits in to his (Vasu's) choice of dress—a red check bush shirt and field grey trousers—and both these reflect well upon the temperament of a fellow who fits into his self chosen profession of a taxidermist.

The environment, both physical and human, in which a character places himself largely determines and reveals his inner self. To quote Rimmon-Kenan in this context:

A character's physical surrounding (room, house, street, town) as well as his human environment (family, social class) are all often used as trait-
connoting metonymic. 62

Vasu lives in the attic of Nataraj which is a darkening place, only a shaft of light falling through a small window above; the caracasses of animals, skins of some tanned and of others half tanned are all strewn over the place that emit a stinking smell, and all these make it unbearable for an ordinary human being to live in. The room habitated by swarm of mosquitoes looks a veritable hell and Vasu finds it congenial to live in. Vasu's preference for living in such an environment matches his choice of persons like Rangi, a public woman having big, round arm and fat legs resembling a dark, squalid, seductive, "female animal."

The author employs here the device of apronymic names, though ironically, to reveal Vasu's personality. Vasus are celestial beings who are invoked to ward off evil and to bestow riches on their devotees. But Vasu here is himself a source of evil, and instead of bestowing riches on his benefactors, he robs and tortures them. The name of Vasu evokes here a sense of profanity instead of sanctity. The same device when is used in relation to Nataraj, the other name of Shiva, it makes Vasu's character sharper and more explicit.

Vasu's character takes another breadth when the author draws an analogy between him and Ravana and Mahisasura. Reference to these two mythical prototypes in relation to Vasu brings out his lustiness, his pride and his vanity. An analogy between him and Ravana, the anti-hero in the Ramayana gives Vasu a human dimension. Ravana is famous for his scholarship, for his expertiseness in battlecraft, for his devotion to learning. Vasu is a triple M.A., he has a scientific spirit, he is a specialist in his uncommon profession of a taxidermist and only when he is paralleled with Ravana, he acquires human attribute; otherwise, he (Vasu) would have slumped into an ephemeral figure.

Narayana's aim in the novel is to probe into the problem of Evil and how to resolve it. So he creates the character of Vasu to fit in to the design of his matter. When the author places Nataraj with all his goodness and innocence opposite an evil character like Vasu, the latter looks more grotesque and more bizarre. So the character of Nataraj is created as if to measure the depth and dimension of evilness in Vasu. Vasu is conceived in line with Docherty's 'static' characters. Docherty observes, "a static character is one whose existence is entirely accounted for in the fiction; this
character is simply a function of the plot or design of the whole and cannot step outside the bounds of the fiction. In Vasu too, we do not encounter any psychological rationalism or any subjectivity. And Narayan chooses this 'static' character to inform his life values and his world vision in a lucid way.

The method of isolation and recreation by which method a novelist selects only a few traits of his character and presents these as vividly as possible to throw light on the particular phase of human experience is frequently adopted by modern novelists to make the character look more real and more acceptable to readers without diffusion of their interest. Realism in art form, says Marjorie Boulton, is selective because it has to maintain a sense of proportion. This, according to her, is the principle of art:

The first and most necessary and unbreakable convention of every art is that the artist chooses those aspects of the subject he wishes to treat in detail, ignores or almost ignores everything else, and suits the details of treatment to the chosen matter.

Thus Sriram is shown only in his mindless infatuation with Bharati, Margayya is presented only with his greed and filial love, Raju is shown in his passion and Jagan, the protagonist in The Vendor of Sweets, is seen in his blind attachment to his son.

Jagan, the vendor of sweets is enveloped in ambiguity and hypocrisy, he runs after illusory objects of life, and in course of his mindless coursing he stumbles, only to discover that all his worldly pursuits are illusions while life's meaning lies elsewhere. Jagan's confusion, his sufferings lie much in his inability to look beyond his skin deep knowledge of scriptures or Gandhian principles or the orthodox values and tradition in which his personality is moulded. So he often comes in clash with his son Mali who cherishes opposite values.

It is Narayan's technique to fix his character first in his tradition and then to play up before him the contrary values in the shape of modern, changing set up, thereby evoking his response and reaction to it. By taking Jagan repeatedly back to his distant past, to the surroundings of joint family environment, to the values and traditions in which he has grown up, Narayan weaves a
complete picture of the character's personality. Jagan's confusion, his naive reaction to the behaviour of his son make him appear a comic character, but underneath there flows a sort of poignancy that makes him one of the most pathetic characters in Narayan's novels.

Narayan's descriptive method in describing Jagan and Mali in their contrasting bearing and attire sets the motion of divergence in their respective values and attitudes. Jagan wears "a loose jibba over his dhoti, both made of material spun with his own hand" (15). The very Indian image of Jagan is well set against Mali's "dark suit, with an overcoat, an air bag, a camera, an umbrella" (63) that air the feeling of a stranger drenched in western civilization and alien culture. Jagan is "slight and elfish, his brown skin is (was) translucent" (14) while Mali after his return from America seems to have "grown taller, broader and fairer" (63).

Narayan introduces in Cousin such a nameless character who plays the role of alter ego of Jagan, and through him he digs Jagan's paradoxical existence reminding him always of his shortcomings and veiled hypocrisy. He is not an integral part to the story, he has no power to influence others, he is also not wholly irrelevant to the novel. He serves the role as is served by chorus in greek tragedy. Through another nameless figure, the vagrant, Narayan provides the frame for Jagan's routine life. Jagan has often asked him, "You are sturdy; why don't you seek work?" and the unfailing remark is "when have I time Master? By the time I have gone round begging returned here the day is over" (89), thus conveying obliquely the message of Jagan's total engrossment in his routine life.

Description of locale in the novel is brief, but it is successful in creating a proper atmosphere for Jagan to contemplate. Krishna, the English teacher found in a starlit evening in a village garden with lotus pond and a ruined temple on its bank, breeze blowing through casuarina trees, a proper atmosphere to "get a glimpse of eternal peace" (ET 136) so as to soothen his agitated mind. Now Jagan in a like atmosphere at the foothills of the Mempi forest experiences "an internal transformation":

The pond was covered with blue lotus, the steps were mantled with moss and crumbling. On the bank stood a small shrine supported on stone pillars,
with a low roof of granite slabs blackened by weather, time and the oven smoke of wayfarers. Over this little building loomed banyan, peepul and mango trees and beyond them stretched away a grove of casuarina, the wind blowing through their leaves creating a continuous murmur as of sea waves. The surroundings were covered with vegetation of every type; brambles, thornbushes, lantana and oleander intertwined and choked each other (115).

The Malgudi locale is seen beautifully set with all its quietude, nature is bountiful to help Jagan pacify his perturbed mind, and all these make him forget the cares and anxieties of life, "sweet meat vending, money and his son's problems seemed remote and unrelated to him. The edge of reality itself was beginning to blur . . . " (118). The setting is in stark contrast to Jagan's ancient home, behind the Lawley statue, that is beginning to "resemble hell on earth" (126) for him.

This physical environment has also been used by the novelist in another way to reveal the inner life of Jagan. This other way stems from his recognition of the inadequacy of speech as a conveyor of emotion. Jagan makes a tortuous bus journey to the top of the Badri Hills to get blessings from Santana Krishna to have a son, and throughout the journey his thoughts revolve round his desire of begetting a son so as to escape social castigation. Since it is difficult and problematic for the novelist to present this thought going in the mind of his character in the medium of language, he uses a physical correlative that solves for him the problem of presenting his character realistically. By using the painful shriek of a mottled bird caged in a small wooden cage of a fellow passenger, Narayan brings out the pains and the pangs present in the heart of Jagan. Bird's cry is the outer expression of the inner cry of Jagan, its struggle for freedom correlates Jagan's efforts to get free from fecundity. Thus Narayan is able to project the desired image of Jagan's psyche without heightening or distorting the language of his thoughts.

Jagan's character is remarkable for its duality and inner contradiction. From the very beginning, this duality remains the defining trait in him. Jagan practises Gandhian principles in his dietary habits and dress code but flouts it when the question of paying tax arises. He is crestfallen at Mali's
choice of an outcaste girl but on the next moment develops a soft feeling for her. This duality in his character runs till the last since even after the moment of his spiritual illumination, during his retreat to the Mempi forest, he does not forget to carry with him the cheque book. This duality becomes more remarkable in his attitude to Mali. His apparent naivety, "Mali is displaying strange notions" (33) is well contrasted to his getting "completely identified with Mali's fancies" (39). This contrast in Jagan cannot be altogether brushed off since it makes him more realistic. As Engel defines realism:

Realism to my mind, implies truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances.65

The Painter of Signs marks the author's same preference for selection of a single dominant trait in his character and then to focus on it vividly. The single trait in Raman is his blind passion for Daisy, a non-denominational name whose identity, whose family background remains shrouded in mystery. Narayan presents Raman in his roguishness, in his eccentricity to express his general judgements on life.

Daisy while contending Raman in his search for a role model says, "You always find some role model" (159) and true to her, Narayan always tries to find a model from Indian classical literature to correspond to his protagonists, a method that recalls the strategy of employing the "usable past" to reveal a character. Narayan's Raman is cast in the mould of king Santhanu of the Mahabharata and this has been hinted subtly not once but twice by the protagonist himself. Like Santhanu who gets infatuated with Ganga, a woman from a strange land and of mysterious background, Raman is infatuated with Daisy, a girl of unknown background. Author reveals the dimension of Raman's infatuation with the help of the character's broodings and wild imaginings. Raman's total engrossment in the thoughts of Daisy is shown when at her slight touch his blood pressure went so high that he had "felt giddy" (44), an experience that echoes Raju's intensity of passion for Rosie in a similar situation.

Conscious use of landscape as a device to influence the moods and motives of a character is a characteristic element in Narayan's method of characterization. The novelist as if in complete
agreement with Watt's observation, "we cannot visualize any particular moment of existence without setting it in its spatial context also," sets some of the moments in the life of Raman against his "spatial context" to reveal him. One such "particular moment" in the life of Raman is when he and Daisy are left stranded in an open field with a huge tamarind tree standing nearby and canoping the stranded spot. The spot washed by soft light of the half moon rising on the distant horizon is gently blown over by cool breeze and all meet to create an exact atmosphere to arouse in Raman such sensation and passion that can affect his equanimity and provoke him to "behave like Rudolph Valentine in 'The Sheik" (92). 

A physical scene reflects the inside of a character. One such scene found in the novel is the cave scene that reflects the inner mind of Raman. Raman is taken inside the cave surrounded by thickets, he is led to the inner sanctum on a path which is circular and narrow with a low roof. The stone image is faintly visible by wick-light and the sanctum exudes fragrance, the spot is charged with holiness. Narayan's brief, measured setting and his choice of physical correlatives show metaphorically how Raman's thoughts filled with strong passions are evil while his soul is pure and innocent.

Narayan's description of Raman's meticulous preparation to dress himself, his extreme care to have his silk dress pressed regularly, his shaving of chin to a gloss and combing his hair back applying brilliantine over it is not without purpose. It shows the young man's extreme consciousness of his bearing and make-up which, he feels, will help him to find favour with his lady love.

Narayan's usual method of presenting contrasting characters to measure the depth of each is also found here. Daisy is antithetic to Raman in the sense that she has a mission in life and, except that, all other things are gross, drab and meaningless to her. She searches her identity in the solitary pursuit of her goal. She does not lose her time away in pointless cherishment of illusion like Raman. And by placing Daisy beside Raman, the novelist gives a fresh meaning to Raman's character.

To return to Rosie at this point will be more helpful to understand the role of and the complexity underlying Daisy and Rosie. Rosie taints herself by associating her physically with Raju,
and she remains all along conscious of her moral lapse. By subjecting her to more psychological realism, the author invites our sympathy for her. But Daisy is strikingly modern in her fierce sense of freedom, she has no moral awareness, no scruples of conscience except her occasional remorse at the betrayal of her emotions and instincts. Rosie and Nalini, two different names for the same person picturizes two separate identities, one with her debauchery, her sensuality and the other with her devotion to art and aesthetic pleasure. This "fictional use of fictional names" is a deliberate method used by the novelist to show a single person in her myriad forms and temperaments. After Rosie/Nalini leaves Raju, Raju becomes conscious of her individuality, her ability to sustain herself and her fulfilment of self through art. Raju in his association with Rosie also gets to know himself, his true self and his place in the scheme of life. Daisy is not such a complex character, but by the time she leaves Malgudi, Raman's passion is chiselled, his heart's burning gets subsided. Both Rosie and Daisy recede to the background after playing their desired roles in helping the respective protagonists to discover themselves.

In his *A Treatise on the Novel*, Liddell says that many novelists draw their characters from "a face seen in the street or in a train, from a chance word overheard. It is enough to have seen or heard something significant, and the novelist is haunted." "Haunted" is the right word for it until the character has been given life. True to Liddell's words, Narayan was "haunted" to put a tiger into a novel after seeing the photograph of a tiger displayed on the wayside for sale and a real tiger following his Master in a country fair. The picture of the tiger stirred in him the age old Hindu belief that "deep within, the core of personality is the same in spite of differing appearances and categories, and with the right approach you could expect the same response from a tiger as from any normal being." (10)

By the time the novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* was conceived, the novelist was well past seventy, an age when one, according to Hindu Varnashram dharma, enters sanyasa dharma after vanaprastha. The tiger Raja, the protagonist who in human reckoning is of seventy years old, after living a life of blood and violence, enters the period of renunciation and looks back on his life.

'Raja' is the fictional name of the tiger, the name that suggests his arrogance, his pride which
ruled his personality in his youthful days and defined his dealings with other animals during his jungle life. The author draws an analogy between the name and the tiger to express the tiger's make believe world that he (the tiger) once wove over himself. The tiger after suffering from the delusion of his self chosen role in the jungle kingdom realizes gradually of his littleness at the approaching twilight of his life. As Jagan's meeting with Chinna Dorai brings in him an internal change, Raja's realization of his role in the scheme of life is largely effected in his meeting with an hermit whom he calls Master. Like Jagan, Raja feels a change coming inside himself, a change from a proud, arrogant, egoist animal to a restrained, spiritually illuminated being, analogous to Narayan's human characters in their later stage.

The device of double focus works upon Raja to make his character more explicit, more illuminating. As with Raju, two characters, Raja, the sober and Raja, the drunk are superimposed. Raja looks back on his past through his present eyes and interprets the past events and incidents, all now looking to his eyes a debased, illusory, ignoble life. This telescopic self makes his character more interesting, more appealing and more lyrical.

Talkative Man is not the story of the title character but it is the story of a person whose type is found in the stories of Indian classical literature. Dr. Rann about whom the story is told is a philanderer of global scale and he represents the type of elusive husband whom the deserted wife goes on haunting and reclaiming till she feels tired and abandons her search.

Dr. Rann, another incarnation of Sampath and Raju, is an expert in the art of deception and has unsuspected depths of duplicity. This very art played by him creates a deceptive impression of him on the mind of the gullible Malgudians. The novelist has been able to compound the mystery surrounding Dr. Rann by giving him an unusual name, a very Indian name Ranganathan trimmed to double 'N'. Ranganathan is the other name of Vishnu who can take various names and various forms at different times and different places to hoodwink and play with the evil forces. By distorting the name Ranganathan and also by drawing an ironic analogy between him and the other name of Vishnu, the author throws an ironic slant on Dr. Rann's hypocrisy. Moreover, Ranganathan is the other name of Krishna who is known for his playful nature with the girls. Dr. Rann's hide and seek
with the girls of different countries and of different background informs his chicanery, only comparable to Krishna's art.

The guile and duplicity of the character is more pronounced when the novelist deliberately hides the place of his origin by giving it a twisted name, Timbuctoo, an unheard and unknown place. Having a bizarre name, an unfamiliar place of origin and a dubious qualification, Dr. Rann evokes more mystery with his kind of profession, the profession of a futurologist with the specialization in the study of possible destruction of the globe by a harmful weed. He fits into Currie's possibility of "transworld identifying individual."69

Dr. Rann like Vasu of The Man-eater of Malgudi is an unusual character in Malgudi standard. He evokes a queer sense in the Malgudi mind with his dress and appearance what Vasu did with his bearing. He, in his blue shirt, tie, shining shoes and felt hat in hand, is a strange figure for Malgudians. He arouses awe and wonder in them, his strangeness is more pronounced when the old sweeper, a Malgudi commoner, startled at his "gowned apparition" (32) flees the courtyard of TM's house. The strangeness in the dress is well matched with his blonde hair, greenish blue eyes and borderline complexion. This peculiar combination of dress and appearance in him added with his reticence makes him obscure and enigmatic. About the method of using external appearance to imply character-traits, Rimmon-Kenan says:

'... the metonymic relation between external appearance and character-traits has remained a powerful resource in the hand of many writers. One should distinguish in this connection between those external features which are grasped as beyond the character's control, such as height, colour of eyes, length of nose (features which get scarcer with the advancement of modern cosmetics and plastic surgery) and those which at least partly depend on him, like hair-style and clothes. While the first group characterizes through contiguity alone, the second has additional causal overtones."70

The author has here, like in his earlier novels, brought characters of oppositional type to
measure the depth and dimension of his main character. The talkative man Madhu is contrasted to Dr. Rann who speaks very little, reveals his mind rarely and squeezes the orbit of his movement artfully. This play of chicanery in him baffles simple Malgudians who take his incommunicado as a sign of his gentleness and scholarly mind. Also by contrasting Dr. Rann to his wife Sarasa, the novelist highlights the dimension of "unsuspected depths of duplicity" in him. Again, by repeatedly referring to Savitri-Satyavan myth he (novelist) makes a parody of the sincerity of Dr. Rann's promise to his lady love and high seriousness of a modern woman in her search of an elusive husband.

Unusual thinness of the novel offers little scope for the full development of the main character, hence the need for the novelist is to return to the descriptive method of characterization by telling the past life and activity of Dr. Rann through Sarasa. But this method of indirect presentation does not help much to unveil the inner realism of a character. Moreover, these short novels are not ideal for character revelation, they are rather the ideal form for brief but clear philosophical statement.

Nagaraj, the title character of the novel The World of Nagaraj is a common, ordinary human being who cherishes small comic illusions about life like composing a biography on Narada and taming his haughty brother Gopu. But, through ups and downs of his life's journey, he matures and understands the futility of his attempt to bend the circumstances in his favour. Faced with the complexities of life, he drifts and dithers and at last leaves himself to the vagaries of time.

Nagaraj's character does not develop through any serious conflict with the external opposite forces, it grows in his clash with the small comic irregularities of life that stand in the way of his achieving the life's ambition. Through the protagonist's reveries, hallucinations, mental address etc., the novelist attempts to explain worries, anxieties and restlessness, characteristic of a person belonging to a modern middle class society. Nagaraj's ambition to catch in words a bit of the cosmic design reveals the high hopes and aspirations of a person that remain mostly unfulfilled like most of our unrealized dreams in life. The predicament of Nagaraj is everyman's predicament which is more pronounced on his mental level. He howls at the imaginary fear of Tim falling off a
scooter, grows ill feelings towards Gopu for calling him a Narada, visualizes Gopu's tattering condition and his own acquiring the status of a writer.

In a work of art fantasy functions as an aesthetic device to describe, decode and analyse motives and concealed intentions. Desire of a man remaining largely unfulfilled, fantasy functions as the inevitable escape mechanism for individual fulfilment. It is what James Drever says, "a form of creative imaginative activity, where the images and trains of imagery are directed and controlled by the whim or pleasure of the moment." The element of fantasy defines largely Nagaraj's personality and his relation to others. Nagaraj is childless, he suffers from anxiety over the prospect of dying in that condition and dreads the possible torture in the other world. So he has a longing for having a son who, he believes, can save him from falling into hell for being a sonless. His inner craving for a son who can liberate him from perpetual damnation in hell finds full expression when he (Nagaraj), on receiving a letter from his brother Gopu asking him to adopt his nephew Tim to lit his funeral pyre, gloats inwardly over his bright prospect of getting deliverance from the life in hell and laughs loudly.

Scholes and Kellog in their The Nature of Narrative describe a scene from the Ulysses. When Leopold Bloom sitting in Davey Byrnes pub and taking a sip of Burgundy watches two flies stuck buzzing on the window pane, his mind by a Proustian process of association is drawn years into the past. In a rather similar situation, Nagaraj while sitting on the pyol and looking at a vagrant terrier takes back his memory to years past. The terrier was no other than a next door pedigreed white terrier with brown patches which was pampered a lot by his owner. When the neighbour went to New Extension, the terrier even after being provided with most comfortable living there returned to Kabir street, flourished on left overs found here in garbage heaps and enjoyed street fights with intruding dogs. The sight of the dog stirred up uneasy feelings in Nagaraj about Tim and he wondered what made him (Tim) prefer a mysterious existence to a cosy life at New Extension house. The incident, brief and measured, with verbal economy, reveals Nagaraj's introspective nature and his animosity towards Gopu since Tim is his (Gopu's) progeny.

The reality of Nagaraj's character receives a kind of dynamism in his uneven and conflicting
relation with different characters. His restlessness, his incongruities in life and his vacillating mood are revealed through his interaction with different characters. His meekness and his subdued temperament get revealed when he is placed beside aggressive and arrogant Gopu, his wishy-washy and dreaming nature comes to the forefront in his dealings with his more practical wife. Tim hoodwinks him while Saroja's strange antics puzzle him. Kavu Pandit cowards him and Bari remains inscrutable for him. In the resultant confusion, out of sheer dejection, he cries, "Life is getting more and more complex. All that I seek is freedom, peace of mind and scope to write my book" (117).

As is Narayan's practice, he uses apronymic name here to bring out the character traits of his protagonist. Nagaraj is the other name of Adi-Shesha, the thousand headed serpent on whose coils Vishnu rests, thus the name symbolizes the protagonist's tolerant and ungrudging nature on the onslaught of existential problems.

Nagaraj is a "flat" character, to use Forster's typology, since he does not change in course of the narrative, he remains where he was earlier. However, through his character, Narayan offers an interesting insight into human personality, that it is meek who survives and does not suffer much emotional trouble; if he suffers at all, it is temporary.

Bala, the chief character in GrandMother's Tale has her reference in the form of Raman's great grandmother in The Painter of Signs. By the time the novel was written, the writer had spent fifty five years of his literary career and produced fourteen novels, gradually losing interest in story element, and concentrating more on his idea of a particular human being.

In the novels of Narayan, women play different roles, sometimes they occupy centre stage in the life of the male protagonists, sometimes they remain on the fringe. These female characters in most of the novels of the author push the protagonists to the water of trouble, they bring nostalgic feelings to their hearts. They also help them to realize the futility of chasing after the illusory objects in life. When male characters remain more forceful, more vigorous and stronger in personality as Sampath and Margayya are, the female characters are pushed to the background. But when male characters remain weak as Sriram and Raman are, the female characters take upper hand and they determine the life course of male characters. We find in Narayan's women characters the picture of
a rebel, a willy-nilly schemer, a temptress and also a docile being with all her coyness and radiance.

In the gam to fN arayan's novels, women play lead roles only in The Dark Room and in GrandMother's Tale, and in both, women are shown as persons with grit and determination revolting against the male dominated world. In The Dark Room, Savitri challenges the infidelity of her husband, revolts and leaves her home, but ultimately she returns. However in the process, she cleanses Ramani, at least partially, of his false sense of male superiority and also saves him from moral damnation. In GrandMother's Tale, the chief character Bala is the great grandmother of the novelist who lived at a certain point of historical time whom the novelist describes through the eyes of his grandmother, thus making her an objective-subjective character. "In fiction we do sometimes use genuine proper names to pick out particular individuals and say something about them that is part of the make believe," says Currie. Bala is such a name in whom the borderline between fact and fiction vanishes. The unusual shortness of the novel, only seventy-one pages in print, stands as a barrier in the full revelation of the character's inner mind. However, but the character itself does not suffer from being realistically portrayed due to thinness of the work or the remoteness of time. Apart from it, a novel with a fine blending of historical facts and romance cannot indulge in psycho-analysis of its protagonist, and also it is not the aim of the novelist to show her (Bala's) mental conflict. Here he gives more importance to reveal the inner strength of his protagonist (his progenitor) than to manifest her inner turmoil.

Bala is modelled after legendary Savitri who brings back her husband from the clutches of Yama (the god of Death) by her sheer determination and presence of mind. By drawing an analogy between Bala and the prototype Savitri, Narayan unfolds Bala's will power, her presence of mind in the face of a crisis and her emphatic refusal to accept defeat in life.

This fierce determination and undaunted will power of Bala get better revealed when she is set against Surma, the other woman in the life of her husband Viswa. Narayan purposefully presents this character all tender and weak to throw light on the other aspect of female personality, thereby to measure the proportion of strength in Bala's character. The character of Viswa with his feeble protest, his helplessness against the design and assertion of Bala is drawn up only to demonstrate
the resourcefulness and amazonic mental strength of his wife Bala.

A close study of the methods of characterization in Narayan’s novels reveals that some background characters are so arranged in the work that they stand opposite to chief character in their understanding of life values. These characters constantly try to convince him/her to be practical, they admonish and warn him/her to shed illusions and prejudices. They are parents as in The Bachelor of Arts, friends as in The Guide, grandmother as in Waiting for the Mahatma, Aunt as in The Painter of Signs or wife as in The World of Nagaraj. This category of characters is again set against some other background characters who always tempt, by their ambiguous dealings, the chief character to pursue illusory objects of life as we find Dr. Pal motivating Margayya to acquire riches by unethical means or the priest tempting Raman to fall after Daisy.

A study of the methods used in Narayan’s novels shows that as if the novelist had some idea fixed in his mind about man in his relation to himself and to the outside world which he wants to elucidate taking support of his characters. Since these ideas are firmly imprinted on his mind, he creates almost identical characters repeatedly to focus on life’s eccentricity, and analyses them again and again so as to reinforce it on the reader’s mind, as if to show the commonness of human dilemma. Sriram’s character is not much different from Raman’s or Margayya’s character is at little variance with Jagan. This “creative pattern” in Narayan’s characterization does not suggest that the writer runs out of stock of characters or lacks inventive power or he is prone to repetition, rather the object is opposite. In no other novel except in The Man-eater of Malgudi and Talkative Man, the idea behind the chief character takes upper hand; in each s/he appears individual, real, rising above the type. Even characters like Savitri in The Dark Room and Daisy in The Painter of Signs have been created to illustrate author’s idea of the status of women in India in 1930’s and 1970’s, but nowhere do we see these characters slump into mere repositories of mental process. Narayan presents his characters in myriad forms as if he has found them so interesting that he is almost incapable of being bored by them.

With the repetition of characters having similar queerness and oddity, however, Narayan subjects his later character to more scrutiny by using sharpened tools so as to unfold him/her more
accurately, more convincingly, and also in a more balanced way. The later character is presented in
a different environment and in relation to different personae so as to reveal a personality in its
reaction to different set ups. Margayya has two overlapping objects in life, money and son, which
diffuse the intensity of focus on each. But Jagan, a later creation has only one object, i.e. the
wellbeing of his son, an object which moulds his personality and shapes his dealings with the
outside world. Sriram's wild craze for Bharati echoes Raman's blind passion for Daisy. To show
how such identical characters having different mental make ups behave in a different set up, the
novelist resorts to repetition of character. Hence repetition of character is not purposeless or a
disjointed effort on the part of the novelist, rather it is a deliberate, meaningful exercise to reveal a
personality in its different set ups. Thus it seems, as if, the writer is experimenting with the methods
to apprehend the whole of human nature.

Notes

1 James Calderwood and Harold E. Toliver, forward to Character, Perspectives on Fiction,

2 Calderwood and Toliver 356.

3 Calderwood and Toliver 343.


8 R. K. Narayan, Replies to the questionnaire, Kakatiya Journal of English Studies, vol. III,
9 Ved Mehta, 'The Train had just Arrived at Malgudi Station,' John is Easy to Please: Encounters with the Written and the Spoken World (London: Secker and Warburg, 1971) 148.


17 Liddell 111.


19 Rimmon-Kenan 69.


23 qtd in Kirpal 114.
24 Rimmon-Kenan 68.


26 Biswal 22.


28 Holmstrom 60.

29 Rimmon-Kenan 70.

30 Harvey 248.

31 Holmstrom 58.

32 Holmstrom 59.


34 qtd in Sunit Kumar Sarkar, *Freud* (West Bengal Book, 1990) 64.


36 The poem "The Old Playhouse" describes the sad plight of a woman, how she loses her freedom by dwindling into a wife and how then she is cowered beneath monstrous male ego to become dwarf.

37 Rimmon-Kenan 64.


40 Walsh 67.


44 Rimmon-Kenan 69.

45 Bennett and Royle 54.

46 Harvey 240.

47 Martin 118.


51 Walsh 86.

52 Biswal 85-86.

53 T. S. Eliot, The Family Reunion Part II, sc. II.

54 Walsh 127.

55 Welty 254.


58 Naik 70-71.


61 Bennett and Royle 54.

62 Rimmon-Kenan 66.

63 qtd in Martin 120.


65 Engel's Letters to Margaret Harkness, qtd in K. C. Bhatnagar, Realism in Major Indo-English Fiction (Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1980) 34.
Watt 26.
Currie 146.
Liddell 99.
Currie 136.
Rimmon-Kenan 65.
Scholes and Kellog 164.
Currie 148.

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