Time Art

In a work of narrative, behind the events and incidents, behind the vigour and vitality of the actions of characters, there remains such an element which is invisible, inaudible but inseparable. This element flows uninterruptedly and unabatedly through the narrative, peeps in and out of characters' mind and their inner consciousness. This element is time which cannot be eliminated, which cannot be ignored while designing a narrative, because time is "crucial to narrative."¹ Of course, modern narrative tendency is to subvert this element, but it cannot be fully effaced because to efface it is to eliminate all narrative art. Novel is also a narrative art whose movement implies "space" and which "must always involve time."² Novel tells a story and a story is a narration of events connected by subject matter, and it is related by time. As Robert Scholes puts it, "A real event is something that happens: a happening, an occurrence, an event. A narrated event is the symbolization of a real event: a temporal icon."³ In fact, life by values is celebrated through life in time which prompted E.M. Forster to observe, "... it is never possible for a novelist to deny time inside the fabric of his novel..."⁴ This chapter aims at studying the time art employed in the novels of R. K. Narayan because through the movement of time, through its shifts and switches Narayan's characters discover themselves, realize their follies, understand the meaninglessness of their running after 'hysterics and illusions.'

Conforming to the Indian classical conception of time, Narayan believes in its eternity, in its movement in a cyclical order. Narayan while explaining his conception of time vis-a-vis the human personality says, "The characters in the epics are prototypes and moulds in which humanity is cast and remain valid for all time."⁵ Again at another place, he comments, "Over an enormous expanse of time and space, events fall into proper perspective. There is suffering because of the need to work off certain consequences, arising from one's actions, in a series of births determined by the
law of karma. This belief in mythical and circular time does not induce the author to make an effort to emancipate his work from the tyranny of temporal time. He accepts it as one of the basic categories of human experience. By intersecting the timeless with time, by intercepting historical time in its flux, Narayan helps his characters understand their place in the scheme of life, helps the reader feel the rhythm of their (characters') experience. This convergence and divergence of metaphoric and metonymic time are experienced in almost each novel of the author. Srinivas's grasp of life's meaning against the background of mythical time, Raja's awareness of time in its circular form or the effect of timelessness on Raju through historical time are pointers in this direction.

Like the other elements of its craft, time art in Swami and Friends does not show any novelty. Time's movement is here outward and it crosses over the narrative without cutting through it. This outward movement of time does not help the reader much to read the inner recess of the character nor does it help him/her to probe his mind.

The temporal experience in the novel is mostly felt through the natural time when beginning from the first chapter "Monday Morning" the author follows it to the last, "On Tuesday Morning." The story time in the novel spreads hardly over one year as the action of the novel begins in the middle of the school session with Rajam joining the school on the re-opening day of the second term, possibly January, and ends in the early winter, the indication of which is found in chapter seventeen where there is the reference to the exposed portion of Swami's body lying on the jungle path "dumped with the slight early dew" (162). In no other novel as here, this physical movement of time indicated in terms of the passing of days, weeks and months is marked so clearly. There is a clear indication of the movement of time in the novel as, after we are informed of a new arrival in chapter seven, we are told in chapter eight that "This little one was now six months old . . ." (55) This indicates that the time passage from the seventh chapter to the eighth is six months. This lapse of time in its slices is a trick of the novelist to arrange the incidents, as happening to the life of Swami, in a chronological order, thereby to mark the linear progress of his (Swami's) experience. The time gap, apart from bridging the hostile attitude of Swami's friends towards him, serves as a healer to bring together the estranged friends, thus solving the earlier crisis that happened to the life
Piecemeal presence of time in the novel corresponding to each incident as happened to a particular phase in Swami's life does not carry a broken image of the character, rather it reveals a tract of experience that looks complete. However, reference to indeterminate time in the novel like "in a few days," "one afternoon" leads us nowhere, while reference to determinate time like "three weeks later" (43), "Tuesday Morning, ten days later" (174) etc. reminds us of the passing of physical time in a unilinear scale. Swami is put against this unidirectional form of time which enables us to record his physical and mental growth.

Celebration of natural time in the novel does not mean that the novelist totally ignores the play of time in it. In chapter thirteen, narrative time moves backward to give a summary account of Swami's activities during the gap of one and a half months, i.e. from the time of his expulsion from the Albert Mission School to the time of his admission to the Board High school. Moreover, there are variations in the tempo as experienced in the ant incident or in the homeward journey of Swami on the Mempi road that provide us a sense of variety. Reading time from Swami's disappearance till his discovery is more than the narrative time, as sixteen pages are given to narrate events of only two days. This discrepancy arises because the author feels it necessary to describe in detail Swami's impulsiveness and his fear for the outside world. In fact, though the narrative time covers only a period of one year, the sort of variation that the novelist introduces in the work leaves the impression of a complete tract of experience, an entire phase of life, as it were in the life of Swami.

In Swami and Friends time moves largely in a linear, unidirectional path where the art of arranging time is mainly influenced by its narrative structure which is, in itself, composed of smaller narrative units. But in The Bachelor of Arts, with the change in the narrative structure, the art of arranging time undergoes a change. The faintly circular plot structure hints slightly at the cyclical order of time present in the work and gives us the feeling that the author is trying to adopt the oriental conception of time, time in its cyclical movement.

A novelist is very often flexible in handling the element of time in his work. He can, accord-
ing to his need and desire, expand or squeeze the span of time to describe an event of few hours; he "passes over years in a few sentences but gives two long chapters to a dance or tea party." Thus the reading time is always controlled by a novelist.

In the first chapter of *The Bachelor of Arts* time moves very slow, rather in a leisurely pace, and events do not fall into quick succession. The events of a single day, the day on which Chandran participated in the college debate with an astounding success receive an unusual detailed treatment covering more than fifteen pages. The amount of attention given to a single day's activity in the life of the protagonist is not without purpose, it is a strategy on the part of the author to reveal, from the very beginning, Chandran's sense of romantic idiocy and his vision of a carefree life. Chandran's utmost satisfaction at his spectacular success in the college event followed by a late night visit to the cinema house is described in such vividness that it helps the reader to form an impression of the adolescent psyche of the character. Again, it is not without any purpose that the novelist takes long six pages to describe one day's acquaintance of Chandran with Kailash. His aim is here to make Chandran see thoroughly the other side of the life and get more disgusted with his present state of affairs so as to receive necessary impetus to take the next step in his life, i.e. the borrowed role of a sanyasi. However, the author dismisses the long eight months wanderings of his protagonist only in seven pages. It is because, the novelist's aim is here not to record the experience of his character in his wanderings, but to take the incident as a stopgap arrangement so as to prepare him (Chandran) to enter a new phase in life. This varied pace of time is also noticed in other two places in the novel; one, during the marriage negotiations when, for a larger part, time moves on slowly as if to heighten its impact on a love-lorn mind and reveal his (Chandran's) varied moods, and the other, towards the end, during Chandran's negotiation for paper agency when it moves fast as if to bring a quick resolution to Chandran's business venture and serve as an agent to prepare the character to settle in life.

The movement of time in *Swami and Friends* is almost external, it does not have any internal effect on the character. But in *The Bachelor of Arts* time has its effect on Chandran's mental as well as on his physical plane. On his mental plane the duration of four years makes him more experi-
enced in life, frees him from "distracting illusions and hysterics" (123) and brings a sort of emotional equilibrium on him. On his physical level the effect of time is reflected in him with his cheek bones protruding, limbs becoming horny, complexion turning from brown to a dark tan and his looks turning dead and hair growing unhindered during his eight months wanderings.

As in Swami and Friends, here the movement of time is recorded clearly and neatly enabling the reader to mark its passage and progress. Four crucial months in the life of Chandran are dismissed in a single sentence-"July, August, September, and October were months that glided past..." (17) while definite passage of time is recorded with the mention of Chandran's observation, "But I am nearly twenty-four" (125) against the narrator's comment, "He was not eighteen but twenty one" (11). The novel also contains a number of indeterminate time that do not throw much information on action or on character, but always hint at the forward movement of time.

In the work, time moves mostly in a chronological order except for a brief backward movement as seen in the scene where Chandran standing in the college union hall, about three years after his college days, reflects upon his past. His memory takes him back to his good old college days, offers him a scope to compare the present with the past and helps him come to terms with his present life and its surroundings. But this character motivated anachronies do not deviate from narrative chronology.

A deeper study of time scheme in the novel reveals how throughout the work two time scales run side by side, time in its impermanence and time in its reflection of a proper order. For Chandran, time is romantic and transient. His romantic view on time helps him to switch over easily from the thoughts of Malathi to the thoughts of Susila and accept the experience of the moment. But for Chandran's mother, an idealised order of events is a frame for awareness of time. The observation of Lakshmi Holmstrom in this context is pertinent. To quote her:

It was because of romantic view of time and events that Chandran falls in love immediately and intensely with Malathi.

While for Chandran the experience of the moment alone counts, his mother takes the opposite view. For her, events in time have value only in
so far as they reflect the "proper order" prescribed in time honoured formulas.  

Narayan's treatment of time in *The Dark Room* marks a little deviation from his earlier novels. In *Swami and Friends* time in blocks corresponding to slices of incidents moves in a chronological order and in *The Bachelor of Arts* linear movement of time gets a little jerk towards the end. But in *The Dark Room* though time moves considerably in a linear scale, sometimes character motivated time in the form of memories, reminiscences, dreams etc. moves backward and forward bringing before the reader a full view of the protagonist.

*The Dark Room* opens in an indeterminate time capturing the incidents of a day in the life of the protagonist and the same continues till the third chapter. Expressions like "as ever," "one evening" in sentences "At eight thirty Savitri's ears as ever were the first to pick up the hoarse hooting of the chevorlet horn" (11), "Savitri was in Janamma's house one evening . . . " (23) suggest what Martin while discussing narrative temporality says, "iterative narration," i.e." . . . repeated occurrence of the same event . . . described once." In chapter three, time is taken to a distant past in the form of a film show that narrates a legend to create an "illusion of immediacy." The legend provides Savitri and Ramani a framework to interpret an event, imaginary or real, happened in the hoary past, according to their own situations, and then to relate it to them. The event is also used by the novelist to appropriate the present.

The narrative moves within determinate time from fourth chapter till the last-from September to few weeks ahead of summer, "Summer was still a few weeks ahead" (115), the narrative records, and from now on it moves till the end within the time of three days. Earlier, about four months time was taken to describe the events leading to Savitri's growing marital discord as appears in chapter four while another three months' time was taken to cover the high romance between Ramani and Shanta Bai that led to the climax of the story in chapter seven. The novelist thus takes about seven months time to build up the tension and the conflict in the family of Savitri. But in the later part of the novel he takes about ninety pages to cover events of two days and three nights in the life of the protagonist. This long reading time covering sufficient narrative space is
aimed at revealing the deeper individual self of the character. It also helps the author in solving logically basic questions and problems faced by a Hindu married woman and the society. The question confronting the writer is whether to allow a Hindu married woman having a family to spend days and nights outside her home and family environment in anonymity for eking out an independent living or to force her to return to the fold of the family as soon as possible. Narayan's Indian sensibility does not allow Savitri to remain outside the family fold for a long time, so he brings about a quick resolution to the problem by subjecting her to all sorts of physical discomfort and emotional starvation within a brief time. This condensation of time also serves another purpose; it gives the novel a dramatic effect which Beach supports when he stresses on the short period of time for bringing dramatic quality to a work of fiction.10

Narayan allows his reader to get a glimpse of Savitri's past life, her hopes and aspirations so as to form an opinion about her by comparing and contrasting her present with her past. He achieves this by taking the help of her memory, recollection, dreams etc. that do not disturb the chronological order of the narrative. "The act of remembering, fearing, or hoping is a part of the linear unfolding of the first narrative. . . It is only the content of the memory, fear, or hope that constitute a past or future event."11 In chapter four, during doll display, Savitri relapses into memory and recollection, an act that gives the novelist necessary scope to present her pleasant childhood days which stand in stark contrast to her present drudgery. Again, at the time of her attempt to commit suicide, her mind reverts to her past where her mental condition with all its agitations is made to dance before the reader. The novelist skilfully presents here time's decceleration pace by frequently switching from the present (focusing on her present condition) to the past (recollecting the memories of her childhood days) and then to the future ("must go and see my sister . . . ") and also introduces broken time in the form of disjointed expression. In the narrative as time moves backward with the help of reminiscences, memory etc., it also moves forward in the form of a dream of the protagonist as found in chapter six. But in each, the movement is in character's mind, it is not attributable to the narrator.

Not that all segments of the text in a novel correspond to story duration, there are some
that correspond to zero story duration. In *The Dark Room* such a "descriptive pause" occurs in chapter eight where the novelist describes Mari's burglary habit. The pause interrupts the action between Savitri's plunging into the river water and Mari's rescue operation, but it does not progress or retard the story.

Novelists in conformity to the mood of the characters or in their relation to joys and sorrows of life sketch the portrait of physical time. Time, public time, is impersonal and objective, but it plays a role in setting or influencing the mood of a character. As Noon observes, "No major artist in recent literature, whatsoever his putative metaphysics or temperamental intolerance of time may have been, has completely succeeded in eliminating the public referents of time." An aspect of time art that appears again and again in *The Dark Room* is the occurrence of some of the major incidents in Savitri's life against the backdrop of a particular physical time. Almost all the major confrontations faced by Savitri with the outside world take place either at late evening or at night. Savitri's first serious conflict with Ramani takes place at an evening which forces her to sulk in the dark room while it is in a dark night that she flees her house "like a hunted animal" to commit suicide. And the same pitch darkness in a temple shanty arouses in her the sense of fear for the outside world that ultimately compels her to make compromise on her hostile family life.

By the time Narayan began to write *The English Teacher* he had undergone a great psychic development following the untimely death of his wife and his subsequent reconciliation to it. This had its effect on his views on schemes of life that, in turn, made a strong impact on his conception of human time. Once his views on human life on the material plane got changed, his conception of time also underwent a transformation, and he portrayed time more and more from the Indian classical angle which is mythical and regenerative. He began to believe that "Everything is bound to come out right in the end; if not in this world, at least in other worlds." This counterpoise of human time with mythical time is not for the first time found here; it is also visible, albeit faintly, in his first novel where Swami prays for the salvation of the soul of an ant. But what is significant here, in comparison to his earlier novels, is the assured application of the mythical time. Commenting on the time scheme in the novels of R.K. Narayan, K. Chellappan says:
R.K. Narayan in whose novels the mythic or metaphoric vision successfully penetrated by the metonymic or ironic mood; and in their vision and structure we can see the intersection of the timeless with time, the still point with the turning world still moving, of which the dance of Nataraja, which is also his favourite image, is the archetype.\(^{15}\)

In *The English Teacher* what first catches the reader's attention is the presence of two categories of time which gradually emerge in two sections of the novel; one, the time on the material plane continuing till the death of Susila, as referred to in chapter three, and the other, the time on the atemporal plane running from chapter four till the end of the narrative. So long as Susila was alive, Krishna experienced intensely the physical time and the narrative moved following the natural time, week after week, month after month. When Susila came to live with Krishna, their daughter Leela was only seven months old and on the third birth day of Leela, Krishna's father desired to make an arrangement for providing them a shelter. The couple led a blissful life during these twenty nine months time, time did not prove oppressive for Krishna, it moved in keeping pace with the marital bliss barring certain minor domestic conflicts. After this, the recordable time moved for about another month till the death of Susila. There is an ellipsis of time between the third and the fourth chapter which is about three or four months. But after this, time has its inward effect on Krishna, "A terrible fatigue and inertia had come over me these days" (126). Then most of the novelistic actions take place on a different plane where Krishna's temporal existence merges with the atemporal existence of his wife. On human plane, where thought is to be realized, it needs efforts that involve time whereas on spiritual plane, time is immaterial. But because Krishna lives still on physical plane, physical time tickles for him. We find mention of some particular days during his psychic experiment that indicate the movement of this physical time.

In the novel, at many places, human time cuts across the mythical time. The village farmer's garden where Krishna establishes communion with the other self of Susila has a lotus pond, on the bank of which stands a temple which has a mythical existence. The temple carries the sense of atemporality for the fact that it sprang up from earth with the chanting of a name by Shankara who
happened to pass the way.

In the arrangement of human actions and events, the author has maintained, on the whole, a chronological continuity, the actions and events follow one after another in a linear sequence. Time is sometimes reversed and localized, as when Krishna recollects his childhood days or his early marriage days, to dramatize particular subjective experience. But it does not hamper the chronological order of the story in a big way. However, what catches the attention of the reader is the slowness of the movement of the events during the bedridden moment of Susila. Time moves during the period slowly, it heightens the pathos in the life of the protagonist, thirty pages are taken to describe the twelve days' happenings, most of it being repetitive. Thus there is a discrepancy between the story time and the text time. But the discrepancy does not hold back the overall artistic beauty of the work, rather it is a trick of the author; longer the reading time, greater is the scope to probe into the inner mind of the protagonist.

The locus of the narrative lies at the moment when the protagonist experiences a ratified, romanticized moment with his 'this self' merging with Susila's 'other self.' It is the moment when the protagonist passes from humanly felt experience to an inexpressible sense of Timelessness, from the "lament of mutability" to a "sense of fulfilment." At this moment, Krishna, in his quest for spiritual revelation, is least concerned about the contingencies of past or present but for the eternity Time helps him to achieve emotional stability taking past, present and future into one, it "inaugurates, sustains and augments" his "life's movement towards completion, placing everything in an evolving context and bringing everything to maturity."16

The novel where strands of autobiographical voice are maintained with the narration in the first person, events most often tend to appear remote in time, the illusion of presentness and immediacy is rarely achieved, the hero-reader identification is seldom maintained. Mendilow says, "... a novel in the first person rarely succeeds in conveying the illusion of presentness and immediacy... and there is an avowed temporal distance between the fictional time-that of the events as they happened and the narrator's actual time-his time of recording those events."17 But in The English Teacher this does not happen exactly. In the second part of the book, time becomes
pre-eminently subjective, a kind of purely personal "epiphany," an illumination of consciousness that succeeds in creating illusion of presentness and immediacy. The other technique that the author adopts to make immediate involvement of his reader in the cause of his protagonist is by narrating the events through letters and diaries. The diary recording of the events following Susila's cremation and the letters all written in present tense induce the reader to have a sense of immediate involvement in the cause of Krishna. Martin says, letters "in contrast to narration . . . use the present tense, thus inducing in readers a sense of immediate involvement and anticipation."\textsuperscript{18}

Narayan's imaginative world operates in Timelessness but world being a "space term," the narrative fiction "calls out attention to time and a sequence in time."\textsuperscript{19} So while discussing Narayan's conception of time, it is worthwhile to say how through human time, the author moves towards Timelessness, because physical time always possesses "a meaningful relevance to our own experiences and our own way of life."\textsuperscript{20}

In \textit{The English Teacher} Krishna reaches a point in timelessness but as this point of human experience is hard to bear for long, he comes down again to his temporal self. The same notion of time is carried more vigorously and more confidently to the author's next novel \textit{Mr. Sampath} where we see a balance between the human time and the time in its eternity. The dual consciousness that operates throughout the novel provides the framework for revealing this divergent and convergent views of time. Sampath basically remains on the plane of human time and takes the mythical events as a means to fulfil his temporal desires. His preference for performing the role of Shiva is nothing but a desire to consummate his amorous relationship with Shanti who is playing the role of Parvati. He justifies his desire for a second wife citing the sanction of religion, "After all, our religion permits us to marry many wives" (180). In Sampath, we also discover faint trace of his craving to live in Timelessness as he lives in a make believe world of art and love and cultivates altruistic philosophy in life that crosses sometimes the temporal boundary.

Srinivas among all the fictional characters of Narayan affirms most loudly author's views of time, albeit in an overt form. He transports the everyday reality into a timeless order where time past becomes the time present and time present becomes the time future. For him, time moves in
a cyclical order cutting across spatial dimension. In the beginning of the narrative Srinivas experiences human time and is highly troubled by it. But through the passage of this physical time, he gradually comprehends the mythical time and time's regenerative nature:

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\ldots \text{with every passing month he felt the excruciating pain of losing time. The passage of time depressed him. The ruthlessness with which it flowed on a swift and continuous movement,} \ldots \text{Every New Year's Day he felt unhappy. All around he felt there were signs that a vast inundation was moving onward} \ldots (11).
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This sense of depletion of time turns in the end to what Srinivas feels:

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\ldots \text{throughout the centuries,} \ldots \text{this group was always there. Ravi with his madness, his well wishers with their panaceas and their apparatus of cure} \ldots \text{sooner or later he shook off his madness and realised his true identity though not in one birth, at least in a series of them} \ldots \text{The whole of eternity stretched ahead of one, there was plenty of time to shake off all follies. Madness or sanity, suffering or happiness} \ldots \text{in the rush of eternity nothing mattered (207-208).}
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This cycle of time when seen from a larger perspective becomes for him the mythical time, the time in its circular path:

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\text{Dynasties rose and fell. Palaces and mansions appeared and disappeared. The entire country went down under the fire and sword of the invader, and was washed clean when Sarayu overflowed its bounds. But it always had its rebirth and growth (207).}
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Srinivas affirms here the regenerative time that flows continuously setting out to span the vast abyss of historical time. His imaginative world is, thus, essentially in Timelessness.

When Cobley says, "Narrative is therefore not just a matter of paying attention to individual incidents on time-line," he recognizes what Ricour calls "emplotment" that places succession of events "at the crossing point of temporality and narrative."21 In Mr. Sampath author's skill in creat-
ing the chronological order in the narrative through the illusion of chronological disorder is remark-
able. He shows the sequence of events in some places in an apparently irregular manner or by
fragmenting it into a number of parts. Sampath appears formally on the fictional stage after more
than one third of the narrative. In spite of this, in spite of the author's deliberate withholding of the
formal introduction of Sampath to the reader for such a long time, there is no disruption of the
chronological sense of him because repeated reference to Sampath as the printer has been made
from the beginning.

The narrative anachronism is also noticed in the novel with the author's use of flashbacks. In
some novels of Narayan the movement of time goes back to a distant past, long beyond the first
narrative. The discourse time having been condensed to achieve a dramatic effect, the story time is
much extended backward to present principal episodes happening to the life of the character prior
to the opening of the main line of action. This renders to the character a strong impression. The
present of a character is moulded and shaped by the past events, past gets reflected on the waking
consciousness of the character now living in his present. The flashback device helps the character
to compare his present, it enables the author to criticize the present in the light of the past. The
technique is also sometimes used to fill in the gap of the story, while at some other time its object
becomes to create a dimension of time by putting the gloomy, uncertain present or imminent future
side by side the past glowed with sweet and light moments. This technique is achieved by upset-
ting the chronological order of events in a story. As Beach points out:

There seems to be two main reasons for the manner of narration which
departs widely from the chronological order of events. One . . . is first
"to get him in with a strong impression;" and then, to give him the deve-
lopment which he deserves, you "work backwards and forwards over
his past." The other reason is a question of naturalness, lifelikeness,
and getting away from the formality associated with an author, "The
object of the novelist is to keep the reader entirely oblivious of the fact
that the author exists—even of the fact that he is reading a book."
In chapter four, after declaration of the discontinuation of *The Banner* due to a "lightening strike" in the press, the narrative goes back to the past through a long flashback of Srinivas. The narrator tells how and when Srinivas met Sampath and how he was cajoled to hand over the latter the responsibility of bringing out the journal. This flashback is an instance of "internal analepsis." In another flashback of Srinivas, in chapter one, which is external to first narrative, the narrator tells how Srinivas landed in the town with a mission. In the novel, time is telescoped, ellipsis ([It went smoothly on until to-day"(73)]) is resorted and summary method is frequently followed to strike a balance between the story time and the textual space.

The *Financial Expert* explores the world of Timelessness in a very subtle manner. In the novel protagonist Margayya is defined mostly by his dubious and inverted notion of reality. He lives in a self-created autonomous world which is time denying, which seeks to delimit time in an allegorical way. He is obsessed with the thoughts of money, considers himself a saviour of mankind in money matters and for him, "Money alone is important in this world. Everything else will come to us naturally if we have money in our purse" (17). And at the same time Margayya gloats over the visions of his son obtaining degrees from America and growing into the class of aristocrats. Thus, Margayya's world is a world of fantasy which denies time, "violates the real, contravenes it, denies it, and insists on this denial throughout." But the narrative which explores such a world should always have a "tangential relation to the 'real', interrogating its values only retrospectively and allegorically." Allegories and myths appeal to our mind and imagination respectively when they are bound in a narrative. Narrative is "the symbolic presentation of a sequence of events connected by subject matter and related by time. Without temporal relation, without continuity of subject matter we have only a list." In the novel there is an allegorical conflict between the goddess of wealth and the goddess of learning underlying which there lies the timeless world of fantasy, and to make it appear real, human time is superimposed.

The narrative in *The Financial Expert* achieves an epic dimension. It covers a time span of eighteen years in the life of Margayya. During this period, Balu grew from a toddler into an adult of nineteen, the protagonist rose from a money quack to a money wizard, and then slumped into an
insolvent. The story time is taken backward when the novelist takes the help of flashbacks to present some important events that had happened to the life of the protagonist before the first narrative began. This human drama encompassing such a vast stretch of time is presented only in one hundred and seventy eight printed pages and it depicts only those events in the life of Margayya that help the novelist define his world views. To adjust the discourse time to story time, Narayan takes frequently the help of summary method and uses ellipses repeatedly. References to sentences and half sentences like "Balu progressed steadily from class to class and reached the Fourth Form" (89), "... he got the correct answer very soon, in less than eight weeks..." (111) "... a fortnight later" (115), "six months of this life..." (148), "The tide rolled back in about three or four months" (177) suggest the forward movement of time, overlooking the intervening events.

The first thirty pages in the novel narrate two days' events in Margayya's life telling about his money mania, his huge dreams, his unintended villainies and his small vanities. Detail account of a single day's events in first twenty pages may not match the wonderful use of time in some of the novels of Dostoevsky or Mann, but it certainly bears the mark of Narayan's mature and confident handling of time art to explore the individual self. Again, the author takes a lot of text time to describe one day's event in the life of Margayya in his business dealings with Lal that ultimately finds him rolling in wealth. This deceleration pace of time is not without purpose, it is meant to reveal the business acumen, the bargaining capacity and the market strategy of Margayya. In the narrative text time is telescoped according to the author's desire. For example, the cumbersome ceremony of worship to propitiate the goddess of wealth that takes forty days is dismissed only in one and a half pages because the writer's aim here is not to tell his audience about the rituals but to focus on his protagonist's belief in supernatural agents to turn his fortune. This flexibility of tempo is one of the major instruments of the novelist to indicate the relative value of each occurrence. Though the discourse time is shortened, the novelist does not forget to indicate the passage of time, as he says how the forty days' time had had its effect on Margayya. Margayya when emerged from the little room had grown a beard and "moustache and hair on his nape... His voice became weak... (he) had lost ten pounds in weight..." (57). The device of descriptive pause has been
used in the text in page one hundred and twenty two where the office arrangement of Margayya is described. It corresponds to zero story duration and shows the little vanities and ego bloated personality of the protagonist.

While handling time, Narayan is not averse to utilize the devices like flashbacks and flashforwards as we find in Mr. Sampath. To give an example of the external analepsis, when Margayya, grief stricken at the news of his son's reported death, remembers how, when his wife had a problem in conceiving, he along with his wife had made a pilgrimage and undertaken all sorts of troubles in the fond hope of being blessed with a son. He connects the present sad event to the happy memory of the past and more he escapes into his past, more he shows his craze for money. After the pilgrimage, after the blessing materialized, Margayya immediately offered the god the promised pledge, i.e. silver coins equivalent to the weight of the child because the child "showed a tendency to grow heavier each day" (132). And in the next moment, Margayya while travelling by train to Madras in search of his "dead son" is seen sitting in a third class compartment to save money. So the flashback apart from arousing our sympathy for the protagonist in his most trying moment also presents him in his usual self that helps a reader experience the fictional time in the narrative.

Narayan uses here the device of flashforward to handle time. Margayya found Balu, suspected to have been dead, in a dirty, dishevelled, weak state in a cinema hall in Madras doing odd jobs, and felt heaven fall. The narration at this moment takes a leap forward in time and the narrative records, "As he later explained to his relations, the moment he saw him he felt as if he had swallowed a live cinder" (141). Thus the flashback and the flashforward devices used in a single bit of narrative reveal, what Bergson says in Time and Free Will, "an inner life with well distinguished moments," it is used "to humanise his (author's) protagonist and to keep us involved in his life story and acquaint us with his thought process." Another chronological disorder is found when, after recording the completion of the admission process, the narrative records the act of Margayya's invitation to his brother to participate in the procession on the occasion of Balu's admission to the school. This discrepancy is not a slip but it is a deliberate anachronism adopted by the author to
capture the little oddities in human time.

Patches of interior monologue scattered in the novel help the reader see Margayya in his present condition. To give one example, when Margayya remembered his encounter with Dr. Pal near the lotus pond who had offered him the manuscript of a pornograph to earn money, he thought:

This man wanted to put in picture—what a wicked fellow... the priest had told him to let his mind rest fully... He visualized his future. How was wealth going to flow in? When he became rich, suppose he brought from his brother the next house too... (56).

Thus what we see here is Margayya's mind in his waking consciousness switching from past to present and from present to future. Despite this, the author has been successful in creating an illusion of presentness in the mind of the reader as the protagonist even in an uncertain moment like this remains his usual self in thinking how to acquire his brother's property. Mendilow writing about the use of the technique of interior monologue to achieve presentness says:

The patches of interior monologue in the novel is capable of achieving lies in the effect of presentness produced by the fact that such writing is in the present tense; it gains thereby an immediacy what it loses for most readers by its use of private and esoteric forms of expression, association and symbols which hinder easy identification with the protagonists.27

In the story, with Margayya's selection of Dr. Pal to tout for his private financing business, the course of events gets altered, time begins to accelerate. There follows the scene where he, in an unguarded moment, assaults Dr. Pal suspecting him of corrupting his son. This is the turning point in the career of Margayya. From this moment, time moves swiftly and definitely towards the end and the end is brought quickly. In the beginning of the novel we see time gradually gathering itself up, then beginning to move, its end still unknown to us, then as its goal becomes clear, it marches with steady acceleration, and finally destiny takes over Margayya.

In Waiting for the Mahatma the main narrative moves only within the time frame of five and
a half years, i.e. from the time of the Quit India movement in 1942 to the death of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948. However, another four years of narrative time is experienced in the first twelve pages of the book. The text opens when Sriram was twenty; time is omitted abruptly when in a half sentence in page twelve the narrative records, "It was an unruffled, quiet existence, which went on without a break for the next four years..." (12) and suddenly Sriram reaches twenty four. After this ellipsis of time, the narrative moves without perceptibly cutting short the objective time except while describing the prison life of Sriram. Sriram's prison life is telescoped as if to avoid the monotony of it, "The days, weeks and months, that followed were similar, one day following another without much distinction..." (130).

Narrative moves for most part in a linear sequence depicting the events in the life of the protagonist from the year 1942 to 1948. Time is sometimes localized and some times it celebrates the romanticized moments rich with national pride, and sometimes it records incidents of grave historical consequences. Though time is sometimes reversed and sometimes taken forward, the narrative has limited chronological disorder. The moment of Mahatma Gandhi's sojourn at Malgudi is shown before the arguments and the decisions taken on it at the official level. Again, the narrative takes a leap forward in time when before the actual arrival of the Mahatma, the wife of Mr. Natesh, the Municipality chairman, attacked her husband for his failure in introducing her to him. The death of Bharati's father, an event that had taken place before the first narrative began is reported repeatedly. An internal analepse has been introduced when Sriram while changing his dress in the downhill thought over the trials and tribulations he had gone through once while learning the art of spinning and weaving. An external analepse is also seen in relation to Sriram when, at the suggestion of Jagadish to shave off his crop to facilitate a disguise to avoid police surveillance, he remembered how he had to face humiliation once earlier from a barber while doing the same act. The first flashback when suggests the reversal of role between the young lovers and Sriram's determination to win his object of love, the second shows Sriram in his impulsiveness, the nature that is his defining trait, and both these flashbacks are not isolated, they help in enriching the theme.

The temporal-spatial relation in the novel is sometimes disturbed. While describing Mahat-
ma's visit to Malgudi, the narrative takes a deceleration effect as Mahatma's four days stay at Malgudi is described in about one fourth space of the text. Few hours of an evening during the first meeting between Sriram and Bharati take six pages and it is not without purpose, because, during these few hours, we hear the longings of two young persons, their sense of loneliness and their yearning to overcome their desolation. During this period, Sriram is put to test by Bharati to prove his earnestness and to show his sincerity, both to her and to the cause for which she stands. Once he passes it, he is put to further test on the next morning in front of Mahatma Gandhi; and, like the earlier test, it also takes a lot of reading time covering more than eight pages. In between these two segments of time, there is some text space to indicate the passing of the night as if to provide a sense of time's continuity.

There are two temporal realities in the novel; one is the objective, impersonal and historical reality, the frame in which India's freedom struggle, its rich moments of success, and also its grave historical tragedies are put and the other level of time is that on which the great drama of life takes place, the time that silently and unobtrusively moves on witnessing the strong passions in young hearts and their defiance to space and physical time. This subjective time meets and transcends the historical time in the wedding of Bharati and Sriram with the blessings of Mahatma at the time of his death. This moment is the romanticized moment, it is rich with great emotional fulfilment for Sriram and Bharati. The microcosm of the love making of Sriram and Bharati is artistically and emotionally integrated into the larger macrocosm of India's national history, the narrative operating by a principle of simultaneity. Thus, the human drama operating alongside the political drama becomes timeless in the fulfilment of the state of quest for the protagonist, though the kind of fulfilment offers on the other hand a possibility for another narrative.

The time art in The Guide is more complex than found in all the earlier novels of the author. Narayan's artistic excellence in handling the counterpoint aspect of time contributes here to the clear expression of the underlying theme of the novel, i.e. illusion vrs. reality. Two threads of time, present and past, operate on the narratorial level. Raju, the protagonist unreels his past in his own narration while the omniscient narrator narrates the events now happening to Raju. In the narrative
time swings forward and backward enabling the author to present the story of Raju's past and present authentically and realistically. These two threads of time are woven in the narrative in an intricate but artistic fashion.

Modern writers intertwine very often the exposition with main thread of action; in short, the narrative oscillates between backward and forward movement of narration. This "time shift" technique is used to "get in the character first with a strong impression and then work backwards and forwards over his past." The time shift technique is so exquisitely used in The Guide that when the past of Raju gets exposed in a braided manner with the main line of action, it does not serve as an appendage to the main thread of story but remains an integral part to it without which the main action would have remained incomplete and unconvincing. In the novel, six chapters are told in flashback technique while two are told in flashforward and the other three are a medley of both retrospective and anticipatory flashes. The narrative when focuses on the immediate action of Raju remains in temporal present and when it offers information about Raju's past in his (Raju's) own voice it remains in temporal past. As a result, Raju becomes a subjective character reviewing his own disagreeable past, he also remains an objective character witnessing his present predicament. This hide and seek of time in relation to Raju intensifies pathos surrounding him, but at the same time it throws ironic slant on him. This swing between the time past and the time present of the protagonist helps us follow, as Alan W. Friedman observes in another context, not only "the action of the past but also the mind of the protagonist narrator as it seeks to recapture and depict, and therefore create the past in the image of the present."

The story covers more than thirty years of natural time. The time past is a contour of Raju's metamorphose to "Swamihood" through his life roles of a guide, a lover, a dance manager, and a prisoner. The past events when recounted are shortened, summarized intricately and events spanning over thirty years time are told in one night. The narration of past life of Raju covers about one hundred and fifty pages in the text and after it concludes, we move to the present situation as narrated by the omniscient narrator. Chapters three, five, seven, eight, nine and ten are occupied by the narration of Raju's past while chapters six and eleven tell about the protagonist Raju in his
concrete immediacy. As in a binocular the things of distance seem coming nearer and nearer, the past of Raju seems coming closer and closer to the present situation in chapters one, two and four that mix up Raju's past and present, creating an illusion of immediacy. The chapters having braided time scheme have scenes covering more text space that help in achieving a decceleration effect. This, in turn, helps in providing a strong impression of the continuous dramatic present. Scenes following one another, smoothly and naturally, achieve almost an uninterrupted continuity of effect that enables the reader, what Mendilow says, "to merge himself into the fictive present and fictional time of the book and creates in him the illusion of being present at the action..." This method of parallel placing of Raju's past with Raju's present while draws the reader's sympathy for him also makes him look sharper, more authentic and more tragic. To quote M.K. Naik,

This persistent juxtaposition of the present and the past... shows with inexorable logic how the protagonist's present is rooted in the past and how the past also inevitably shapes his future.31

The method of showing the past of the protagonist in his own narration and the present of him by the omniscient narrator helps the reader connect his (proganist's) two worlds, and it makes his present criticize his past. If Raju had been shown only in his past, the reader would have been deprived of knowing his present state, if he had been shown only in his present, many incidents in his life that occurred in the past and shaped his present would have remained unrevealed and the character would have lacked verisimilitude. Hence the time shift device employed here strengthens the effectiveness of the narrative and heightens the vividness of the events now happening to the life of the character.

The crux of the decceleration pace in the novel is in the last chapter where longer text space is devoted for short duration of story time; fifteen pages are taken to describe twelve days' action. The story time moves very slow depicting in every possible detail the carnival attitude of the objective world to Raju's fast and the grim realities faced by the subjective world of Raju. The aggregate clock time covered in this section is less than the average time covered in earlier sections. This inevitably results in concentration of action in time and provides a "sense of our being
The author beautifully captures the movement of natural time along with the internal time of the character. He achieves it through the description of the movement of natural time indicated by the harvest periods, festival time and changing positions of the sun, rain and mist and the cycle of season. Raju is a witness to the movement of time which has its indication in the internal change of his physical bearing. During his swamihood his "beard now caressed his chest, his hair covered his back, and around his neck he wore a necklace of prayer beads. His eyes shone with softness and compassion, the light of wisdom emanated from them" (79).

The novel witnesses an emphatic impact of Timelessness on the character's mutable time. Raju, in his realization of the meaning of life, leaves his temporal world and gets poised to enter the world of eternity. He forgets the movement of clock time-hours, days and weeks-during his "swamihood" and, during his fast, he becomes least concerned about the flow of it. At this moment, he develops the thought, ("if by avoiding food I should help the trees bloom, and the grass grow, why not do it thoroughly?" (213)), in line with the immortal swamis and saints, and aspires to become a saviour of mankind. At this moment of his great fulfilment, he remains immersed in subjective time and gradually moves towards a "vital moment" that knows no boundary of time, that sees chronological time dissolved and revoked. In true mythic tradition he enters the process of "thingification" leaving behind the mutable time.

If The Guide manifests subtle play of mythical time and the human time, The Man-eater of Malgudi manifests it in an obvious manner. Here we shall see how Narayan affirms loudly his vision of time in its mythical and repetitive nature and in its circular movement. This vision of the author is found not only here, it is seen even from the beginning of his literary career. But what is significant in this novel is the obvious imposition of the regenerative time on the narrative by drawing a parallel between it and the myth of Bhasmasura. The cyclical pattern of time is thrust on the narrative when, at the end, Shastri told, "Every demon appears in the world with a special boon of indestructibility. Yet the universe has survived all the rakshasas that were ever born" (242). We are told further, "he narrated again and again for my benefit the story of Bhasmasura, the unconquerable" (242). But
immediately against this recurrence of mythical time, we are allowed to experience the human clock time happening in history, "When you are gone for launch it will be drying, and ready for second printing when you return" (242). Thus, we experience in the novel both mythical and human time in the same breath, the human time imitating the cyclical pattern of time set by recounting a myth.

This intersection of timelessness with time was seen reflected earlier in Mr. Sampath in the dancing little image of Nataraja that serves as an archetype. Narayan in a talk to William Walsh once said, "In an otherwise philosophical country concrete evidence in continuity and mortality lies in little things...". This "continuity and mortality" in little things mould the experience of an individual. The Queen Anne style chair that adorns the office room of Nataraj is a symbol of this continuity of time, so also the steel pen with a fat green wooden handle with which Krishna's father in The English Teacher used to write from time immemorial. Time's continuous movement, oblivious of human humdrum, is repeatedly referred to in Narayan's novels. Malgudi, the micro world of the author, the stage for human drama of his fictional characters, remains calm and placid despite occasional threatenings coming from the outside world. In The Man-eater of Malgudi the hands of the clock move on, least touching the drama of Malgudi life ruffled by the threats of Vasu. Vasu had set his alarm clock to arouse him from the deep sleep but, during the period, his death occurred and the author tells how time is not at all concerned about this important event in the temporal world of Malgudi, "The alarm clock which had screeched in the dark on the previous night was now ticking away modestly. Its pale pink patch must have watched the process of Vasu's death" (221). Thus time is a mute witness to the rise and fall of Vasu.

The narrative though for the most part moves in a chronological order yet it betrays sometimes chronological discontinuity as it contains mythical elements that feed on appetite for repetition. Ricoeur says, "Dechronologization implies the logical abolition of time; repetition, its existential deepening." Sastri narrated again and again how the rakshasas threaten the placid movement of the world, how they think themselves indestructible and how they conserve all their energy to destroy the world; but, in the end, the energy so conserved turns against them, thus saving the
human world from their onslaught. A chronological disorder also occurs in another way in the narrative. The encounter of Sen and others with Vasu took place almost at the same time when Nataraj's wife was pleading with him to stay inside. The novelist is found struggling hard how to intersect this parallel movement of narrator's chronology and reader's chronology. And to solve the problem, at a certain point, through a parenthetical statement, he records, "While all this was happening (as narrated to by Sen later) at home my wife was arguing with me to stay put on my mat" (199).

Temporal condensation has been achieved in the first part of the narrative, to keep pace between the story time and the text time, by using the summary method. Slices of time elapse quickly and the method appears again and again in the narrative, examples of which can be cited from lines like "Vasu did not come next day but appeared again in fifteen days later" (19), "A month later" (86), "fifteen days passed uneventfully" (85). Ellipses have been used to leave out some temporal periods in the life of Vasu. Vasu joined the civil disobedience movement and went to jail in 1931, and after his release he found himself in Nagpur. Thus without recording the time spent in the jail, the novelist brings Vasu to an indeterminate point of time. The author also takes the help of ellipses in minor scale to describe the life of Nataraj on the day of the temple procession. A lot of reading time is taken to record Nataraj's hectic engagement in the morning and his reaction to Vasu's decision to shoot the temple elephant. The writer obliterates the description of a few hours' activity of Nataraj on the day to condense the textual space. Nataraj meets Vasu in the morning hours to dissuade him from killing the elephant and then immediately the narrative records the events of the afternoon, "It was four o'clock," (177), omitting his activities during the noon time.

The second half of the novel moves very slow, in a deceleration pace; the text takes seventy two pages to describe the events of two nights and two days just preceding and following Vasu's death. The reading time is made too long and it is not without purpose. Nataraj's elaborate preparation for the temple procession, his nerve racking concern for the safe passage of it, his last minute efforts to convince Vasu not to harm the elephant in any way and the subsequent death of
the villain are all described in the maximum possible detail. This becomes necessary to heighten the reader's interest in the power of evil and then to affirm solidly Narayan's world vision, that every thing turns right in the end in spite of the presence and menace of demoniac characters in the world.

Tenses used in a novel do not have the same temporal implications as tenses used in our daily life. Bronzwaer while discussing the importance of the study of tense in a novel says that there is a "difference between time within the novel and time outside the novel-the physical clock-time in which the author lives and the fictional time in which the characters live." Study of time invariably leads to study of tense. "Time and tense are indispensable axes of analysis," Martin also says.

In *The Man-eater of Malgudi* past is the principal tense of narration, it becomes the focus where the whole problem of time and tense is visible. The present of the characters in the novel is conveyed through the past events, the non-fictive past becomes the fictive present. In the novels of first person narration, the fictive action is felt as having taken place actually, telling a story occurs in backward from the present and the narration tends to appear remote in time. The writer here along strives to convey "the illusion of immediacy" because illusion may sometimes convey the action stronger than its approximation to reality. So the function of the past narration here is not to assign the narrated events any time-sphere, but to "fictionalize" them, to give them a sense of presentness. The deictic adverb 'now' used in the following examples offers an illusion of immediacy and sense of presentness. "Now an unusual thing happened" (12), "I was a different man now" (17), "It was difficult now to meet him" (67) "I am telling you now" (225). These four examples will show how the deictic adverb now is used in different contexts to convey the sense of "fictive present." In the first example, now is used as a subjective perspective of the narrator Nataraj conveying the impression of a thing happened in immediate past where he was actively involved. The second use of now is being presented in a subjective-objective manner to show as if the speaker Vasu while narrating an event that had happened to him in distant past is not telling a story but just making a point about its happening. The third example of the use of now shows how
it is intended to immerse the reader more deeply in the narrative by inviting his/her identification with the subject Nataraj, a kind of empathy. The fourth example shows how now is used in a very objective manner, in its usual form, informing a fact not related to any time frame.

The Vendor of Sweets opens when Jagan, the protagonist is fifty five and it closes when he is sixty. But the narrative is presented in such a way that the picture of his three generations dances before our very eyes. By making the past events of Jagan's life appear and disappear in a very subtle way, Narayan gives a full picture of Jagan that encompasses four stages in his life. Narayan achieves this by adopting the chronological looping method.

Development of Jagan's psyche from the period of childhood innocence to a life of rebellion, from confusion and conflict to a life of aloofness and knowledge is effected by the inward and outward movement of time. Past events happened to the life of Jagan, like direct presentation of scenes in a play, are so arranged in the novel that they convey an impression of presentness to the reader. To quote Tobin:

When memory recalls the past event and submits it to the mind for analysis prior to a final evaluation of its impact, then memory is working in service to knowledge. And when the operations of memory and mind are translated into the past tense of novelistic narration, the historically actual, the biographically life like, and the artistically plausible become indistinguishable. Time as the shaping form becomes invisible.37

So while reading the story of Jagan, with his memory recalling his past, our mind goes back with him to his distant past where we encounter different persons and different surroundings. We derive the same pleasure in his happy bygone days as he derives and with his coming back to his present we rue at his present predicament; the narration achieves a kind of sympathy securing device. This method of taking the reader frequently to the past world of the protagonist helps the author to make Jagan's present appear sharper and more vivid; the reader does not much distinguish between the events of his past and his present, they move like a single slot. While discussing the relative merit of this method, Mendilow says:
The focus of presentness shifts continually, the relative pastness and presentness are deliberately dissolved; the tenses are confused or rather fused, so that the past is felt not as distinct from the present but included in it and permeating it. Every moment is conceived as the condensation of earlier history, and the past is not separate and completed but an ever-developing part of a changing present.  

With each shift, the narrative divides time into slices and each slice illustrates the protagonist’s reaction to a particular moment in his life, and thus the story moves forward giving an impression of a continuous movement of the life story of Jagan.

This subtle play of time with its peeping in and out of Jagan’s mind helps us to compare his present with his past. Thus, comparing and contrasting, at each turn of the action, the bubbling past of the character with the worries and anxieties of his present, the author achieves a continuum of the life story of his protagonist, where past is dissolved into present and present looks real when read in relation to past. To give an example of this subtle play of time past and time present in the life of the protagonist, when Jagan was about to meet Mali to discuss the story writing project, he hesitated at first to face Mali, but with his remembrance of a past action that took place at the prime of his youth, that of his snatching away the Union Jack from atop the Collector’s building during the heyday of the British Raj, he rushed to meet Mali. This sort of juxtaposition of the past and the present events makes Jagan look in his present context like a character much desolate, much dejected and more pathetic, but at the same time it makes him look more real.

The Vendor of Sweets connects two worlds of Jagan, i.e. the world before Mali went unruly and the world which he now faces with the challenge emanating from Mali. To cast the vast material of Jagan’s two worlds spanning over forty years, the flashback device is adopted. The device contributes a good deal to condense the narrative; otherwise, if the narrative had events arranged chronologically, the whole presentation of it would have lost much of its effectiveness and vividness. A long flashback towards the end, in chapter twelve, takes us forty years back to Jagan’s student life, to his preparation for marriage including the bride seeing and marriage cer-
emony and then to the family discord at the temporary barrenness of Ambika. The flashback also recounts the tortuous journey to Santana Krishna via Badri Hills to get the blessing for a son and the euphoria at the birth of Mali. The Bachelor of Arts mentions the scene of a journey of Chandran to select his future bride, The Financial Expert has a flashback on the gala celebration at the birth of Balu but nowhere, as it is here, the distance between the protagonist and the reader has been cut short by clever manipulation of time, thus inviting the reader to sympathise with Jagan in his present loneliness. The flashback being unusually long no doubt, diverts for a considerable period the attention of the reader from the fictive present, deprives him/her of forming illusion of immediacy; but the device also supplies the necessary information about an important event in the life of Jagan that can be weighed against his present. To quote Biswal:

The long flashback in which Jagan nostalgically ruminates over his past helps to build up a frame-work in which Jagan's past and present stand in ironic contrast, and the father-son relationship is presented in shifting perspectives of irony. Jagan's anxieties and his fond dreams, the traditional rituals and the euphoria in the entire household when Mali was born are pathetically embarrassed and undone by the absurdly crazy son with his unconventional social behaviour, his new-fangled ideas about manufacturing stories.  

T.C. Ghai's observation that the long flashback is unnecessary, unaccounted for because it has little connection with the main story line is difficult for us to take. When he says that the flashback fails to fully integrate with the story and rather has an independent existence, the sort of which "could have been added to almost any of Narayan's novels," he fails to grasp Narayan's aim at introducing the flashback. The author introduces the flashback to inform us of the clash between generations and to present his protagonist in a more pathetic atmosphere, to arouse sympathy of the reader for him and to present Jagan in his completeness so as to provide an aesthetic sense to his narrative. To quote Biswal further:

The long flashback brings into contrast two different generations with
their respective values and institutions, and this helps us to see the complete panorama of Jagan's life. Jagan's marriage with Ambika—an event of thrill and sensation, of elaborate rituals and gala celebrations in the entire family—is presented in the narrative with loving nostalgia before which the Grace-Mali affair pales into insignificance.41

Moreover, the flashback provides necessary psychological impetus for Jagan to take a final decision to leave the life of worldly humdrum and enter a life of renunciation.

The other time dimension that observes the events in relation to Jagan through omniscient narration is the time from fifty five years of Jagan to his sixty. It is the fictive present that records Jagan's value clash with his son, his pains and pangs at the fall of Mali's moral values, his disillusion with hullabaloo of life and his psychic development.

Time in the narrative takes another dimension with a kind of forward movement, filtered through the character's imagination. Jagan's fancy about Mali burning the midnight oil and "littering the table with sheets of paper in a delirium of inspiration" (39) or his revelation for a moment in visions of Mali at eighty thinking "where will Grace be when Mali is eighty? Still in the same situation? Perhaps Mali would succeed in sending her back" (181) are some of the examples where prolepses are motivated by character's emotions.

In the novel Narayan alludes to the progress of human time in an indirect manner, by the growth of Mali who to Jagan "seemed to have grown taller, broader and fairer..." (63). Use of deictics helps the author to effect a smooth switch over from the reminiscent mood of the character to his fictive present. For example, Jagan while remembering the beginning of his habit of wearing leather sandals made from the hides of the dead cows and also while brooding over the mechanism of its making comes back to his present without any difficulty:

Afterwards he just trusted the cobbler at the Albert Mission to supply his rather complicated foot wear.

Now his cousin's reference to natural salt upset his delicate balance and he reddened his face (16). (emphasis added)
The same effortless switch over without the help of deictics is also encountered by the reader in the novel, though these are very few, as in "Then he had gone to the cupboard and found the pill for his wife. But that was some years ago and Mali had grown" (28). Use of uneven pace of narration is found in the narrative more conspicuously when Narayan takes five pages to describe the journey of Jagan to the temple on the Badri Hills, a matter of only few hours, while he dismisses long three years of Mali’s stay in USA in only seven pages. It is because the author does not intend to throw light on Mali’s life there but to show Jagan’s life with his pains and delight before and immediately after Mali’s birth which had generated a lot of excitement in him. Moreover, with the use of iterative and summary method (["My son is in America," he said to a dozen persons every day (57) or "Day after day, the cousin collected information on America..." (62)]), the reading time is made shorter than the story time.

As said earlier, Narayan’s vision is Timelessness, the clock time is only a means to reach the Time beyond the physical time. Jagan’s present when seen against his past becomes dreary and weighing. He in his search for a balancing time discovers himself in the midst of a sort of epiphany, "becoming something else" (129), where temporal merges with atemporal, at least temporarily. Jagan’s reaching a point of Timelessness, for however little time it may be, does not of course negate historical process for him, it is the culmination of his worldly life, it is also reclamation of that life. As Tobin views:

Temporality and eternity are not inalterably opposed and distinct, but work together toward a purposeful consummation of life that will be beyond the finiteness and freedom of historical existence, but not above reality.42

The period of action in The Painter of Signs is set against the backdrop of an historical time and later the action is related to a legend, happened at a mythological point of time, to explain the repetitive nature of such actions in human life. The historical time alluded in the novel is to the period of bank nationalization in India, the reference to which is given in lines like "Indira Gandhi is dynamic no doubt, but I do not approve it," or "it could be nationalization of banks..." (16) or
"Raman took a diary out of his bag. Its calico was faded, and the year on it was 1962. The bangle-seller remarked "It's more than ten years old..." (138). This time of early part of 70's in India's social life was a life in ferment, a life of great social tension because of government's serious bid to curb enormous population growth by adopting both persuasive and coercive methods of population control. Raman and Daisy are created to represent opposite views towards this human problem, one, for his senseless breeding instinct and the other, for her ruthless measures to control the enormous population growth. Their story is made analogous later in the novel to a legend in the Mahabharata where Ganga, in her bid not to carry the burden of children, lays certain conditions on her Santhanu and deserts him when these conditions are broken. Like Santhanu, Raman agrees to all conditions of Daisy and yet Daisy leaves him when she feels that her mission in life is more important than the pressing demands of Raman. So, an event that occurred in a mythical time serves as a frame to illucidate an event happened in the temporal history of Malgudi. It is this imperviousness to time, this almost mythical permanence experienced in the story that deepen our delight in the theme and in Raman and Daisy.

There occurs in the novel frequent interspersions of mythical time and the specific time in history as if to remind us that human time imitates mythical time in its cyclical pattern. Self-professed "rationalist" Raman after his headlong dive into the love of Daisy rationalizes his fall by taking the help of puranas where he finds a number of instances about "saints failing in the presence of beauty" (40). The village teacher also narrates how the villagers spend their time during rainy season in listening to tales from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Daisy interprets the teacher's analysis and asks, "Very Well, ... At the end of the discourse men and women do go home, don't they?" (66). We also hear frequent references to the stories heard in the temple every evening about gods and other celestial beings that remind us of the presence of Timeless world in the contemporary world of Malgudi life. All these instances, and many more found in the novel, make us aware of the past moving towards present which suggests

an order which gives to the transitional phases of Malgudi continuity it
relates the present to the past and vice-versa, by emphasising the change-
Narayan envisions in Raman a mythical figure who, of all things said and hitherto done, realizes himself in the end as "A Painter of Signs and, and... what more shall I say?" or in Daisy's words, "An arist in lettering" (182), an artist whose art is sublime, who even at the moment of heightening physical desire stroked her gently, letting his hand rest on her breasts; as he watched, her face wore a serenity he had not noticed before. Her angularities and self-assertiveness were gone. He was struck by the elegance of her form and features, suddenly saw her as an abstraction perhaps a goddess to be worshipped, not to be disturbed or defied with coarse fingers (175).

Thus Raman experiences a kind of sublimity, for whatever short duration it may be, in aesthetic body figure of his object of love. With him, the painting of signs remains from beginning to end a "mythical balance between active participation and acute withdrawal." 44

Narrative time in the novel is hardly six months. There are references to the passage of time in the text; first, fifteen weeks passed from the time of Raman's first acquaintance with Daisy till his return from village tour along with her; then, another two weeks time passed for Raman to get over the trauma which he suffered during the tour, and then, hardly three weeks passed till Daisy left the place for a distant village to pursue her mission. In the novel description of some of the events happening in a single day to the life of the protagonist takes a lot of textual space. For example, in chapter one, twenty two pages are devoted to a single day's events in Raman's life that depict incidents like his encounter with the lawyer and the bangle seller; in chapter two, one evening's cart journey takes more than twenty pages; in chapter three, events of one afternoon takes twelve pages and in chapter four, a single evening, the evening in which Daisy leaves Malgudi takes nine pages. This slow movement of time helps the author to present Raman in his varied moods, in his frantic struggle against the hostile existential problems. The novelist also ignores some insignificant moments in the life of the protagonist by making time move fast, as we find in expressions like "after six days" (41) or "Fifteens days passed" (121).
Time in the narrative sometimes moves backward, sometimes it leaps forward. Aunt's retelling of the story of her grandfather's Poona visit or Daisy's narration of her life story effects a retrospective movement of time in the narrative. Through the former, Raman is reminded repeatedly of the fierce determination of his great grandmother to get her things done, a point when is correlated to Daisy, the great grandmother serves as a prototype for her in human comprehensible time, while through the latter Raman is reminded of Ganga, an archetypal character belonging to mythical time who deserts her Santhanu when he breaks his marriage condition. Narrative takes a leap forward in time when Raman weaves golden threads to net Daisy in his arms or when he makes meticulous mental preparations to receive her as a bride. In both these, narrator does not intrude into the mind of the character and the prolepses here are homodiegetic and internal.

The narrative in *A Tiger for Malgudi* captures a vast span of time in the life of the tiger Raja, "beginning with its cubhood and wild days in the jungle" (8) till he becomes an ascetic. It is almost impossible for any novelist to give a chronological account of the development of the tiger spanning over such a vast stretch of time. Hence, the author selects here only those important and significant incidents and events in his (Raja's) life that help him achieve a stage of spiritual illumination and a state of abnegation, and he (the author) deselects others. This omission of time has been possible with the help of ellipses and summary method.

The longest ellipsis in the narrative is found when the tiger passes from its cubhood to its youth. The state of cubhood is dismissed in only eleven lines while the state of youth which was chiefly spent in circus is covered in sixty eight pages. It is because the early stage of the tiger neither contributes meaningfully in his journey to spiritual illumination nor does it define the future course of his action. The narrative records:

> When I ventured out, I was chased, knocked down and hurt by bigger animals and menaced by lesser ones, I starved except when I could catch miserable creatures such as rabbits, fox cubs and squirrels, and survived somehow (13),

and immediately it tells of the youthful stage of the tiger,
Not only survived, but in course of time considered myself the supreme lord of the jungle, afraid of no one, striking terror in others (13).

Thus the narrative omits a certain period, the period of 'growing up,' in the life of Raja.

The author also adopts summary method to shorten the reading time. Quick movement of time, after Raja was caged in, is suggested by the expressions like, "For days they kept me without food and water" (148), the repetition of circus life is dismissed in single lines, "Day after day I had to do the same thing over and over again" (110), "Several days had to pass before Madan could finalize the agreement" (86), and in this way the vast expanse of time in the life of the tiger is dispensed with.

If the novelist skips over a longer period in the life of the tiger by ellipses and summary method, he also focuses most elaborately on the events of a single day's happening to Raja's life. Author takes forty pages in the text to describe the day on which the tiger escapes from the set after killing Captain and then taking shelter in the office room of the school head master till being led away by the Master. Allotment of this long textual space to one day's story time is made with the aim at showing the tiger's gradual change from a ferocious, violent animal to a being with a "feeling of change" coming over him. This long slot of reading time helps the author in drawing a parallel, first between man's cruelty and the tiger's fierceness, then to underline his (tiger's) soul's pull towards a force greater than the force on earth.

In the story the tiger describes his past in a reminiscent mood. The hero-narrator while telling his past indulges in frequent comments and generalizations by using present tense. The use of past tense makes the narrative a universal portrait of the journey of the tiger from a life of blood and violence, action and exertion to a life of renunciation and detachment, while the use of present tense enables the writer to realize his aim of giving a realistic picture to the narrative by offering occasional comments on life through his protagonist. For example.

At that time, I only knew that he had some concern for me, but I was not ripe enough to grasp the meaning of what was happening. Only in recollection now I can appreciate Captain's energy and power and the
variety of tasks he was able to perform . . . (56) (emphasis added)
or earlier in the text we find such juxtaposition of present and past:

Now I follow human speech, by the grace of my Master, but in those
days I was dense and did not know what the word "jump" meant, and
suffered untold misery. To-day I would have immediately understood
that Captain wished me to cross the hurdle in a jump and proceed to
go round . . . (54). (emphasis added).

Thus the tiger experiences the point of time in past at which the narrative began extending onwards
into a present where he yields to the illusion by an imaginative shift, that the past is absorbed into
the fictive present. But the novel rarely succeeds in conveying the illusion of presentness and
immediacy. The English Teacher written in first person narration had facilitated the hero-reader
identification by the use of diary and letters, but here the reader finds it difficult to sink his/her own
actual present into a fictive present. s/he is always conscious of the obtrusion of an interposing
force that causes the loss of intimacy. As Mendilow comments:

There are bounds which the I of the autobiographical novel cannot,
except by means of unlikely and artificial tricks, overstep. He cannot
present his own character or analyse his unconscious reactions and
prejudices convincingly, though in a story where the emphasis is on
action and adventure, this may not be the drawback; it is in the novel
where the accent is placed on character and psychology.44

And Mendilow's observation holds good for this novel, too.

Not that the writer has not made efforts to enable the reader to sink his own actual present
into a fictive present, the effort is seen in the author's narration of some events in third person
because the narration in third person can better convey intimacy and immediacy, " . . . it is highly
fictitious; it is the most natural and the least probable way of telling a story.44 The scene where the
negotiation between Captain and Madan goes on to make the tiger a film personality, the scene
where Captain's wife exhorts him to co-operate with Madan or the scene of Raja's exist from the
school along with Master are some of the portions where third person narration is used to create a sort of illusion of presentness.

We find, throughout the novel, author's struggle to meet the indiscrepancy arising out of the difference between the narrator's chronology and the reader's chronology. Difficulties arise in solving the problem of reporting the incidents going beyond the first-hand knowledge of the narrator. This difficulty is met when others report the matter to the narrator at a later period which he, in turn, narrates to the reader, a device that further stands as a barrier in conveying the sense of immediacy. For example, the meeting of the villagers with the office assistant of the Collector and their conversations were the events that are beyond the knowledge of the tiger. This problem is sorted out in the narrative chronology when the tiger says, "But I come to know of it only later in my life" (29). To cite another example, and examples are many in the text, the description of the chaos that fell upon the city after Raja entered it was narrated to him by his Master, "Later I learnt from my Master of the chaos that fell the city..." (116). Thus, the narrative fails to render an easy, natural temporal transfer and hence the reader finds it more difficult to sink him/herself into the fictive present. When one retrospectively analyses the art employed in the novel, he experiences its double dimension, the paradox of the first and the second reading. In the novel Raja, the protagonist-narrator incorporates both the reading processes. He, while recounting his past, returns to his present frequently and the reader always remains conscious that at some point of time the protagonist's point of view and the narrative might coincide. This "circle of time" is what Tobin says:

"... setting out at the beginning, when nothing is known (prospective experience) and the analysis at the end of the journey when everything is known (retrospective evaluation)." 47

And when the novel ends, when the narrative discontinues the novelistic time moves towards a meaningful continuity. The protagonist while looking back on his past in a detached manner and while looking at his present is neither doomed by any apocalyptic vision of darkness due to his past life of recklessness nor he is swayed by the illumination of the present, but inches forward to a
timeless concord of eternity.

Narayan's attempt in Talkative Man to recount repeatedly the story of Dr. Rann, each time in a modified version, so as to blur the objective time in which the episode had occurred and also to make it well receptive for the listeners of now, is a strategy on his part to create myth by parodying myth. The witness-narrator Madhu (TM) goes on repeating the husband hunting expedition of Commandant Sarasa and each time he tells it to his select audience, he forgets the temporal existence of such a character like Rann, instead he renders him (Dr. Rann) a mythical colour. By doing so, he reinforces the notion that such persons with their elusiveness in real life can serve as prototypes like the characters in our myths and legends. This mythical experience of Madhu realized through his temporal existence at Malgudi (Dr. Rann and Sarasa providing the necessary framework for such realization) is presented in an indeterminate time slot that again makes us feel that such experiences are not confined to any particular time or to a particular place, but they are of universal experience, always remaining ready to elicit free drawn conclusions from different persons at different times.

The reader is aware of this subtle play of mythical experience and temporal existence from the very beginning of the narrative, the calendar at The Boardless Hotel reminding him/her always of this. The calendar portrait of Mahishasura, an archetypal figure, adorned with "serpents entwining his neck and arms... holding aloft a scimitar, ready to strike" (1) catches immediately our imagination about the efforts of these figures from time immemorial to conquer time. But in the very next moment we are reminded of the frame in which it is held is of seven years old. Towards the end of the narrative, the inverted comparison drawn between Savitri-Satyavan myth and Sarasa-Dr. Rann story confirms this realization of mythical experience in temporal existence.

However, this mythical experience related in the first person narration does not stand as an impediment in rendering the impression of presentness to the story. The story is narrated in such a manner, the time is manipulated in such a way that the incidents dance before our eyes creating an impression of the incidents happening as if now. Narayan has been able to create this fictive present by employing in the narrative various methods like use of dialogue in abundance, use of
letters, telegrams and diaries etc. A dramatic work creates the character-audience collaboration by its use of dialogue. A novel has its limitations; if it adopts the dramatic method wholly, if it uses dialogue throughout, it will lose much of its appeal and much of its flexibility. So, the novelists have all along tried to bring a compromise between narration and dialogue to identify the character, author and reader more closely. In Talkative Man a compromise has been made between the use of dialogue and reported speech. Dialogue form has been used in more than half of the text for which a reader experiences an effect similar to that felt in an auditorium, while the rest is in reported speech that gives a free hand to the narrator to manipulate the threads of narration. Moreover, use of letters, telegrams etc. for throwing light on the philandering nature of Dr.Rann and for supplying information about his elusiveness creates in us the feeling of presentness, we forget for the time being the pastness of the events.

Talkative Man's experience with Dr.Rann is subjective, but his subjective experience is linked to "objective time" since these two have always an inescapable relation. This objective time often gets condensed in the novel with the devices like ellipsis and summary method. Author omits the time between the photograph taken of Dr.Rann for publication in the newspaper and the time of arrival of Sarasa at Malgudi, he also omits the intervening time between the reclaiming of Dr.Rann by his wife and the arrival of a letter from her thanking TM for his support. When the narrative records "Six months later" to indicate the time of arrival of Sarasa from the time of her reclaiming of her husband, the author uses the summary method, and the textual time in between these two events, as it is not helpful for revealing Dr.Rann further, is obliterated. The chronological narration in the story gets disrupted when in a flashback Sarasa presents Dr.Rann in his true personality. The flashback is necessary here because the information supplied by her can only make Madhu cautious of Dr.Rann's hypocrisy that would later prompt him (Madhu) to prevent the villain from doing any permanent damage to the Malgudi society. The narrative has uneven pace, sometimes few hours of story time cover a lot of textual space. It takes nine pages to describe the manoeuvre of Madhu to take the photograph of Dr.Rann while space of another nine pages is devoted to describe a public meeting in which Dr.Rann was the chief guest. Both these decelerations are
necessary because the first incident when is crucial to create complicacy in the plot, the second is
essential for untangling it.

The hide and seek of the past and the present found so often in *The Vendor of Sweets* repeats in *The World of Nagaraj*, but not in such a vigorous form. Here the reflective inwardness and flashbacks of Nagaraj take us back in time as the flashforward device takes the time ahead. The kind of long, elaborate flashback used in chapter twelve of *The Vendor of Sweets* is not found in this novel but the device of swinging time back used here has served its purpose in giving a clear peep into the incidents happening to the life of Nagaraj before the first narrative began. There occurs, of course, disruption of natural flow of time in the novel when flashbacks are used but Narayan's skill lies in the fact that while using the device here, even in large number, the narrative does not lend least impression of disruption of the chronological order of the story. For example, the flashback in the very first chapter of the novel not only presents the scene of Gopu's birthday celebration but also throws light on the relation between the two brothers. Nagaraj while trying to escape from the nagging of his mother to take a hot bath goes back in time to the scene of giggling, garlanding and photographing of Gopu and his wife on the day of Gopu's grand celebration of his sixtieth birth anniversary. He finds them "laughing, joking and smiling at one another endlessly" (8) and also joins the banal jokes of Gopu unreservedly, but at the same time he goes on asking inwardly, "What makes them so happy on a birthday? I feel gloomy if I realised I was sixty. Birthday must be ignored, as occasions, taking one inescapably a step nearer decrepitude and decay" (8). So, by juxtaposing past and present Narayan informs us of Nagaraj's deep entrenched negation of every activity of Gopu even in the moments of his escape into an analepsian world.

It is not only the protagonist who is allowed to relapse into the past but also other characters in the novel indulge in reminiscences. One such character is Nagaraj's mother who remembers and recounts her family skill that had been with them before the narrative began. For example, Nagaraj's mother while recounting the expertiseness of her grandfather who "must have cured thousands of cases of barrenness" (46) goes back to distant past and then immediately the narrative comes back to the present life of Nagaraj in so subtle a way that the reader does not feel immediately
any disruption of time sequence.

Author's skill in manipulating flashback to achieve desired end goes side by side with his art of manipulating the device of flashforward. Disagreeing with Genette's argument that, "so-called first person narratives lend themselves to the use of prolepses better than other types, because within the admittedly retrospective characters of such narratives it seems more natural for the narrator to allude to a future which had already become a past," Rimmon-Kenan says, "I would like to stress, prolepsis can also be effectively used in so-called omniscient narration. " Some of the examples from the text will show how Narayan has effectively used prolepses, even in third person narration, to inform his character. Gopu's letter in the beginning of chapter fifteen asking Nagaraj to adopt Tim for lighting his funeral pyre prompts him (Nagaraj) to think of the time ahead where he visualizes Tim as his successor "applying the burning faggot, according to the rules, in order to ensure a smooth passage to heaven" (172). But this vision of the future suddenly breaks off when, touched by Gopu's solitude to send him heavenward smoothly, he returns to his present self, gloating over the prospect of getting material there on Narada or even "the sage himself might materialise and guide him" (172). Again the narrative switches to forward time when Nagaraj visualizes his death and his wife Sita becoming "widowed and forlorn . . . all alone in this vast house" (172). So by juxtaposing the future (widowed and forlorn) and the present (this vast house) even at the risk of disrupting the chronological order Narayan tries to humanize his protagonist. All the above prolepses where the narrator keeps himself off from directly getting involved are "character motivated anachronies" and these are filtered through character's hopes and fears. Such prolepses do not deviate from chronology, rather they are a part of the "linear unfolding" of the first narrative. There are also prolepses in the narrative which disrupt the chronological order. One example is given here to show how this device refers to the story line figuring at a homo-diegetic point in the text. After the bride seeing ceremony for Tim, Nagaraj felt the girl was odd looking and also her voice was not melodious but nasal whining. But actually Tim was not only interested with the girl, he was overwhelmed as he told his uncle later, "In Delhi girls are smart" (91).
Everyman Nagaraj leads a divided life. He cannot bring unity into the world of his dreaming, he cannot even unify himself. Each step forward in his action unlocks a wider range of his relevant past. He identifies himself now with his ambition to write the life story of Narada and in the next moment he cherishes fond hopes of getting liberated from the sufferings in hell with the help from Tim. For this he is subconsciously attached to Time. This drama of "shift and merge" goes on in the mental recess of Nagaraj, and for him time is a great healer of his occasional despair and frustration. Thus what we see here is that Nagaraj lives in double-time.

GrandMother’s Tale embodies three time dimensions, i.e. first the period in which the novelistic action takes place, second the period in which the oral tale is given a written form with modifications and comments of the author influenced by his contemporary ideas and thoughts and then the reader's time, the time in which the text is dissected. The action of the novel takes place in the later period of the East India Company rule over India before the Sepoy Mutiny, a point in the historical time of the country that dates long back, more than one hundred and fifty years, from the time when the recording of the story is made.

Presentation of novelistic action taking place in distant past has every possibility of its suffering from the lack of immediacy and presentness. In such novels a discrepancy naturally arises between the time-locus of the protagonist of the novel and the reader's actual "now"; so to say, there remains 'two presents' in the story. To overcome this problem to a certain extent, the writer plays here the role of an "intrusive author." He recalls the reader from the "Relative Now" of the fictional characters to the "Actual Now" of the reader, steps out of the imaginary frame of the novel and addresses directly to the reader, but in the process he disturbs considerably the sense of immediacy of the fictional time and imposes his present sensation on the reader. GrandMother’s Tale confronts the same problem where the reader remains always conscious of the presence of an intrusive author who throws occasional comments based on his own observation on protagonist's actions and draws very often comparison between the fictional time and his own time. Throughout the narrative, through long notes, the author supplies comments to induce the reader to believe in the truthfulness of such incidents. As a result, the "illusion of immediacy" is shattered, the sense of
presentness is not strongly evoked, the reader remains always aware of the fact that s/he is experiencing different time dimensions in the work. The established convention that the author should efface himself more and more in his work is thrown overboard. To quote Ford in this context:

\[ \ldots \text{the object of the novelist is to keep the reader entirely oblivious of} \]
\[ \text{the fact that the author exists even of the fact that he is reading a book.} \]
\[ \text{This is of course not possible to the bitter end, but the reader can be} \]
\[ \text{rendered very engrossed and the nearer you can come to making him} \]
\[ \text{entirely insensitive to his surroundings, the more you will have succeeded.} \]

The fictional action that covers over a span of about sixty five years gets codified only in seventy one printed pages and hence the writer has frequent recourse to ellipses and summary to condense the reading time so as to bring a balance between the story time and the text time. One such ellipsis is found just after Viswa ran away from his native village and the next section records how in the mean time Bala grew up. The longest period covered by the summary method is when the writer, in a few words, drops twenty years in the domestic life of Bala and Viswa:

The next twenty years, roughly, were the years of prosperity. Viswa's business flourished. In proper time, he found bridegrooms for his daughters and sent his son Swaminathan to study in Madras at the Medical college.

\[ \ldots \text{Viswa was past sixty when he found himself isolated} (77) \]

and we encounter larger number of such narrated time gaps throughout the novel.

The narrative is straight, chronological except a brief slot of narration moving backward in time. This is when Surma recounted the circumstances in which she and Viswa entered into wedlock. The narrative ends with the death of Viswa, with the disposal of his property, but the question arises if the story closes. In my view, there is a subtle flow of the continuity of time that creates an impression of the story never closing with the end of the narrative. It moves towards time infinite, the hint of which is found, first in the very explanation,

\[ \ldots \text{the descendants of the couple in the story are present in our midst} \]
\[ \text{in different walks of life, scattered here and there, with this author being} \]
one of them (GMT Explanation)

and second,

One morning, two years ago, I had a desire to revisit Number One Vellala street in Purasawalkam, where all of us were born in one particular room... It was totally demolished, cleared and converted into a vacant plot on which the idea was to build an air-conditioned multi-storeyed hotel. Among the debris we found the old massive main-door lying with "One" still etched on it. Ram made an offer on the spot and immediately transported it to his own house, where it is mounted as a show piece (79-80).

Time and narrative are always on intimate terms because narrative is the human relation to time. Time scheme in Narayan's novel is a medium of art for effecting a gradual revelation of an individual's personality. As the individual consciousness reflects part by part of its changing moods in slices of time, so also totality of the picture of an individual gets reflected in the mirror of time when all the moods/moments come together. To quote Hans Mayerhoff:

Time is particularly significant to Man because it is inseparable from the concept of the self. We are conscious of our own organic and psychological growth in time. The question, what is man, therefore invariably refers to what is time?

Time is indispensable to both story and text and any possible attempt to eliminate it is to eliminate narrative fiction. In Narayan's works, through beautiful arrangement of time, the hint of profound awareness about self is repeatedly illuminated.

Notes

1 Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory


6 Narayan 13.


14 Narayan 13.


18 Martin 131.
19 Warren 76.
20 Noon 291.
21 Cobley 19.
22 Beach 360.
24 Jackson 43.
25 Scholes 205.
26 qtd. in Noon 188.
27 Mendilow 278.
28 Mendilow 270.
30 Mendilow 276.
32 Beach 160.
33 qtd in Lakshmi Holmstrom 125.
36 Martin 131.
37 Tobin 6.
38 Mendilow 270.
40 T. C. Ghai, 'Patterns and Significance in R. K. Narayan's Novels,' *Indian Literature*

41 Biswal 103-104.

42 Tobin 14.


44 Sinha 108.

45 Mendilow 274.

46 qtd. in Mendilow 273.

47 Tobin 24.

48 Rimmon-Kenan 48-49.

49 qtd. in Mendilow 268.