CHAPTER – V
THE ROLE OF SANYASA

Sanyasa is the fourth stage in the religious life of a person and enjoins upon him the complete renunciation of the world and its possessions and attachment. It means the abandonment of temporal concerns: total abstention from sexual enjoyment. A sanyasi is one who renounces everything and undergoes a complete change of personality. Why one would become a sanyasi is not easily answered – a personal tragedy or frustration, a deep compelling philosophy of life, or flash of illumination may drive one to seek a change. Whatever be the cause, when one becomes a sanyasi, one obliterates one’s past. A sanyasi is to be taken as he is at the moment. You can never ask a sanyasi about his earlier life. He will never refer to it. It would be a crass, inconsiderate act even to ask a sanyasi his name. He assumes a new name, bearing no mark of his ancestry or class, but indicative of some general beatitude. He has freed himself from all possessions and humanities. Among certain sects; the man will even perform his own funeral ritualistically before becoming a sanyasi. A sanyasi is a wanderer living on alms,
never rooted to any place except when he seeks the seclusion of a cave or forest at some stage for prolonged meditation.

The shastra-based concept of sanyasa noted along with Narayan’s similar and traditionally realized views on the fourth ashrama, have great relevance in the context of the typology of sanyasa. The views may also serve as excellent points of reference especially in dealing with the different faces of sanyasa in Narayan’s novels.

Talking to Ved Mehta (1971), Narayan confessed that he just couldn’t write any novel without the name of “Krishna or Hanuman”. He also said that “to be a good writer anywhere one should have roots in the religion and the family”. He seems to make it clear that the Indian culture, realized through a typically orthodox family, forms the bedrock of the house of his fiction. Therefore, it may be desirable to read Narayan’s novels from the essentially Indian perspective. One of the ways, as G.S. Amur suggests, is to consider Narayan novels realized through the Hindu family culture, particularly, the ashrama system and the purushartha frame. Read closely, all Narayan novels may be interpreted as the fictionalization of these purusharthas and the ashrama-dharmas. It is here that sanyasa assumes great importance as a frame in the typological study of the characters in Narayan’s novels.

At the outset sanyasa becomes the logical and concluding frame of the typology chiefly because it forms the other end of the typology (innocence being
its first end). Significantly enough, like all the earlier typologies, sanyasa too is a recurring feature in Narayan’s novels. Almost every Narayan novels has a sanyasi character. The different faces of sanyasa in Narayan novels may make it possible to view Narayan’s notion of sanyasa. It may also be possible to underline the implications underlying the individual cases and note the strategies Narayan employs to delineate the sanyasi portrayals.

Narayan’s first novel, Swami and Friends, has to be skipped over obviously because it does not have a sanyasi figure. A closer look at the title of the novel, however, makes an interestingly ironic point. As M.K.Naik points out that the ‘Swami’ in the title raises our anticipation for a sanyasi figure, cladding ochrish garb and having a beard. Our anticipation, however, get deflated as Swami turns out to be a typical school boy. It may also suggest the world of appearances, fully realized in the later Narayan novels, particularly in the context of the portrayal of sanyasis.

Interestingly, Narayan’s second novel, The Bachelor of Arts, has two faces of sanyasa: the popularly realized one and the fake one. The graduating Chandran, in the early part of the novel, is confronted with a genuine looking sanyasi who is, however, taken as a thief stealing flowers. It is only after he is caught by Chandran’s father and almost man-handled by Chandran that he is identified as the sanyasi.
In an apparent case of mistaken identity, one may, however, discern other implications as well. First, the scene projects the cultural psyche symbolized in Chandran’s mother. (She has not been given any name so as to underline the representational image.) The moment she realizes the mistake, she becomes panicky and exclaims: “Ah, leave him alone, let him go”\(^5\). Beneath her panic seems to be concealed the belief that the curse of the holy man fall on the family. Secondly, the scene also underlines a far reaching irony: Chandran, the antagonistic youth, after the failure in love, finds himself turning into a sanyasi, obviously a fake one. There also seems to be a deep irony: in case of the genuine sanyasi serenity seems to have been taken as triviality, and in Chandran’s case triviality is regarded serenity.

As the desperado unwittingly runs into a drunkard, Kailas, and encounters a prostitute, he is horrified and consequently finds himself playing a sanyasi. Initially as his own decision and later as the rustic’s compulsive desire, Chandran continues to play the sanyasi sponging on the hospitality of the village community. But as the mask (on account of the pricking conscience) starts paining him, he sheds off the holy clothes, casts off the fake role and returns to the world of normal life. In an apparently simple act of donning and discarding the ascetic’s robes, several implications seem to be concealed.

At the outset the kind of sanyasa Chandran plays, seems to be the travesty of the sanyasa dharma prescribed in the shastras. Sanyasa comes as the last and
culminating stage in the ashrama system. Needless to say, it also bespeaks the maturity of the mind to understand the serious and decidedly purposive nature of sanyasa. Chandran's sanyasa may be regarded as the most impulsive act which, indirectly perhaps, seems to be flouting the sacred codes and religious order. It is here that one recalls the sublime sanyasa of Adi Shankaracharya as against the trivially and ridiculously realized sanyasa of Chandran.

Although Chandran's sanyasa decidedly underlines his totally illusory notion of life -- from Malathi to the fake sanyasa -- and, by implication, his deviation from the traditionally accepted norms, it may, however, be said that the youths becoming a sanyasi seems probable and perhaps a natural act in the Indian context. It is therefore difficult to accept T.D. Brunton's view that "Narayan spoils this novel, typically, by the unlikely episode in which Chandran runs off as a sanyasi". But equally important is Narayan's unmistakable suggestion of the undesirably illusory notion of sanyasa. Chandran is evidently seen suffering in his sanyasi robes. It is only when he discards the cherished clothes and puts on the ordinary and plain ones that he once again feels free and almost rejuvenated. Ironically, it is not the sanyasi but the ordinary man of the world that is shown happy with himself. Beneath the irony, however, is the suggestion of the madness of illusion and the wisdom and sanity of the ordinary, real life which seems to underline the view that "individual aberration may be tolerated for a while -- by society or by the Gods -- but must inevitably erode".
As in *Swami and Friends*, the strategy of rite de passage is employed in *The Bachelor of Arts* as Chandran passes through the two crucial stages of experience: one with Kailas and the other with the rustics. The journey realized on the geographical as well as the mental plane proves to be the self-realizing and self-educating experience for Chandran. Realizing the folly of his playing the fake sanyasi, feeling guilty for the naive rustics and sorry for the parents, Chandran returns home. It is here that the theme of the return of the native seems to have been suggested. In Chandran’s return what seems to be concealed is the assertion of the average and the ordinary symbolized in the mute but deciding force of the rustics and Chandran’s own realization of his essentially ordinary self. In other words, it is through Chandran’s sanyasa that Narayan reiterates the pervading theme of his novels: illusion versus reality.

*The Dark Room* does not fit into the typology of sanyasa for the obvious reason that it does not have a sanyasi figure. Although Savitri’s renouncement of the worldly possessions may remind us of a sanyasini, it is realized with obviously ironic overtones. Unlike the genuine one, motivated by the hope of salvation, Savitri merely wants to commit suicide and put an end to her humiliating and slavish life. Skipping it over, one may turn to *The English Teacher*.

If the eccentrics in Narayan represent every walk of life, the sanyasis in his novels reflect types in human life. *The English Teacher* displays three types, each underlining ironic implications. The first of the three sanyasis, known as the
Swamiji, is introduced as the “Man with his forehead ablaze with sacred ash, and a thick rosary around neck and matted hair.” The spiritual healer, invited for the sake of the ailing Susila, underlines the mistaken identity as the agnostic Krishnan takes him for a beggar and says, “Go away.” As he gives a pinch of holy ash to the patient and ties a talisman to her arm, Narayan seems to present the sanyasi as a holy man. A dot of a caricature, however, has subtly realized implications.

At the outset the bearded Swamiji seems to install the exorcist in The Bachelor of Arts. He also seems to install the exorcist in Mr. Sampath. Krishnan’s mother shares the attitude of Chandran’s mother towards the holy man. The Swamiji symbolizes common man’s (spiritual) reverence for and faith in the miraculous and godly power of the spiritual healer. One also notes different attitudes towards him. Dr. Shankar, the family doctor, though takes an almost non-committal stance, he certainly does not disown the holy man. Krishnan’s fury at the sight of the Swamiji clearly indicates the former’s agnostic and scientific attitude to godman. But more important seems to be the irony concealed in the attitude towards Swamiji. It may be recalled that towards the end of the novel, Krishnan not only echoes the family doctor’s view of the unknown ways of the holy man but also unreservedly accepts it.

The protagonist himself plays a symbolically realized sanyasi in (TET). At the end of the novel, as he ultimately succeeds in attaining spiritual communication with his dead wife Susila, and as he realizes that the boundaries
between life and death get dissolved, he finds himself at the threshold of a new awareness. He is now in a position to look at life and its issues from a wider perspective. It is at this point of time that Krishnan, like many of Narayan's heroes determines to have life freed from hysterics and distorting illusions. And knowing fully well what he is required to do he acts immediately. Krishnan takes two decisions almost simultaneously: he determines to join the headmaster's Leave Them Alone school for children and tenders his resignation to the principal of his college. It is here that he displays the basic aptitude for sanyasa: he shows willingness to detach himself from the worldliness and has accepted the inevitability of the dissolution of human ties.

In Krishnan, Narayan presents a symbolically realized sanyasi. The novelist deceptively suggests Krishnan's dissatisfaction in "earning and spending," reflected in his talk with the principal. He says, "I have no use for money." His leaving Leela at her granny's house may also be taken as the protagonist's gesture of the snapping of the ties in the world (conceived as maya). Significantly, to underline the spiritual aspiration of "the uncompromising idealist," the novelist suggestively introduced The English Teacher's association with Plato. Krishnan says: "I will... get through this stuff on Plato's idealism, I read"\textsuperscript{10}.

In the final analysis, although Krishnan does not do the ochrish robes and traditionally enter the sanyasashrama, he seems to imbibe the essential principles of sanyasa. In fact Krishnan's spiritual development, although particularized in
his decision to “write poetry and live and work with children and watch their minds unfold”\textsuperscript{11}, may be discerned in his ability to understand the “law of life” and act accordingly. Harrex puts it thus: “Krishnan’s development follows a recognizable Vedantic path of selfhood. By submitting to the “law of life,” which necessitates the renunciation of attachment, he severs some of the spiritually constricting bounds of Maya”\textsuperscript{12}.

And most significantly, the sanyasi seems to have discovered the root cause of human misery and the basic truth of human existence. Krishnan’s philosophy does not sound verbose and airy. On the contrary, it sounds authentic, as it has emerged out of his personal life, and seems to have a universal endorsement: “We come together only to depart.... The Law of life cannot be avoided... All struggle and misery in life is due to our attempt to arrest this law or get away from it. .....The fact must be recognized. A profound unmitigated loneliness is the only truth of life”\textsuperscript{13}.

The eccentric headmaster may also be considered as a typical sanyasi in The English Teacher. Significantly, sanyasa in his case does not come as the natural stage of his life but only as a resort. In a queerly realized story, when the headmaster survives the prophecy of his own death, he determinedly turns his back on his household and dedicates his life for the experimental school for children, called Leave Them Alone. It may also be noted that unlike Krishnan’s
sanyasa, taken as the culmination of his philosophical development, the headmaster's however laudable, remains basically the whim of the eccentric.

One finds it difficult to suspend one's disbelief and accept the innovative and experimental school founded and developed by the headmaster. The atmosphere of the school has not been properly evoked and even the children in the school have been realized as stock figures, reflecting their creative imagination. They seem to play their measured or tailored roles. As regards the school, it has more of an airy and dreamy than solid and real atmosphere. It is here that Narayan's symbolic intentions behind the school become clear. The school, representing the essence of good innocence in the form of children, remains the symbol of Krishnan's sanyasa. Contrasted with the warring world, represented by the headmaster's household, the Leave Them Alone school symbolizes ideal world represented by the joyous and divinely innocent company of the children.

In the final analysis, The English Teacher may be considered, like its protagonist, a three-dimensional study of sanyasa represented by the one liner Swamiji, the cardish headmaster and the round character of the English Teacher whose growth seems to have been realized through the catalyst, headmaster and the ficelle called "Medium."

It is essential to be aware of the dominantly realized title-role in Mr. Sampath, to underline Narayan's treatment of sanyasa in it. The novel brings
into focus the dubious, corrupted and unholy world of (Mr.) Sampath, overshadowing the quiet, uncorrupted and essentially innocent world of Srinivas. I may be Narayan’s oblique way of suggesting that a holy-man (a sanyasi) may never be able to breathe comfortably in the unholy world of Sampath’s. He however, presents two characters in the novel, whose life-style may be viewed through the concept of sanyasa.

The landlord in (MS) is generally realized as the most miserly and eccentric old man. Although to Srinivas and his wife he presents himself as a sanyasi, having no material interests or desires, he is seen contentedly eating the refreshing rice-cakes at their place and later asking for a piece of areca nut. Reality reveals the landlord to be a money maniac, never bothered to care for the genuine complaints of his tenants and living miserly and all by himself. (One, however, feels sorry for his unholy tryst with Sampath and his loss of money). But the old shark has a redeeming feature -- a tender concern for his marriageable granddaughter for whose sake he often grows sentimental and would not hesitate to keep the strings of his purse rather loose.

In the final analysis, the landlord makes an extremely poor impression as a sanyasi. Although he says, “The true sanyasi has no need to live on anything more than the leavings of God”\textsuperscript{14}, one knows it pretty well that it is the miser and not the ascetic who is speaking. If, as a sanyasi, he is seen praying everyday several times, as a hoarder he prevents even the most religious of his tenants from hanging a
picture on the wall lest the walls should be weakened. It may, however, be noted that despite the travesty of sanyasa he exemplifies, the landlord decidedly suggests the culturally deep rooted influence of sanyasa.

The other character to be considered under the typology of sanyasa in Mr. Sampath is Shanti. As a matter of fact the glamorous young woman seems to be obviously lured to the irresistible world of money and glamour. Besides playing the seductively realized Parvathi, Shanti literally plays havoc with every male around. It may indeed seem most paradoxical to regard the artist's Beatrice, Sampath's seductive companion and Srinivas's charmer, as a sanyasini. But India being the land of 'perpetual paradox,' (Brata) where even a seductress may be transformed into a sanyasini, Shanti in the final scene of the novel seems to be flinging away her earlier of a gay and bewitching beauty and taking on the serious role of a sanyasini. Perhaps by some stretch of imagination one may consider the last phase of Shanti's role as a sanyasini. In the denouement, Shanti, in a way like Chandran, undergoes traumatic and nerve-killing experience, thanks mainly to the mad lover, Ravi. It is under such a psychologically harrowing state of mind that the irritated and exasperated widow seems to have been entreated by the roguish lover – Sampath -- to share his life as a wife. Shanti, having possibly realized the threateningly uprooting nature of illusory love, decides to call it a day. She writes to Sampath before she leaves him for good. Her note reads: "I am sick of this kind of life, and marriage frightens me... please leave me alone... If I find you
pursuing me, I will shave off my head and fling away my jewellery and wear a white sari. You and people like you will run away at the sight of me. I am after all, a widow and can shave my head and disfigure myself if I like." The shaving off of the head suggests the traditionally conceived widowed sanyasini. The note reveals the realization of her folly and the willingness to accept and follow the sane and solid world of reality. Thus, it may be noted that in her threat to disfigure herself if pursued by the blind lover, and her determination to return to her child, seems to be concealed the assertion of the sane, average and unruffled mind. It is here that the chastened Shanti seems to be waving off to the world of illusion and deviation and marching towards the world of reality and acceptance. One may read the unmistakable suggestion of the growth in Shanti, indicated through the employment of the strategy of rite de passage (realized in her trip to the Mempi forest). Shanti remains a one liner and is realized as a symbolic character underlining the moral deviation.

Although Margayya (TFE) shares the gift of the gab and the instinctive shrewdness with Sampath (MS) and Raju (TG), he is markedly different from the other two rogues. He is neither realized through the corruptible world of Sampath nor is he ever known for the romantic disposition like Raju. Margayya's ruling passion seems to be his abnormal attachment for the world of wealth. Ironically enough, if the basic urge to accumulate wealth made him an economic avatar, the Icarus thirst for fortune ultimately saw his fall as well. Significantly, Margayya's
role as a money-wizard is interlined with a sanyasi, who as a Narayan character, presents yet another face of sanyasa.

In The Financial Expert, the sanyasi is primarily realized as the temple priest. He is also known the spiritual healer and is in fact involved in the cure of a child-patient. The priest, however, plays the most vital role in the life of Margayya as he shows the latter the way to propitiate the Goddess of Wealth, Laxmi. The priest prescribes the most intricate kind of Puja which, underlining significant implications, merits a closer attention.

At the outset the priest is known as the most knowledgeable spiritual head. If a seeker desires the way to be known, the priest will not hesitate to oblige him with the prescription. The priest is also regarded as an authority on the Shastras, the inherent basis of the cultural ethos. For instance, he makes us aware of the most whimsical yet extremely influential Saturn and the rivalry between the Goddess Laxmi and Goddess Saraswati. The priest underlines the symbolic meaning of milk, lotus, fire and the rest. The symbols too have thematic relevance. Finally, the priest echoes the Gitaic principle of Karma as he tells Margayya: “Results are not in our hands”.

The temple priest is realized as a sanyasi in other ways too. When Margayya, for instance, asks him about his experience of the Mantra, the priest’s answer is typical as he says: “Me!.... I am a sanyasi, I have no use for it”. It is here that the selflessness of sanyasa is stressed. Or better still, the priest is
realized as the nishkam karmayogi. As an ascetic, he has no desire for the worldly things and he seems to prefer to remain absolutely unattached. It is in this context that the sanyasi is often likened to a tree offering fruits to the wayfarers while desiring none for itself.

The priest is also realized in one more context underlining the Shastra-prescribed life of a sanyasi. A sanyasi is always regarded as the citizen of the world. Having already renounced his home, he is seen as a wandering monk and is invariably associated with a pilgrimage. Later, the priest goes "to Benares—from there he is going on foot all along the course of the Ganges, to its very source in the Himalayas". Narayan contrasts the ideal sanyasi with the immature young temple priest with his sour look and rude behaviour.

In the final analysis the priest, the one liner in (TFE), plays a functional role. He is instrumental in transforming Margayya's entire life. In this he primarily plays a catalyst and a ficelle. It is in this sense that the temple priest symbolically plays a Margayya (the path-shower) to Krishna, (TFE).

The critical consensus is far from being happy with Waiting for the Mahatma, particularly with Narayan’s portrayal of Mahatma Gandhi. The critics point out that Narayan fails to evoke the essential spirit of Gandhi. Raji Narasimhan, however, thinks that "no other Indo-English writer merges with the Gandhian myth more unselfconsciously than does Narayan upto a point". In the context of the typology of sanyasa, Narayan’s Gandhi may be regarded as a rare
sanyasi portrayal. Interestingly enough, Narayan’s Gandhi, unlike the traditionally conceived image of the long-haired and bearded figure wrapped in the ochre-coloured clothes, turns out to be what Winston Churchill used to say, the “half-naked fakir.” In his unique appearance, perhaps, one may read a suggestion of a characteristic sanyasi played by Gandhi.

Narayan’s overall portrayal of Gandhi, unlike that of Rao’s (Kanthapura) or Anand’s (Untouchable), remains unpoetic and mirrors the well-known and popularly conceived image of the Mahatma. Putting it differently, Narayan’s Gandhi turns out to be a clichéd figure. The novelist, thus, underlines Gandhi’s truth and non-violence, his emphasis on selfless or disinterested Karma and duty as religion and advocacy of self-reliance and Swadeshi. Even the actual realization of Gandhi is also based on his clichéd image: Gandhi, reciting his bhajan or the famous Ram-dhoon, his time-bound morning walk, his long-strides (making you run) and his conversational habit, his insistence on spinning the daily quota of yarn as dedication and self-discipline, his cleanliness, Harijan association, evening prayers and finally his murder, have been recorded through the popularly known images of the Mahatma.

Gandhi’s asceticism has very little to do with the traditionally conceived notion of sanyasa: renunciation. He has not renounced the affairs of the world. What, however, stands out is the fact that despite living and fully involved in the world, he has never been realized through the “ways of the world.” Gandhi’s role
may indeed be interpreted as a sanyasi because he seems to imbibe the essentials of sanyasa. Like a sadhu, he has minimum needs, is mainly realized as spiritual guide (to Sriram and Bharati) and comes to be regarded as the citizen of the world. Like a sanyasi he lives a detached and selfless life playing the benevolent role for humanity.

Besides Gandhi, there seems to be one more character to be considered under the typology of sanyasa. It’s Sriram’s granny, playing a sanyasini. Interestingly, granny seems to play a rival to Gandhi and tries, helplessly though, to win over Sriram from him. In fact, her role as a sanyasini may be regarded as the indirect outcome of Gandhi’s influence on Sriram and Bharati. But apart from it, her sanyasa may be considered as an independently realized act.

Granny’s firm decision to go to Benares seems to be based on the traditional belief, especially in the Hindu community, that if one spends the last moments of one’s life in Kasi, the most sacred place of pilgrimage, taking the daily dip in the purifying river and worshipping the God Vishveshvara, one is blessed with a permanent seat in Heaven. The pilgrimage, that offers jeevan-mukti, freedom from the perennially operating wheel of existence, must certainly have been known to granny. It is because of her faith in the Shastra-Vachan that she could snap the delicate family strings.

Sriram’s granny seems to symbolize Narayan’s idea of ideal womanhood. She exemplifies the ideal in both the phases of her life. In the first phase, she
plays the most benevolent and almost dedicated role of Sriram’s caretaker after the accidental and premature death of his father. She plays the caretaker grandly and hands over a sizeable amount of money left by her son, to Sriram, the heir apparent, as soon as he completes twenty years of his age.

In the second phase of her life, despite her genuine concern for the grandson and her deep attachment to him, the moment she realizes that her traditional convictions and her entire religiosity would never be cherished by Sriram and the Gandhi-girl Bharati (having an unsurpassable grudge against Gandhi’s Harijan association) the pollution conscious woman determines to go on a final pilgrimage, to Benares. In her unequivocal decision to snap the family bondage and leave for the holy place granny exemplifies the age-old faith in the Shastras. It is here that Sriram’s granny installs Raman’s aunt (TPS), and in a way Jagan (TVS).

In the final analysis Waiting for the Mahatma seems to project a unique presentment of two faces of sanyasa: the symbolic and the traditional. If for Gandhi, he neither renounces the worldly affairs nor does he lead to the Himalayas like a conventional sanyasi, he, however, imbibes the inherent principles of sanyasa and lives like a sanyasi. In fact, he seems to have epitomized, what may be called Sanyasa-Vritti or sanyasa-consciousness. Gandhi’s character in Waiting for the Mahatma may certainly be regarded as Narayan’s contribution to the study of sanyasa.
In terms of his role in *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Gandhi's basic image as a sanyasi seems to have influenced the lives of Sriram and Bharati. It is because of the formidable but benevolent image of Gandhi that they attain the marital bliss going through the flame tests of exemplifying dedication to duty, self-control and morally evoked codes of conduct. It is because of his strict adherence to morality that Sriram (despite his fits of passion) and Bharati exemplify the brahmacharya, a sound and shastra-dictated foundation for the happy marital relationship. Gandhi, as a character, however, remains flat.

The other face of sanyasa in *Waiting for the Mahatma* belongs to granny, a person for whom tradition is sacrosanct. Although as a type she voices the traditional codes she seems to play an equally important role against Bharati, the New Woman. Interestingly enough, although both the women represent Gandhi's ideals of Indian Womanhood (at different stages of life, playing different roles) they, ironically, do not seem destined to live together. It may also be noted that despite their totally different worlds and ideals, both the women share the principle of assertion for the conviction and sanctity of human relationship. Granny, however, remains a cardish character and becomes a symbol of old values.

*The Guide* remains the most interpretative novel bespeaking Narayan's deep understanding of the human predicament. Thematically, no novel of Narayan has raised such fundamental questions related to human existence as *The
Guide. Some of the themes dealt with in *The Guide* seem to be: sin and redemption or crime and punishment, modernity versus tradition, material self against the spiritual self, illusion and reality et al. Significantly enough, the basic issues in *The Guide*, although they have the universal application, seem to have been realized through the Indian perspective. Narayan seems to underline a sort of ‘Eastern Solution’ to the fundamental problems shared by the world community.

As regards the typology of sanyasa in *The Guide*, it may be useful to note the sanyasa phase of the protagonist underlining the essential stage of his ascetism. The first stage in the final phase of Raju’s life begins as he closes the door on his past life. And, as if preordainedly schemed, he is taken as a sadhu by a villager, Velan, as he accidentally finds himself at the outskirt of a village called Mangala. The old habit of getting involved in other people’s affairs impels him and before Raju himself could properly understand the nature of the new situation, he accepts the role of an ascetic given by Velan. It is essential to mention that a mere dot of a character, Velan’s recalcitrant sister plays a vitally important role in Raju’s ultimate sainthood by admiringly confessing the change of her heart. She says: “He doesn’t speak to any one, but if he looks at you are changed”\(^{20}\). And soon enough, every second person in the village, attributing any turn of good luck to the holy presence of the ascetic, helps Raju to play the new role. The first phase ultimately marks him as the villagers willingly and reverentially accept him as their spiritual guide.
Several implications underlie this phase. Raju basically remains his usual earthly opportunist, feeling happy to have been accepted as the guest of honour by the village community, marking full use of his art of the gab and playing yet one more goal. It may also be added that his inherent instinct to get involved in other people’s affairs and to play the role other people given him may not brand him as a sinner. In fact, Raju’s initiation to sainthood has an unmistakable suggestion of the preordained scheme of the world and the “element of chance,” suggesting, perhaps, the puppetry existence of the human beings. The phrase clearly suggests one of the themes of the novel: mistaken identity or illusion versus reality. One also notes the basic difference in Raju’s playing his part and Velan’s living his and the irony in the disciple’s dictating the Guru, and most importantly, in accepting the ex-convict as an ascetic.

Once Raju feels confident about his smooth landing in the new territory, he takes the stock of things. The village community, nurtured on the traditional culture, welcomes his arrival and treats him like a Yogi. Raju, on his part, reads the community’s religious psychology, as the letters on the wall and decides to play the new role of a saint with thorough preparation. He determines “to look as brilliant as he could manage, let drop gems of thoughts from his lips, assume all the radiance available.” His efforts to play the saint with the sophistication of an actor, and the rustic community’s indomitable faith in his spiritual power soon find him growing in stature beyond his own imagination.
The third stage is initially marked with Raju’s decision to look his part. Says the narrator: “Raju’s decision to fall on his nape. A clean-shaven, close-haired saint was an anomaly”. Gradually Raju comes to be realized as Mr. Know-all, playing all sorts of roles arising out of necessity. He starts prescribing the medicine, mostly for the children, and the community unhesitatingly takes him as a spiritual healer. Raju also plays the village judge to sort out their disputes and quarrels. Ironically enough, when the saint finds everything well with his world, destiny seems to interface with the smooth and happy run of his life and Raju receives the severest jolt of his life. It all begins with the severe drought the village suffer and themselves breaking each other’s heads. As the restive saint asks a village moron to deliver the message, “Unless they are good I’ll never eat”, the latter twists it and blurts out saying, “The Swami, does not want food any more ....Because.... it doesn’t rain”. Thus, unknown to himself, Raju makes them believe that he is undertaking a fast to himself, Raju makes them believe that he is undertaking a fast to bring rain.

Significantly enough, in all the roles Raju plays, there seems to be an unmistakable hand of destiny. One notes that Raju feels obliged to change his role as he finds himself at the peak of his involvement in it. As the third stage leads him, rather forcibly, to undertake the fact, one notes the mute but formidable influence of the community of the rustics. It may also be possible to read the twisting of Raju’s simple message as a karma-consequence. Although Raju plays
the sanyasi quite seriously, basically he remains a charlatan. Narayan telescopes Raju's typically rascalic attitude to the drought oriented fight at the village in these words: "Personally, he felt that the best thing for them bothering too much about the drought". And, finally, one may as well consider the caricature of the semi-moron. It is through him that Narayan underlines life's most absurd ironies. The semi-moron, finding himself at a loose end casually decides to pay a visit to the Swami and receive his blessing. But life's irony operates with such devastating nature that the semi-moron, instead of receiving the Swami's blessing, seems to deliver the latter the death warrant as it were. The tiny dot of a character also seems to project the triumphing of the average over the extraordinary.

The fourth stage of Raju's enforced sainthood begins as the repentant and guilty rustics devoutly behold him as "the fasting saint." Raju, unaware of the reality even discourses on the food on the fateful day. It is only when Raju says, "Tomorrow I'll take my usual food" and the shocked and bewildered disciple asks him, "Do you expect it to rain tomorrow?" That he understands the serious implication of the twisted message and ultimately becomes aware of the death-trap he unconsciously walks into. Although he feels touched as the gullibles honestly express their sense of gratitude by trying to touch his feet, the awareness of the impending threat to his life scares him and as a last resort he makes a clean and thorough confession of his sinful past to Velan, hoping thereby to escape the jaws
of death. But Velan exemplifies the genuine stuff of the disciple and remains
unmoved.

The phase has rich symbolic and ironic overtones. As Raju finds himself
helplessly trapped in his own scheme, one may clearly read Narayan's subtle
suggestion of the Karma-theory and the preordained nature of life. One also notes
the subtle irony operating throughout the phase. Commenting on the ironic
realization of Raju-Velan relationship, M.K. Naik says: "as R.S. Singh points out,
Raju is judged twice, first by the judge who sentences him for forgery and next by
Velan who pardons him, even after knowing that the so-called saint is charlatan.
But a further and more subtle touch of irony in the situation seems to have escaped
Singh's notice. The judge ruins Raju's career as an impresario but Raju's prison
life is happy, whereas Velan's "pardon" only in effect tightens the noose around
Raju's neck". We may add that although at the outset Velan's "pardon" seems
to be taking the charlatan to the scaffold, a close reading of the scene may,
however, reveal that as Raju was going to be the martyr's death, in a way, Velan
offers him the eternal life.

On the first day in his fasting phase Raju remains essentially his old self,
gulping down the stale food and finds himself painfully chased by the thoughts of
food. Comes a time when he wins over his hunger and gradually gets involved in
his new role of the fasting ascetic. One even finds him arguing with himself, thus:
"If by avoiding food I should help the trees bloom, and the grass grow, why not do
A definite and distinct change in Raju’s basic attitude may be noticed as the narrator says: “For the first time in his life.... he was doing a thing in which he was not personally interested”. The ordeal of fasting continues till the last day of the fast when finally the saint declares: “It’s raining in the hills. I can feel it coming under my feet, up my legs”.

The last phase of Raju’s fast underlines several implications. And the end of the novel marks one of the rare instances of Narayan’s teasing ambiguities. It may be relevant to underline different characteristic interpretations of Raju’s last role. Raju lives a sinner and dies a sinner. He thinks that the rains he sees (or thinks he sees) are indeed, a pathetic hallucination of a starving impostor. Uma Parameswaran views Raju’s final phase on similar lines. Her thesis is that though Raju plays the sanyasi with full application and dedication, he does not change a whit and dies as the mask becomes the noose suffocating the ‘player’ to death. She pays a ‘tribute to Narayan’s ambiguity and art’ but insists that the rogue dies as a rogue.

Meenakshi Mukherjee thinks that Raju plays the sanyasi well in keeping with his previous reputation as an accomplished role-player. Her assertion is: “Towards the end Raju loses the feeling of an actor performing an act; the act becomes reality, the mask becomes the man, and Raju The Guide turns into a guru”. She joins those critics who believe that a picaroan was making a room for the holy pilgrim. Meenakshi Mukherjee also notes that Kalo in Bhattacharya’s He
who Rides a Tiger, finding the mask painful, finally, dares and flings it away and stands fully exposed with his original punic self: “The man who rode the tiger ultimately did have the courage to kill in order to dismount it”\textsuperscript{33}. She, however, concludes that Raju prefers to keep the killing mask, until it becomes the skin itself.

The ambivalent nature of the ending of \textit{The Guide} makes it difficult to ascertain the kind of death Raju meets: a martyr’s? or, a commoner’s? Although Narayan remains silent, he is not without suggestions. It is through the tell-tale signs that one may forward a theory that the common charlatan undergoing rite de passage ultimately becomes martyr.

The first marked change in the charlatan is seen as the enforced saint realizes the tremendous of the rustics in the miraculous power of a saint. He recollects the similar story of the penance he had told them: “When the time comes, everything will be alright. Even the man who would bring you the rain will appear, all of a sudden”\textsuperscript{34}. It may also be possible to read the suggestion of the martyr’s death in Graham Greene’s advice to Narayan to show Raju dead at the end of the novel: “While I was hesitating whether to leave my hero alive or dead at the end of the story, Graham was definite that he should die”\textsuperscript{35}. Narayan’s own statement that “Yesterday’s demon, perhaps, becomes tomorrow’s god, after a revolutionary or purgatorial process of change”\textsuperscript{36} may prompt one to read Raju’s
death, as ‘death by water’ underlines the sanctimonious nature of the martyr’s death.

In the final analysis the typology of Sanyasa seems to underline yet another face of a sanyasi in (TG). Raju, although resembling the fake sanyasi Chandran in (TBA), stands unique as his sanyasa is realized ironically and with significant traditional overtones. The sanyasa here may be taken as Narayan’s strategy to present the story of crime and punishment on the moral and ethical plane of realization.

There exists striking parallels between Narayan’s The Financial Expert and The Vender of Sweets. Both Margayya and Jagan have been realized through their ironical names. Putting it differently, if the former, contrary to his name, as the path shower, seems to get lost in the material world, the latter, denoting the sun-God, often finds himself enveloped in the illusory darkness of the world. Both have been blessed with a single male issue, face the unbridgeable gap between the spoilt sons and themselves and, finally, seem destined to witness the exit of their sons (temporarily though) from their home and town. Both the sons return after some time and play havoc with the life of their sires, especially as they get involved with immoral affairs. The differences between them, though few, seem to be significant as they underline their characteristic individualities.

Margayya, despite the sea-change in his life, finally, returns to the family folds as the family man at the beginning of the novel. Jagan, however, having
played his full innings and experienced the traumatic moments in his later life, decides, as a thriving businessman, to call it a day and marches towards the Shastra dictated vanaprasthashrama. Margayya comes out as the man with Midas touch and consequently faces the nemesis. Jagan, although meticulously hoarded his unaccounted cash, did not lament when it vanished. In the final analysis, Margayya’s realization remains quite thin and within the confines of his family fold and household duties. Jagan’s realization, however, appears more meaningful as he renounces the world and hopes to see the light of spiritual enlightenment.

Although Jagan plays an eccentric and a ‘sanyasi to be’ with equal felicity, he seems to have been cut to play the latter under the guise of the former. At the end of The Vendor of Sweets, as he determinedly marches towards the pond, snapping the worldly ties, carrying a bank book and saying to the cousin, his alter-ego and confidant: “I am going to watch a goddess come out a stone. If I don’t like the place, I will go away somewhere else, I am a free man”37, Narayan seems to present yet another face of a sanyasi absolutely human and full of foils and foibles. It may be worthwhile to underline the chain-reactions that ultimately become responsible for Jagan’s renunciation. In other words, one may mark the significant stages of his life related to his final decision to become a sanyasi.

As a young and sensitive collegiate, Jagan had most enthusiastically responded to Mahatma Gandhi’s call for the struggle for independence. As a satyagrahi he had rushed into the British Collector’s bungalow and while trying
desperately to bring down the Union Jack and plant the Indian flag on the roof, he suffered really nasty cuts on his skull. Although one may not completely overlook the rather dubious nature of young Jagan’s patriotic act, especially because of his repeated failures as the possible reason behind the satyagraha, one may not altogether rule out the possibility the link between the Gandhian satyagrahi and the determined sanyasi seen at the end of the novel.

Jagan’s marriage interlude has distinctly ring of Indianness. Two important issues concerning his relationship with his wife, Ambika, merit our attention. As a youthful husband Jagan, the passionate and unleashed colt, must have given the young girl Ambika moments of embarrassment playing the over-sexed husband. But soon enough, he gives the indication of developing an entirely surrealistic attitude to sex, viewing the whole phenomenon thus: “He felt fatigued by all the apparatus of sex, its promises and its futility, the sadness and the sweat at the end of it all”38. The second issue is related to Jagan’s only offspring, Mali. Mali’s birth after the most painful and trying period for the parents, proves significant, giving Jagan a sense of pride, putting an end to his doubtful virility and elevating Ambika’s status as the mother of a son and bringing her humiliatingly sterile existence to an end. But soon enough, after Ambika passed away leaving an acutely felt lacuna in Jagan’s life. One may take the loner’s state of mind, in a way, conductive for the state of sanyasa.
Grace seems to revive Ambika’s association in Jagan. But more than the feminine principle (fascinating the widower, at least once, through her ‘ivory hued kneecap’) what stands out, in the context of his relationship with Grace, is Jagan’s humanitarian outlook. Despite her foreign identity Jagan accepts Grace as daughter-in-law and develops a tender concern for her. But when he learns about her ‘living in sin’ with Mali, the image of the daughter-in-law in his mind gets distorted and married and he feels terribly hurt and disturbed. It is here that the tainted image of Grace may be taken as an indirect cause to draw the future moment of sanyasa nearer for Jagan.

Mali, Jagan’s only son, seems to be destined to give his father the painful moments of discomfiture and worry all his life. The spilt son has practically nothing to share with his father and is realized as an antagonistic figure for him. Ironically enough, the gift of the God of seven hills has, through every act of his, become responsible to widen the gap between his modernity and Jagan’s tradition. Thus, Mali’s unceremoniously quitting the college, his leaving for America, getting involved with the fantastic novel-writing machine, living with Grace without marriage and finally his getting arrested distinctly and loudly speak for his disharmonious relationship with Jagan. Mali also seems to help Jagan march towards vanaprasthashama.

Jagan’s total snapping of the communication with the deviant. Mali his desperate efforts to keep himself away from the tainted sinners, his decision to
give it a try to the invitation given by the sculptor to buy the place to make it a spiritual resort and witness the Goddess of Radiance coming out of the stone and, his firm refusal to get involved in Mali's problem may speak for the genuine sanyasi and logically put him at the threshold of vanaprastha, the penultimate stage of sanyasa.

It may be significant to underline Jagan's Gandhism and his abiding faith in the Shastras as the definite contributory factors to his renunciation. One may also note these two principles realized with the typically Narayan touches of irony, comedy and satire. Although Jagan's image of the Gandhian appears genuine when he was quite young, in his later years, however, Jagan's following of the Gandhi principles seem to be reduced to its travesty and a few fads. One notes Jagan's practicing of non-violence in procuring the leather of the dying cows, (and in the process almost killing his wife), his strict following of dietary methods (abstaining from sugar and consuming just a few of honey) and other daily chores like taking cold water bath and spinning (as a duty bound activity) etc., have an unmistakable stamp of Gandhi-principles reduced to their external applications only. One also notes Jagan's noncooperation with the sinners in the most characteristic way: "Jagan barricaded himself in completely. He derived a peculiar pleasure in performing all the actions of a purificatory nature. He shut the communicating door between his part of the dwelling and Mali's and locked it on
his side. He did everything possible to insulate himself from the evil radiations of an unmarried couple living together.\textsuperscript{39}

As regards the influence of the Shastras in Jagan’s mind, one becomes aware of it right from the first page of \textit{The Vendor of Sweets}. The novel opens with Jagan’s quoting of a philosophic platitude: an unquestionable and irrefutable Shastra-Vachan: “Conquer taste and you will have conquered the self... [because] all our sages advise so.”\textsuperscript{40} As a matter of fact Jagan is often found quoting some Shastra or the Gita and may indeed be regarded as the astute follower of the Hindu way of life. Despite its ironic realization (Jagan’s reading of the Gita and supervising the culinary activities often go simultaneously), the facts remains that he always moves under the shadow of the Shastras.

The most obvious influence of the Shastras seems to be sharply realized in his reaction to the ways of the sinners. The moralist in him simply fails to understand the nature of the moral deviants. He is found musing thus: “He stood looking at the girl. She looked so good and virtuous; he had relied on her so much and yet here she was living in sin and talking casually about it all. ‘What breed of creatures are these?’ he wondered. They had tainted his ancient home.”\textsuperscript{41}

Finally, as the faithful follower of the Shastra dictums Jagan must be well aware of the significance of renunciation as the most desirable stage in the life of a Hindu householder. Jagan religiously believes that at sixty one enters a new janma. This is now he regards himself: “He was fit only for retirement. What a
magic word! If one had to shake off things, one did it unmistakably, completely, without leaving any loophole or a path back.

The ambivalent nature of Jagan primarily realized as he plays a Shastra-abider and a Gandhian, seems to be responsible for the multiple views of his sanyasa expressed by the critics. William Walsh for instance, seems to honestly regard Jagan as a genuine sanyasi-to-be: "Jagan’s decision to retire from the world is not only part of the national tradition.... It follows the bias of his won nature. He is ... pious attentive to scriptures, observant of customs, scrupulous about rituals."

M.K. Naik, however, seems to take a different view. He seems to present Jagan as a far cry from a true sanyasi. "If old Jagan’s Gandhism is only skin-deep.... His renunciation cannot be authentic either. The ancient Hindu ideal of renunciation, of course, holds a romantic glamour for modern westerners, and this perhaps explains how even an extremely perceptive critic like William Walsh is tempted to swallow Jagan’s renunciation, hook, line and sinker, without noticing the glaring inherent inconsistencies involved."

The ambivalence in the character of Jagan is so pervading that it seems to be Narayan’s strategy to present his sanyasi as imperfectly human as possible. This apparently strange trait may, thus, account for Jagan’s forgiving Grace, the tainted defiler of his pious household and his willingness to buy her return ticket to America, his refusal to get involved in Mali’s problems and his viewing the
sculptor sceptically. Jagan obviously does not seem to trust the old hair-dyer unconditionally and may take him seriously only after the emergency of the Goddess out of the stone. He cannot help thinking over the possibility of the hermit being his master's illegitimate issue. Says the narrator: “Jagan wanted to ask, but he suppressed the question, whether he might not have been born to passing concubine of his so-called master who never...married". Finally, the so-called ambivalence in his nature seems to follow him to the last moment. It is here that although Jagan seems to follow the Shastras as he marches towards the pond in the spirit of renunciation, he apparently remains his calculating self. He hands over the charge of the shop to the cousin and does not forget to take with him the bankbook along with the charkha. The sanyasi is yet to see the five faced Gayatri, the Goddess of Radiance and until then perhaps, he is not prepared to take any chances. How very practical he is and yet how very human he remains. In the final analysis Jagan's symbolic initiation to sanyasa seems to be the most obvious and logical culmination if his life-long quest for the spiritual realization.

If *The Painter of Signs* comes to be regarded as a minor work the novel seems to make a significant contribution to the typological study of sanyasa. *The Painter of Signs* telescopes the sanyasa motif through a vividly sketched out sanyasini, played by Raman's aunt, reminiscent of Sriram's granny in (WTM). Like most minor characters in Narayan, the aunt in (TPS), is realized as a type and a stock figure, showing typical characteristic traits. At the opening of the novel,
the aunt is presented as a sorrier edition of her former youthful self. She is quite garrulous, reminiscential but equally forgetful. She keeps repeating the heroic story of her grandfather. She meticulously manages the household and lets the ‘Boardless’ friends. She invariably spends her evenings at the temple, listening to the Harikathas. To consider her character under the typology of sanyasa, it may be essential to focus on her role in relation to Raman and Daisy.

Raman’s aunt, despite her name Laxmi, is basically realized, like Raju’s mother and Sriram’s granny, as a mother-figure. Although she exemplifies the tradition-based world of old values, striking a noticeable contrast to Raman’s modernity she seems to be quite contented living with him and religiously playing his mother-substitute. She is virtually shocked to witness her nephew’s open alliance with the modern girl with dubious character. As her advice to ‘keep off the girl’ falls on Raman’s deaf ears, she reads the nephew’s disregard of her and her own defeat in the battle of sexes and takes the unequivocal decision to go on a pilgrimage. Significantly, her departure to Benares coincides with Raman’s preparation to bring the bride home. Although the aunt’s decision to go on a pilgrimage may be taken as an outcome of Raman’s deviation from the accepted codes, she, nevertheless, exemplifies the traditionally conceived sanyasa — renunciation — by snapping off the worldly ties and aiming for the Moksha.

Although one never witnesses a confrontation between Raman’s aunt and Daisy, one may, however, read an absolute incompatibility between them. The
two women obviously belong to the diagonally opposite worlds of value. If the aunt epitomizes the traditionally realized ideals and absolute faith in the socio-moral codes, Daisy plainly shows her amoral attitude to sex and seems to have little regard for the Shastras and codes in her scheme of life. One way of realizing the aunt’s renunciation is to read Narayan’s intention of obliquely underlining Daisy’s deviation. It may also be noted that both the women leave Raman in the end and, interestingly enough, both of them seem to be leading to their individual goals, clearly marked with tradition and modernity.

In the final analysis, the aunt’s sanyasa, reminiscent of Jagan’s renunciation in *The Vendor of Sweets*, seems to be basically realized through her notion of sanctity in the man-woman relationship. Raman’s aunt, however, scores over Jagan’s bank-book association and his obviously sceptic attitude to renunciation. The one liner illumines as a sanyasini, especially as she marches towards Benares with total determination and unruffled soul. The aunt, however, remains a flat character and plays a symbolic role.

Narayan’s conception of (human) life is so deeply rooted in the culture of his soil that possibly every novel of his, as K.V.S.Murti points out, has a mythological soul. He has consciously made use of the mythological analogies in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* and *The Painter of Signs*. Narayan recurringly uses myths and mythological parallels to explore the complex nature of human
A Tiger for Malgudi, vividly showing resemblance to The Panchatantra, remains basically a tale of a quadruped gifted with a soul.

A Tiger for Malgudi has a tiger named Raja, with a soul, as the central consciousness. The genesis of the novel is narrated by Narayan himself in its preface. He read an unusual story of a hermit and his unleashed tiger companion whom the former claimed to be his brother in the previous lives. Although Narayan thought it as an incredible story, ultimately it became the source of his novel:

It also occurred to me that with a few exceptions here and there, humans have monopolized the attention of fiction writers. Man in his smugness never imagines for a moment that other creatures may also possess ego, values, outlook, and ability to communicate. Though they may be incapable of audible human speech.... I wished to examine what the result would be if I made a tiger the central character in the novel.

Raja, the central consciousness of A Tiger for Malgudi, narrates (through the flashback), the strange tale of his spiritual awakening (thanks to the Master, his Guru) and the entire journey of his developmental stages underlining illusion and reality. At the outset A Tiger for Malgudi recalls Orwell’s The Animal Farm for obvious comparisons but, a closer look at the latter may reveal that it is perceived as political allegory and is regarded as an ironic commentary on the Western phenomenon focusing on the Now and the Here of the world. Narayan’s A Tiger for Malgudi, although based on the real experience, runs mostly on the lines of
The Panchatantra and deals with the eternal issues like spiritual awakening and renunciation in the world if illusion or maya.

As far as the typology of sanyasa is concerned, A Tiger for Malgudi may be regarded as the closest to the traditionally conceived notion of renunciation. It also focuses on the full-fledged study of a sanyasi. Since Raja, the disciple tells the story of his transformation achieved through with the guru-shishya relationship. Needless to say, serious issues have been artfully disguised in the novel.

The ascetic, referred to as the Master by his disciple, Raja, appears in the last part of the novel, although one feels his presence as a bright absentee throughout the novel. If the reader learns about the Master’s spiritual existence chiefly through Raja’s tale, he also gets some of his biographical details through Jayaraj the Malgudi photographer who happened to snap the Master’s photograph in the latter’s young days. The chequered life of the Master (as a satyagrahi, as an affluent householder, as a sanyasi) revives our memory of Rudyard Kipling’s memorable portrayal of the mysterious Puran Bhagat, in The Second Jungle Book. Like Puran Bhagat, the Master, too, steps into the sanyasa after successfully performing the role of a householder.

The master epitomizes the concept of sanyasa conceived in the Shastras. If he played the householder with the usual materialistic glory, he did not indulge in it but, soon enough, realized the meaninglessness and futility of that affluent life.
Says the master: “One day it seemed all wrong, a senseless repetition of activities.... and I abruptly shed everything.... and filed away from wife, children, home, possession.... At midnight, I softly drew the bolt of our back door... while others slept, and left very much in the manner of Siddhartha”

Narayan’s portrayal of the Master may be regarded as an epitome of an ideal sanyasi. The Master, as an ascetic, must certainly have undergone the ascetic’s ordeals and eventually perfected the role of a sanyasi. One may even read his spiritual power to visualize the thing crossing the limits of time and space. This may account for his sudden appearance in Malgudi. If his act of saving Raja underlines the benevolent trait of a sanyasi, his power to totally change the basic attitudes of Raja focuses on the sanyasi’s spiritual influence. When the Master enters the headmaster’s room, Raja still breathes the nature of the man-eater but, the moment the Master speaks simple but magnetic words --“Understand that you are not a tiger..... I am your friend” -- Raja seems to have felt a mysterious change taking place in him. Gone is the beastly and deadly intention to attack the frail humans, and gone is also the egoist’s pride of his enormous strength. Instead, he becomes subdued, humble and quiet. Thus, guiding the disciple through various philosophic discourses -- “God says in the Gita, ‘I’m life and death, I’m the killer and the killed” -- the Master eventually brings a spiritual realization in Raja.
Significantly enough, Narayana presents a dual sanyasa in *A Tiger for Malgudi*. The Master, after settling, like Puran Bhagat, at the Mempi mountain resort, remains busy, perfecting his life as a yogi. He amicably, but firmly refuses to go back when all of a sudden his wife appears and appeals to him to accompany her back home. (One my recall almost a similar situation in *The English Teacher* and also note the world of difference between the headmaster’s sanyasa and the Master’s). He plays the yogi to the last moment before he senses the ripe time to attain Samadhi. Simultaneously, through philosophic discourses and teachings, he initiates his disciple Raja into the sanyasa state of existence. Narayan brings a gradual change in Raja as he sheds the worldly and fleshy craving of hunger and desire and eventually shows inclination towards otherworldly existence. If Narayan presents the Master and his disciple Raja as kindred souls, then it may be imagined that as the Guru marches off towards his nirvana, the mantle of sanyasa, symbolically speaking, falls on Raja’s shoulders.

In the final analysis, as Narayan presents the exemplary sanyasi reflecting the ideals of the Shastra-based sanyasa in *A Tiger for Malgudi*, he seems to have completed the story of sanyasa began, ironically though in his first novel *Swami and Friends*. The wheel turns a full circle in *A Tiger for Malgudi* as the typology of sanyasa meaningfully culminates into the copybook study of a sanyasi who becomes a light-house to the followers of asceticism.
As regards the characterization in *A Tiger for Malgudi*, the novel, true to its parabolic nature, presents the sanyasi character in accordance with the popular notion of the holy-mystic. The fabulist presents the ascetic as a yogi whose portrayal has become quite authentic. Raja confirms to the pattern reflected in *The Panchatantra* stories. The novel also reiterates the usual patterns of the preceding novels. Most importantly, as the subdued and peace-loving Raja is led to the innocent world of children, Narayan seems to underline the assertion of the ordinary and average, and, in the transformation of the ferocious “man-eater” into the “man-entertainer” in the zoo, he seems to suggest a subtle realization symbolizing growth.

As one takes into account the typology of sanyasa in its entirety, one notes that almost every Narayan novel has a face that either belongs to the genuine type or at least partially resembles the serious one. In terms of types there are some that seem to be fully aware of the magic of the ochre-coloured grab and they play the fake sadhus and, cash in on the naive believers’ faith in the holiness and spiritual power of the sanyasi. Some of them play the sanyasi role not as a consciously planned out act but rather obligingly. Their sanyasa, as the outcome of the troubled conscience, however, does not belittle their purposefully played role. There are others who, symbolically imbibing the essential spirit of sanyasa, renounce the materially realized world and snap worldly ties. Narayan also
presents an ambivalent sceptic and a metamorphosed one. And finally one encounters the full-fledged one.

It is significant to note that if sanyasa (as the typological study reveals) mainly symbolizes the deep-rooted Hindu family tradition, and is regarded as the most ideal stage of life by the culturally nourished masses, it also underlines serious implications: it becomes the novelist's strategy to focus on the deviation of the character, or it suggests the illusory way of life, or it underlines the spiritual growth of character.

Thus in sum, we may say that with the typological study of sanyasa, we come to the other end of Narayan's overall conception of humanity. If the typology of innocence, realized through the Hindu way of life, underlines the first stage of brahmacharya, the typology of sanyasa stresses the last stage, sanyasashrama. Again, if Narayan's perception of humanity begins with the notion of innocence, his presentment of sanyasa may mark his idea of spiritual experience. Thus he seems to view the entire humanity (characteristically symbolized in the Malgudi novels) through the universally acknowledged stages: innocence and (spiritual) experience.
NOTES


