CHAPTER V

R. K. NARAYAN AND HIS STYLISTIC PATTERNS

SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STYLE — A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

Style is not purely a grammatical category, but as a linguistic means of embodying or verbally materialising the author's creative intentions. In tracing the development of style of a writer we shall have to base our analysis on the syntactic and semantic characteristics of the prose style. These stylistic features appear as a continuous changing tendency in the gradual evolution of prose style in fiction.

In such a scientific approach, the subjective element cannot be entirely suppressed or eliminated from our conception of style and the author's specific qualities in individual cases will be recognised as a more or less important agent. On the whole, however, we believe that conclusions of a general nature, obtained by such textual analysis and their mutual comparison, may be useful in illustrating the dependence of artistic realisation of a sentence or paragraph in fiction on some historically conditioned rules of stylistic expression.

In the earlier stages in English as well as Indo-Anglian fiction prose style may be generally described

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as one with strong elements of rhetoric, indulging in long sentence periods, adorned with various rhetorical figures. Rhetoric in those days was closely associated with logic. This close connection of logic and rhetoric constituted an important moment that asserted itself as a formative principle in the process of realizing a literary utterance, the basic unit of which in a work of fiction, is in a narrower sense the sentence and in a broader sense a paragraph or even more extensive stylistic patterns. With the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century authors, the logical process formed designs or schemes that precisely governed the sentence construction. Not only in the sense that one item followed another in linear succession, that any statement had to ensue in logical consequence from the preceding statement; but also in the sense that all the logical windings - explanatory parenthesis and digressions - had to be duly expressed through grammatical means as well.

An example will elucidate the point. The following passage is taken from T. Ramakrishna's 'PADMINI': An Indian Romance' (London):

Like the stately lotus sprouting out the unsightly, uninteresting clay, she was born in an uninteresting and obscure village, and like the servant of the royal household that Contd...P/384.
comes to a distant place to pluck the flower and take it to adorn the palace chambers, she was taken to the palace of Chandragiri to shine there as a woman among women, and like that same flower breathing sweetest fragrances whence fiercest beat the sun's rays, the beauties of her character shone brightest by the rays of royal favour beating on her at all hours of the day, and her rugged virtue was shown the most when fiercely she was attacked with requests and importunities for marrying her. 1.

The logical subject of the utterance (the basis of the statement or the theme about which the affirmation is made) is throughout the whole paragraph Padmini and all the nuclei of the string of statements refer to her as the given theme. We come to know who she is, where is she going, how does she look like and what magic influence does her beauty cast upon others. And all this in one logical and syntactical sequence. One can easily perceive that a modern writer would convey the whole body of information, contained in our quotation, in a stylistically quite different way. But any disturbance of this logical and syntactical sequence by dividing the compound sentence into shorter simple sentences, by substituting co-ordinate

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relations for sub-ordinate ones, would more or less deform one of the substantial specific features of T. Ramakrishna's stylistic pattern which ranks him and makes him regardless of other linguistic and non-linguistic qualities - one of the typical representatives of the Nineteenth Century Indo-Anglian fiction.

Apart from this "enumerative type" of utterance, based on a linear sequence of its component members, another stylistic pattern illustrative of the older kind of prose style may be demonstrated in which the correlation between logic and syntax is clearly reflected in an exemplary form. This time, our sample has been chosen from Henry Fielding's 'Joseph Andrews' (1742):

By those high people, therefore, whom I have described, I mean a set of wretches, who while they are a disgrace to their ancestors, whose honours and fortunes they inherit (or perhaps a greater to their mother, for such degeneracy is scarce credible), have the insolence to treat those with disregard who are at least equal to the founders of their own splendour. It is, I fancy, impossible to conceive a spectacle more worthy of our integration, than that of a fellow, who is not only a blot in the escutcheon of a
great family, but a scandal to the human species, maintaining a supercilious behaviour to men who are an honour to their nature and a disgrace to their fortune.2.

The thematic kernel of this rather complicated passage is the censure of persons who look down upon those in an 'inferior' position. In terms of style, the thought is expressed by way of a comparison, the key words being the pairs of concepts: disgrace plus scandal and honour versus disgrace, placed in contrasting parallels. It is not the artistic appeal here that matters, but the logical argument based on an antithesis, conditioning the stylistic construction of the whole paragraph. The 'argumentative type' of utterance where compound sentences are unfolded round certain key semantic kernels indicates the close affinity in stylistic technique of the Eighteenth Century English authors with that of the Nineteenth Century Indo-Anglian prose writers.

Doubtless, a more detailed examination of further materials from the same point of view would yield the rather common place inference that the current prose style of the Twentieth Century Indo-Anglian novels is in many respects dependent on the older stylistic tradition, at least as
far as descriptive and discursive passages are concerned, but doubtless as well the Twentieth Century marks a step forward in moulding a style that is colloquial, unvarnished, direct and more functional in its semantic contents. This progression toward fluidity and indeterminateness in style achieves its culmination in William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway in English fiction and in Raja Rao and A.K. Ramanujan in Indo-Anglian fiction. Their English is less ornamental, less rhetorical and therefore more functional as to its semantic contents. The structure of sentences and clauses however is accommodated to similar logical designs. Substantial progress, compared with earlier stylistic practice is evident especially in direct speech. An unprecedented number of colloquial phrases and idioms, the idiosyncrasies of the characters' speech habits or the nuances of the regional or linguistic speech patterns is to be found and the dialogues become or at least appear natural or suitable to the temperament of the characters.

In this connection the question of creating atmosphere in a work of fiction – the atmosphere of place, time and situation is interesting. The earlier authors are rarely concerned with creating the atmosphere of place or time. What we mostly meet with in their works, is the atmosphere of situation which follows from the description.

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of the action. The modern novelists know how to prepare an atmosphere of situation which marks a notable step forward. They can also rouse the acute inner tension between the atmosphere of situation and the action proceeding against its background. Here is an example from A.K. Narayan's 'THE GUIDE':

Josie blinked unhappily. She did not know how to answer. I intervened to say, 'Mother, she is not going anywhere'. My mother appealed to me, 'Have some sense, Aaju. She is another man's wife. She must go back to him'. There was such calm logic in what she said, I had nothing more to do but repeat blindly, 'She can't go anywhere, Mother. She has got to stay here'. And then my mother brought out her trump card. 'If she is not going, I have to leave the house', she said. My uncle said, 'Did you think she was helpless, and only a dependent on you?' He thumped his chest and cried, 'As long as I am breathing, I will never let down a sister'.

I appealed to my mother, 'You don't have to go, mother'. - 'Then throw that wench's trunk out and give her a push towards the railway, and your mother will stay. What do you take her for? You think she is the sort that can keep company.

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with all kinds of dancing - 'Shut up, uncle', I said, and I was taken aback by my own temerity. I feared he might repeat his threat about recalcitrant bulls. Fortunately, he said, 'Who are you, puppy, to say if I am to shut up or speak. You think I notice you? Are you sending that ... that ... out or not? That's all we want to know.'

'I go; she is not going,' I said very calmly. He heaved a sigh, glared at the girl, looked at my mother: 'Well, sister, you must start packing, then we will go by the evening bus'. My mother said, 'All right. I can pack in a minute'.

When depicting this scene Narayan relied on what we have already said earlier in the narrative. After Raju's mother's inquiries about the whereabouts of the stranger Rosie, after Raju's inability to answer the inquiries and his rude manners and after Raju's uncle's decision to leave the house with his sister, the reader is led to divine what Rosie's lot most probably will be and his sympathies for both the hero and the heroine inspite of their illegal relationships will not only continue, rather increased than abated, but he is also prompted to share Raju's repulsion for his uncle and the intensity of Rosie's

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present crisis. Thus an important atmosphere of situation originates over which the reader lives more intensively (as he can understand the experience of the hero and the heroine from a more general and perhaps, more mature perspective) than Aju whose hatred of his uncle here, is only impulsive. It is not necessary to put all in *verbis expressis*. An abbreviated, short-cut delineation may be used, with blank spaces left for the reader's fancy to fill in within the limits rather suggested than defined by the description. In contrast with the foregoing examples, the considerable stylistic variety of the utterance is remarkable, with the corresponding division of sentences into shorter sections and the alternation of the descriptive parts with curt direct speeches. Logical links may be relaxed, as the inner coherence of the scene is sufficiently secured by the uniform atmosphere of situation. The aesthetic appeal is shifted from the rational level to the emotional level. It is the artistic image that is relevant here, not the literal meaning of the description.

Stylistically, such imaginative values cannot be enlivened by sticking strictly, in the process of verbal materialization, to the logical patterns of utterances, since logical sequences of strings of statements or grouping of the rhemes round some logical kernels rather
demand descriptions and affirmations of a monothematic quality. However, in a delineation where any kind of atmosphere becomes a concomitant agent, such stylistic methods must be found unsuitable and even unfeasible.

An examination along these lines of the quotation from 'The Guide' will illustrate the point. With respect to the broader context, the scene is, of course, focussed on Raju as the hero of the novel. Yet the intended effect based on the first 'collision' between Raju and his mother and his uncle, requires the introduction and interplay of four characters of equivalent importance in the given situation, namely of Raju, Nisie, Raju's mother and his uncle: each of them plays his role, the actions or speeches of each represent themes in themselves, and only the sum or combination of all these various themes make up a literary unit or entity able to convey the integral meaning intended. Four logical subjects enter into the framework of this artistic image; the passage is no longer monothematic, but a polythematic one. Here we have already realised one of the potentialities of modern prose.

It seems that the parallel presence of the atmosphere of setting or time on the one hand, and the development of action or plot on the other hand, or the interaction of the
two planes, is a significant feature of modern prose. To illustrate this as briefly as possible, the following example from 'THE GUIDE' has been selected:

The Peak house was perched on the top most cliff on Kempi Hills - the road ended with the house; there was a glass wall covering the North Veranda, through which you could view the horizon a hundred miles away. Below us the jungle stretched away down to the valley, and on a clear day you might see also the Sarayu sparkling in the Sun and pursuing its own course far away. This was like heaven to those who loved wild surroundings and loved to watch the game, which prowled outside the glass at nights. The girl was in ecstasy. She ran like a child from plant to plant with cries of joy, while the man looked on with no emotion. Anything that interested her seemed to irritate him.

There are two parallel lines of happenings centred round two basic themes: The Peak house with its surroundings and the girl. The sentences "you could view the horizon a hundred miles away", "the jungle stretched away down to the valley", "the Sarayu sparkling in the Sun"...
and pursuing its own course far away" evoke a graphic vision of a natural phenomenon, independent of the girl; yet at the same time the heroine's situation is projected against the background of this setting. The third theme, the psychology of the man, cleverly introduced in the narrative functions as a connecting link between the two parallel lines of happenings: 'the man looked on with no emotion' and 'anything that interested has seemed to irritate him'. What is important, giving a vivid imaginative quality to the treatment of the action, is that the author does not reduce his interest to a mere statement when and where this or that happened or was happening, but creates like a great novelist the atmosphere of time and setting parallel with the gradual progress of his central plot.

Richard M. Eastman comments:

In sentence structure a different range of effects is to be found. The mere length of an author's sentences may give a characteristic feel to his writing. 5.

In Narayan's 'WAITING FOR THE MAHATMA', short sentences help to establish the urgent, fragmented reactions of Sriram confused and deeply agitated:

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Sriram felt crushed by her tone. 'Oh, Bharati, don't add to my troubles, by mistaking the so completely. I revere the Mahatma, you know I do. Why do you suspect me? Have I not followed every word of what he has been saying? ... Otherwise I should not have been here. I should not have left the comfort of my house. All that I want is some more time to think it over. I am only thinking of my grandmother. I want to see her before I am finally jailed. That is why I asked you how long we should be in prison. She is very old, you know. I will surrender myself after I have seen her once. I must manage to see her.

Later, as Sriram gains assurance, the sentences lengthen; they attain a momentum and rhythm appropriate to sustained action:

He loved her as she drew herself up, more than at any other time in his life, but he also felt afraid of her more than at any other time. ... He was seized with desolation at the thought that he would not see her anymore coming round the bend of the road ... He stood where he was
and saw her raising her hands to her eyes once or twice in order to wipe off the tears gathering there.

Style as just considered may be an index either of the narrator's personality or of individual characters whose speech and thought the novelist may stylize to reveal distinctive qualities of temperament. At a final level, style is cognitive - it is a way of organizing and creating reality; it reflects and extends the basic vision of life contained by the novel; thus it can be examined as evidence of the novelist's own values.

A man's style is closely connected with his personality and character. It is as individual as his voice or walk, and just as we can recognize a great author merely by his way of writing. How often, on reading a passage quoted anonymously in a magazine or newspaper, we say - 'It must be Bacon' or 'it must be Lamb'. There is something in the way each other writes - in his choice of words, his turn of phrases, his contraction of a sentence which marks the passage as his and no one else's. In the oft-quoted Renaissance phrase, style is 'mentis character' - the image of man. His whole personality - mind, heart and soul - is mirrored in it. Even Shakespeare, who in many
respects is a most elusive writer, he's a style of his own which it is impossible to mistake. It is strongly coloured by the way he thought and felt. It is true that where scientific accuracy - the bare statement of facts - is necessary, style can be reduced to a minimum. The facts almost communicate themselves without, as it were, the intervention of the writer. But where there is a style, there is the man behind it, with all the myriad facets of his personality. It is also useful exercise in the study of style to look for the writer behind the writing: to trace in it the influence of his background, his surroundings, his education, his literary tastes; to seek to understand his mental and emotional make-up, his observation and experience of men and matters, his likes and dislikes, the growth of his genius, and so on. For instance, there is a close connection between the circumstance of Mulk Raj Anand's involvement during his youth in the non-violent campaign against the British rule championing the socialist cause in the nineteen-thirties of the down-trodden masses in India and his superb handling of those elements in his novels. His espousing of the cause of the wretchedly Indian poor, coolies, outcasts, plantation workers and his membership of the progressive writers' Movement and his communist idealism find expression in all his works. It is doubtful whether, if he had been born and brought up in

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any prosperous family of a free country, he would have been
inspired to the same extent by the freedom movement of the
country and the agony of the exploited classes of people.
This is how a man's personal life may affect his style.

Style is also influenced by the age into which
the writer is born; the school of writing, if any, to which
he belongs and the kind of art form (epic, drama, essay,
novel etc.) which he attempts. This explains the superficial
resemblance between the writers of the same age, of the
same school, and of the same forms in prose and verse. Each
of these factors tends to efface individual differences,
for each, often inspite of the author, enforces conformity.
Thus in English literature Spenser could not write like
Chaucer; because he had been reared in the traditions of
a different age. He was deeply, though perhaps unconsciously
influenced by the contemporary intellectual and aesthetic
currents of the Renaissance. Inspite of all its archaisms,
his style is removed by nearly two Centuries from Chaucer's.
Thus in Indo-Anglian literature as well, Santha Rama Rau,
Kamala Markandaya and Balachandra Jajan could not write
like R.K.Narayan because they had spent a greater portion
of their life abroad far from their native environment.
They have been more anglicised in their social, behavioural
and educational patterns. Educated in mission schools,
they adopted even at home more anglicized routine - in eating dressing, pastimes and all that goes with what is termed the 'way of life'. They were reared in an atmosphere once removed from the typical Hindu routine. Hence the difference in style from the early writers immersed in Hindu tradition. How different schools of writing affect a man's style we can see if we compare the language of Kamala Markandaya with that of A.K. Nayar who wrote in the same language but whose roots were deep in Hindu culture. The language of Kamala Markandaya can be understood from the passage given below:

...the tranquility shot with terrifying strands, its center a spinning core of restlessness that took her away from him, led her into this and that.

or that of Balachandra Nayan:

He had chosen her against all pressures, in his obstinate, lonely act of self-assertion, and out of the exactions of sorrow and of chagrin there had to come something of the truth in himself. She was the receiver of the only pure commitment, the act had been free, he was himself uncompromised, and in the reality which it planted, the meanings that he sought could stand and grow.

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And now let us quote a passage from A.K. Narayan:

The river rumbled into the dark starlit night, the leaves of the huge tree over the ancient steps rustled and sighed. Far off bullock carts and pedestrians were fording the river at Nallappa's Grove.

Born almost in the same era, the one sought freedom in a scholar's high flow of vocabulary and mannered prose and the other subjected himself to the raconteur's voice of effortless narration. To pass from Hajam's 'Too Long In The West' to A.K. Narayan's 'Waiting for the Mahatma' is to move from a glittering wash basin in one's flat to the musical river at the base of the Himalaya.

Each age, school, and art form tends to have, in its main features, a style of its own, which is not without its influence on the writer. For this reason it is not easy to lay down principles of writing which can be applied indifferently to all ages, all schools of writing, all art forms, and all individuals. Each manifestation of style must be judged by its own laws, and it happens very often that a style which in its own age is highly esteemed and widely employed, is, in the next, as violently repudiated. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility of its

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resuscitation in some future age. Examples of this are frequently found in the history of English literature and also in the short history of Indo-Anglian literature. The classical mode of writing in English literature, which was extravagantly cultivated in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, was ruthlessly discarded in the Nineteenth, but in our own day finds favour to an appreciable extent with many writers. In Indo-Anglian literature, the flamboyant mode of writing which was cultivated with great zeal in the Nineteenth Century by the writers like A. Madhaviah (1897) Rajam Aiyar (1892), Ramesh Dutt, Mammochan Ghosh and Sarojini Naidu was almost disfavoured in the Twentieth Century by the writers such as Raja Rao, A.K. Narayan and Nulk Raj Anand but the old scholarly mode of writing has been revived in our own day by writers like Manohar Kalegkar, G.V. Desani, Sudhin Ghosh and Anita Desai. Since style is intimately connected with the life and mode of thinking of a given civilisation at a given time, it cannot have any fixed form. It must change with the times. It may even happen that the advancement of science, which necessitates objectivity in expression no less than in thought, may make it difficult for writers in future to achieve a style in the true sense of the word.

The difficulties of the Indo-Anglian novelist in the use of English language

The difficulty that the Indo-Anglian novelist
faces in the use of English language is that in a way it will retain its Indian flavour and at the same time remain English. 'Indian English' has got little appreciation in this country. Even today a large number of cultivated Indians refuse to be interested in the novels Indians write in English. Criticism sometimes founders on uncertainty about how Indian writing should be viewed, as 'Indian' or as 'English'. It is sometimes hard to define what an 'Indian' writer is when we are talking about his work in the English language. Indian writers perhaps bother little about the criticisms of their English. Among them there seems to be a growing consciousness that English is an accommodating language and that they have to fashion it anew to suit their particular purpose and that their use of the language will not be like that of the British or American writer and that the definition of good English varies not only from century to century but also from place to place.

There has been a good deal of research and experimentation in the use of English language in Indo-Anglian fiction during the last forty years. In the early part of the century some writers wrote novels in English and used the language so carefully and consciously as if they were experimenting their style of writing. They were conscious that they were experimenting on a foreign tongue. Therefore, in their use of the language in creative writing they had
all along been feeling uneasy and shaky. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Michael Madhusudan Dutta began their career in English with 'RAJAH BIVAS WIFE' (1864) and THE CAPTIVE LADY (1849) respectively. But very soon they switched over to their own language because they realised the inadequacy of their medium of expression. Only a handful of second rate writers chose to continue writing in English and this is perhaps why Indo-Anglian creative writing in English is poor in quality as well as in quality until the first quarter of this century.

But since thirties there has been a sharp change in the line. We notice a quick development in Indo-Anglian fiction in quality as well as in quantity. This may be due to the recognition on the part of the writers that English has become a part of our own life and culture and that it is like other Indian languages and no longer a foreign language. This self-assurance generated in them confidence to bend the language to their own sweet will. Hence the vigorous attempts to wield the language in different ways must be construed as a sign that writers have ceased to regard it as an alien tongue. Mulk Raj Anand appeared first in the scene closely followed by Aja Rao and Bhabani Bhattacharya as conscious experimenters. All of them enjoyed liberties in their own ways with the accepted diction and syntax of the language.
which they learnt since childhood. Most of them no doubt succeeded in giving a new range and potentiality to the familiar English language and enriching their novels.

It appears that the experiments in the usage of diction and structure of the English will continue in order to give it a peculiarly Indian tone and flavour by drawing on the resources of the Indian languages and infusing their essence into normal literary English. It is essentially an attempt to find an individual style where every writer has to forge the medium that will best answer his needs. But incidentally a successful writer also finds a style that could be called Indian in that it is different from American or British English. It should however, be emphasized that creating an 'Indian English' is by no means the primary duty of the Indo-Anglian writer. Their achievements or failures will be measured not by their capacity to capture the rhythm of the vernacular in English or by the amount of Indian imagery they have used in their novels. These rhythms and images become important only when they become an integral part of the man's vision and not elements that can be isolated from the content or theme of a novel. They become important only when they serve some purpose in the context and become integral with the total pattern and enlarge and enhance the possibilities and scope of the language.

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A writer's style, his use of language, is the aspect of his art most illuminating to the critic. For, in it we see the relation between inspiration and expression at their closest, most localised and as it were, most tangible form. Personality appears in a writer's language as it does in the strokes of the painter's brush or the marks of the sculptor's chisel. This is eminently so in Narayan's work.

At the down of his career as a novelist Narayan devoted much time and energy in order to make his English simple, compact, precise and flexible. He narrates his experiences: ... Day by day Swami was developing. The pure delight of watching a novel grow can never be duplicated by any other experience. ... Swami, my first character grew up and kept himself alive and active; the novel was episodic, but that was how it naturally shaped itself; a series of episodes, escapades and adventures of Swami and his companions. ... I re-read the first draft at night to make out how it was shaping and undertook until far into the night, corrections, revisions and tightening up of sentences. I began to notice that the sentences acquired a new strength and finality while being re-written and the real, final version could emerge only between the original lines and then again in what developed in the jumble of re-written lines and above and below...
them. It was, on the whole, a pleasant experience. Simplicity and charm, cleanness and concreteness - these seem rather appropriate words to describe with any adequacy the full flavour of his English. As an Indian novelist in English he has gradually achieved capacity to develop, command and control a powerful and versatile prose style.

After nearly thirty years of writing Harayan writes again:

English has proved that if a language has flexibility and experience can be communicated through it, even if it has to be paraphrased sometimes rather than conveyed, and even if the factual detail is partially understood.... we are still experimentalists. I may straight away explain what we do not attempt to do. We are not attempting to write Anglo-Saxon English. The English language through sheer resilience and mobility, is now undergoing a process of Indianization in the same manner as it adapted U.S. citizenship over a century ago, with the difference that it is the major language there, but here one of the fifteen languages listed in the Indian Constitution. All that I am able to confirm, after nearly thirty years of writing,
is that it has served my purpose admirably, of conveying unambiguously the thoughts and acts of a set of personalities who flourish in a small town located in a corner of South India.

Harayan says that he is an experimentalist in English prose style. He never says he has attained complete mastery over it. According to the simple definition that prose style consists of how a writer uses diction and form, Harayan's style does not so much impress. His style is especially good and acceptable when it is judged by a wider definition that relates the use of form and language to matter and pattern. Philip Dahw remarks:

All that we can legitimately ask of a novelist in the matter of language is that it be appropriate to the matter in hand. What is said must not stand in a contradictory relation to the way it is said.

Since all the characters of Harayan's novels and stories are common middle class persons of a small Tamil town located in South India and all his stories are plain tales in simple narrative, one can say that there is no contradiction between what is said and the way it is said, that is, between his narrative and his plebian diction.

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In studying the definition of prose style the basic criterion of readability and interest is not to be under-estimated. In this context let us quote the remark of K.D. Abrahams:

Style is the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse - it is how a speaker says whatever he says. The characteristic style of a work or a writer may be analysed in terms of its diction, or characteristic choice of words, its sentence structure and syntax; the density and types of figurative language; the patterns of its rhythm and of its component sounds; and its rhetorical aims and devices.

When this simple definition is applied to Narayan, his style is found to be matter-of-fact and pedestrian. He uses the English language as if it is his own medium of speech. But the thoughts and feelings, the stirrings of the soul, the word-word movements of the consciousness are all of the soil of India. He is perhaps the only writer in India who has taken his task seriously and who has been trying constantly to improve the instrument, pursuing with a sense of dedication what may often seem to be the mirage of technical perfection.

Narayan's usual style is characterised by a
stringing together of subject-predicate-object sentences, but it does not lack colour, music and strength. There is a great naturalness and ease in the conversations and exchanges:

'Here is the vessel I borrowed yesterday; here is the key of the room'.

'Are the things in it safe?'

'Yes. As you see, I am carrying nothing with me.'

'Ah! There is nothing worth taking!

Srinivas tarried and said:

'I am in a hurry'. 'Who is not?' asked the old man promptly. 'Every creature is in a hurry, every fellow I meet is in a hurry, the Sun is in a hurry, the Moon is in a hurry - all except this slave of God, I suppose.'

Or,

'There was a clapping of hands. The band struck up, the engine whistled, the bell rang, the guard blew his whistle and the men who had been consuming refreshments climbed into the train.'

The colloquial expressions of the first two passages and the words 'consuming' and 'climbed into' of the last passage are typical of Indian-English, but they certainly have no positive merit of any kind except that they are in Narayan's simple and natural voice.  

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No one expects or wishes Narayan's language to be highly polished or artificially gilded. No one expects him to write like a Cambridge or Oxford don or like some who have stayed too long in the West. Stylistically unlike many writers from Mark Twain to P.G. Wodehouse, Narayan sticks to standard English. However, though realism demands that his characters be made to speak as the man in the street would, one expects the author to be master of a wider vocabulary when the novel is written in third person narrative. His 'DATELESS DIARY' (1960), 'MY DAYS' (1974) and many other works speak of his wide range of vocabulary. V.Y. Kantak says:

he does not seem to be interested in exploring the fuller, deeper possibilities of the language he is using—word or phrase rarely glints with compression or suggested meanings. 17.

Speaking generally, Narayan's is the art of resolved limitation and conscientious exploration: he is satisfied like Jane Austen with his 'little bit of ivory'. He likes to be a detached observer, to concentrate on a narrow scene, to sense the atmosphere of the place, to snap a small group of characters in their oddities and angularities. Naturally, there is little scope in exploring the possibilities of language and pattern.

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Narayan as a novelist is fully aware of the limitations of his own English. He seldom ventures beyond, he neither explores the variety and versatility of English nor the possibility of transmuting the wealth of the vernacular to that extent as done by Naja Rao and K. A. Anand. Naja Rao and K. A. Anand have shown that one can experiment with the Indo-English dialect in numberless ways. The age of such experiment begins around 1930 when authors attempted to forge a new style for their own needs; their main sources were in colloquial speech and the regional languages. Naja Rao in his first novel 'KANTHAPURA' translates the nicknames by which various women characters are identified, for example, 'Nose-scratching Nanjamma', 'waterfall Venkamma', 'Corner-house Narasamma'. He also uses literal translations of vernacular idioms (Kannada), for example,-

why do you make our stomachs burn? 18.

Such transmutations and translations are not always effective, it is true, but they animate the world of 'KANTHAPURA' with a breath of novelty and authenticity.

M. A. Anand tries to equate the Hindi or Punjabi expression as closely as possible in English words: his constant use of swear-words and expressions literally translated from the vernacular speech such as, 'rape-sister',

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'the illegally begotten', 'Son of a witch', 'devil without horns', 'you, eater of dung and drinker of wine' etc. 13.

often produces a crude or ludicrous effect. These verbal features are the literary descendants of Irishisms, Scotticisms and various examples of stage-dialect found in English literature from Shakespeare onwards.

NARAYAN INTRODUCES A STYLE OF HIS OWN STRICTLY MAINTAINING LOGICAL AND SYNTACTICAL SEQUENCE —

Narayan does not use literal translations of vernacular idioms. Neither does he use literal translations of ejaculations, expletives and interjections and nicknames like Raja Rao and Anand. Narayan experiments to introduce a new style of his own. His method is to use the spoken English of Malgudi, a small town in South India. His style is conspicuous by the spontaneous use he makes of Indian English idioms. The relation of Narayan's English to Tamil usage is obvious in his verbs. The interrogative 'have' is very often used without 'got', as in —

'How many sons and daughters have you'? 20.

The imperative 'let' is another common use at the beginning of a sentence:

Let her not worry, but just look into a mirror and satisfy herself. 21.

Contd...P/412.
Or

Let him demand them immediately if he wants betel leaves also. 22.

There are also new composite words such as 'nose-led', 'line-cleared', 'Sage-like'; and SaJu in 'Tale VIJEd' is told 'Don't eat off all that eating-stuff on the shelves'.

The telescoping of words which is a common feature of spoken Tamil dialect appears in Narayan's English in the frequent use of 'it'd':

The door was so bright and I thought it'd be clean inside 23.

and also in some abbreviated sentences:

Evenings and evenings ago: Chandran, Koban and Veeraswami. Malati evenings; mad days. 24.

or

Poor boy, poor boy, let him be .... I wonder what Jod has in store for him ... must give him more time. 25.

or

......a tiny engine, tiny cows, tiny tables, tiny everything, of the maximum size of a mustard seed 26.

or

To the dustpot with your silly customs 27.

or

Contd...P/413.
Saffron stock out. Will last only another day. 28.

Many Indian-English idioms and words which we use in our everyday life appear in Narayan's writing:

I shall have to fix up a nuptial chamber in the office, Iyengar. 29.

or

In these days you fellows are impotent mugs and let your women ride you about 30.

or

I am like a bamboo pole which cannot stand without a wall to support it. 31.

Or

'If only he started cross-examining the teachers, the teachers would be nowhere.' 32.

Or

Her body stood out as if X-rayed. 33.

Or

The Mexican melody worked up a terrific tempo. 34.

Or

You are right. Do you know, I used to buy twenty towels to a rupee, the Malayalam variety? I'm still using some of them I bought in those days. 35.

Contd... P/414.
or
You may close the mouth of an oven, but how
can you close the mouth of a town. 36.
or
I am practising kindness, otherwise I should
not be speaking to you at all. 37.
or
next moment his face because purple with rage
as he thought of Srikrishna. 'Did our Jesus go
gadding about with dancing girls like your
Krishna ? Did our Jesus go about stealing
butter like your Krishna ? 28

Karayan writes in the spoken Indian English of the Tamil
country retaining the regional characteristics.

'Elder' in 'Do you mind my stretching before an
elder', is a translation from a Tamil word 'Periya-var1'
meaning an older person who is accorded formal behaviour
and respect. 'Crop' in 'combed his crop' is an English word
which has gone into colloquial Tamil, meaning the short
hair style that has replaced the long tuft which Brahmins
wore in earlier generation.

Many of Karayan's characters make use of Tamil
Proverbs and sayings - in their conversation:

Contd....P/415.
'After all, mechanical brakes, you know: I still maintain they are better than hydraulic. Just as an old, uneducated wife is better than the new type of girl.' 'He that hath not is spurned even by his wife; even the mother that bore him spurns him. 39.

Or

'And what would one do with many mansions?' asked Jagan and quoted a Vaiml verse which said even if eighty million ideas float across your mind, you cannot wear more than four cubits of cloth, or eat more than a little measure of rice at a time. 40.

Or

he said, every Aakshasa gets swollen with his own ego. He thinks he is invincible, beyond every law. But sooner or later something or other will destroy him. 41.

With equal fluency Sampath, Jagadish and the elderly cousin in 'The S.WEST VANDOR' use the English catch-phrase: 'I want to be of service in my own way.'

THE QUALITY OF NArayan's PROSE STYLE - ITS SIMPLICITY AND TRANSPARENCY.

The most striking quality of Narayan's prose style is its simplicity and transparency. Unlike the earlier novelists and prose writers his English never breaks down and...
seems artificial particularly in intimate conversation within the family. It is direct and free from affectation and obscurity. He never uses sentences of complicated grammatical construction with such dependent and subordinate clauses and sprinkling Hindustani words and phrases as make the sense difficult and ludicrous. In 'SWAMI AND FRIENDS', for example, the relation between the generation is always implicit: consider the difference in spoken style between Swami and father, comparable to Krishna's criticism of his father's former written style, which he excused as 'the very slight pomposity inevitable in the men of those days'.

....his father stood behind him, with the baby in his arms. He asked, 'what are you lecturing about, young man?'

Swaminathan had not noticed his father's presence, and now writhed awkwardly as he answered, 'nothing .... oh, nothing, father'.

'Come on, let me know it too.'

'It is nothing. Granny wanted to know something about cricket and I was explaining it to her'.

'Indeed & I never knew that mother was a sportswoman. Mother, I hope swami has filled you with cricket wisdom'.

Granny said, 'Don't tease the boy. The Child is
so fond of me. Poor thing he has been trying to tell me all sorts of things. You are not in the habit of explaining things to me. You are all big men. 42.

The amusing interview of Raju by James J. Malone of California in the last chapter of 'The Guide' is another fine instance of Narayani's apt use of colloquial medium for a literary purpose:

'Let us chat, Oh? Tell me how do you like it here?'
'I am only doing what I have to do; that's all. My likes and dislikes do not count'.

'How long have you been without food now?'
'Ten days'.

'Do you feel weak?'
'Yes'.

'When will you break your fast?'
'Twelfth day'.

'Do you expect to have the rains by then?'
'Why not?'

'Can fasting abolish all wars and bring in world peace?'
'Yes'.

'Do you champion fasting for every one?'
'Yes'.

Contd...P/418.
'What about the caste system? Is it going?'

'Yes'.

'Will you tell us something about your early life?'

'What do you want me to say?'

'Er - for instance, have you always been a Yogi?'

'Yes', more or less.

It is quite difficult to report in English a conversation that takes place in another language. Earlier novelists even Raja Rao or M.R. Anand were unable to solve this problem. Narayan seldom tells us which language his characters use, but it is clear from internal evidence that some conversations are in Tamil, such as the one between Ramani's servants in 'THE DARK ROOM'. Here the English comes very close to Tamil: the epigrams at the beginning ('only a battered son will grow into a sound man'); the rhetorical questions ('what should a father do?' 'But it is a proper thing to do, after having been in the house for five years?'); and the many expressions which are straight translations from Tamil ('the fire in a mother's belly when her child is suffering', 'a dinner which a dog wouldn't touch'). Yet the effect is always one of easy fluency:

What should a father do? I merely slapped the boy's cheek and he howled as I have never heard anyone howl before, the humbug. And the wife sprang on me from somewhere and hit me on the head with a
brass vessel. I have sworn to leave the children alone even if they should be going down a well. 44.

Or the conversation between Sriram and the photographer in : 'WAITING FOR THE MAHATMA':

Fancy Nehru and Patel and the rest sitting there where there were haughty viceroys before. Didn't Churchill call Mahatmaji 'The Naked Fakir?' The 'Naked Fakir' is everything now, think of it... 45.

Or the one between the villagers in 'THE GUIDE':

This Mangala is a blessed country to have a man like the Swami in our midst. No bad thing will come to us as long as he is with us. He is like Mahatma. When Mahatma Gandhi went without food, how many things happened in India. This is a man like that... 46.

A particular kind of wit and a flavour of humour which derive from the fluency and naturalness in using the language is often characteristic of the shorter conversations and exchanges of Narayan :

'Are they loaded? he asked.
'Of course, they are loaded, they are not toys'.

'Where is your ammunition statement?'

'In that envelope'.

'When did you discharge your last shot?'

'Shut up, Inspector, and get out. I don't have to answer your questions. What is your authority for coming and questioning me?'

'Our D. S. P's order.'

'It is my order that you clear out, with this bunch of men who have no business here'.

Or

'Old style, but strong as iron. Even dynamite could not break it'.

Srinivas remarks:

'That's obvious. They must have built it in the days of Mohenjodaro - the same building skill'.

'What is that?'

'Oh, very rare specimens of buildings thousands of years ago. They have spent lakhs of rupees to bring them to light -'

'Walls like these?'

'Exactly' the oldman looked gratified. 'How wise of them! It is only the Europeans who can understand the value of some of these things.'

Contd...P/421.
Mani faced Swaminathan steadily and asked, 'Are you a man?' Swaminathan turned to Ajam and repeated, 'Are you a man?' Ajam flared up and shouted, 'Which dog doubts it?' Swaminathan turned to Mani and said ferociously, 'Which dirty dog doubts it?'

'Have you the courage to prove that you are a man?' asked Mani.
Swaminathan turned to Ajam and repeated it.

'How?'
'Meet me at the river, near Nallappa's grove, tomorrow evening'.

'Near Nallappa's grove,' Swaminathan was pleased to echo.

'What for?' asked Ajam.

'To see if you can break my head'

'Oh, to pieces,' said Ajam.

---

The description of Krishna's married life - the first few years of his happiness, the period of his agony and restlessness during the days of Sushila's illness which follow her death and his experiments in psychic communication with the soul of

Contd... P/422.
Sushila is highly emotional. The language used to describe the psychic experiences of Krisnna appears to be deliberately blurred due to excess of emotions and fine lyricism. The adjectives used to describe the charm of Sushila seem to be deliberately imprecise:

'Sushila! Sushila!' I cried. 'You here! 'Yes, I am here, have always been here.' I sat up leaning on my pillow...... I looked her up and down and said:

'How well you look! Her complexion had a golden glow, her eyes sparkled with a new light...... There was an overwhelming fragrance of jasmine surrounding her...... I picked up the garland from the nail and returned to bed. I held it to her...... She received it with a smile, cut off a piece of it and stuck it in a curve on the back of her head. She turned her head and asked:

'Is this all right?' 'Wonderful!' I said, smelling it' 50.

Or

'We were up with the dawn...... I had to light the fire and boil the water for coffee while Sushila bathed, dressed, and prepared herself, for the outing. As I sat struggling with smoke in my eyes and nostrils, she appeared at the kitchen. 'Contd...P/423.'
door way, like a vision, clad in her indigo Saree, and her hair gleaming and jasmine covered. I looked at her indigo Saree and smiled to myself. She noticed it and asked 'why that'?

'Nothing, nothing', I said with a cold damp in my nose. My voice was thick. 'What is wrong with this saree? It is as good as another!' She said. 'Yes, Yes', I replied .... her eyes sparkled with joy: She spread the fragrance of jasmine more than ever. 'The divine creature' I reflected within myself, looking at her tall, slim figure.

Or

'I gazed on my wife, fresh and beautiful, her hair shining, her dress without a wrinkle on it, and her face fresh with not a sign of fatigue....' 52.

The style in the passages is part of the extremely personal nature of the book which makes for artistic failure. In the rest of Narayan's work, he used a different method to describe or suggest states of mind. 'The fragrance of jasmine', 'beautiful', 'wonderful', 'fresh' in these passages and throughout the book 'Joy' and 'rapture' are mentioned again and again: 'It was a moment of rare, immutable joy', 'I felt a deep joy and contentment', 'I had never known such joy before', 'an alchemy of inexplicable joy', 'the greatest abiding rapture

Contd.....P/424
that could always stay. Countless adjectives have been used to describe Sushila more than once. 'Unearthly', 'divine', 'Vision' 'ineffably lovely' are also not rare.

The novel does not much deserve critical attention. It is a plain story of the happiness and agony of a young man and the story is told in the first person. The style of narration has become so superficially poetical that Narayan has failed to portray the heights and depths of emotional experience. The language is highly emotional; we enjoy reading the pages. In this context K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar remarks:

The story of their wedded life is a prose lyric on which Narayan has lavished his best gifts as a writer..... A thousand little occurrences, leaps of light, bubbles of sound, a thousand smiles revealing their rainbow magnificence through the film of tearful happiness or fulfillment, a thousand murmurs of ecstasy ...... it is out of these that the texture of wedded happiness is wrought. 53.

The limitations of his vocabulary are accentuated by his proneness to economize on words. It is because of his effective economy of words that every scene he describes comes out alive and realistic. We are told of
Krishna's daily routine that is punctuated with lovers' quarrels and lovers' reconciliations over such mundane issues as grocery buying, and yet what is transmitted is not monotony but an ethereal sense of total fulfilment. Sushila is, in life, as in after life, a presence that comforts and delights not only her husband but the reader as well. Narayan's simple prose proves adequate for a profound moment of experience when Krishna says while returning with his wife from their house-hunting expedition:

'It is God's infinite grace that has given me this girl!' The Juika was filled with the scent of jasmine in her hair and the glare of the indigo-coloured Saree.

'Indigo' is not an aesthetic-sounding word and 'glare' is rather in-appropriate both in itself and in the coupling of scent and light. Yet within the context the reader feels this is a moment of transcendence where Krishna realises that the spiritual fragrance of Sushila's presence permeates his being as wholly as jasmine sweetened the air in the vehicle. The reader may also realise that it is a high point which portends separation.

R.K. Narayan is a writer whose style is most difficult to analyse or discuss and he has a tendency to
elude categories and classifications. He is linked like Ha 3 a Hao with his characters by a common vision and a common way of reacting to experience. Even when he conceives his characters in gentle irony, he is never superior to them. This homogeneity is reflected in his style which is not a device for a certain end, but expressive of his total personality. His style is so simple, so unobtrusive in syntax and diction and so devoid of purple patches that it is difficult to find quotable passages to illustrate his particular characteristics. On very rare occasions a casual description like the following startles the reader:

I loved this room because the Sun came through a ventilator, bringing in a very bright beam of light and brilliant dust particles floated in it and the two boys who sat on the second bench looked all aflame. 55.

NARAYAN'S USE OF GENTLE IRONY ARISING OUT OF COMIC IMAGINATION

Narayan excels in describing rare moments of beauty. It has been possible because he achieves after great efforts the difficult task of bending the English language to his purpose without either a self-conscious attempt of sounding Indian or seeking the anonymous elegance of public school English. The real strength of Narayan lies in his
honest, straightforward vision. His use of gentle irony and mild satire generally originate from his comic imagination but quite often his irony and genial satire are nothing but an honest recording of facts without any colouring of conventional sentiment. This is evident in his ironic treatment of romantic love. The first meeting between Sriram and Bharati in 'WAITING FOR ThAKU MAHARAJ' can be cited in this context:

As he approached the market fountain a pretty girl came up and stopped him.

'Your contribution?' she asked, shaking a sealed tin collecting box.

Sriram's throat went dry and no sound came. He has never been spoken to by any girl before; she was slender and young, with eyes that sparkled with happiness. He wanted to ask, 'How old are you? What caste are you? Where is your horoscope? Are you free to marry me?'

There is a touch of irony in the Indian variety of romantic love in the last sentences of the passage. But the sentences can also be studied as simple reactions of an innocent young man at the sight of a beautiful girl. There is not the slightest touch of exaggeration in recording the
sentiments of Sriram. The episode continues:

The girl rattled the money box. The sound brought him back from his reverie and said, 'yes; yes!', he fumbled in his jibba side-pocket for loose change and brought out an eight-anna silver coin and dropped it into the slot. The girl smiled at him in return and went away, seeming to move with the lightest of steps like a dancer. Sriram had a wild hope that she would let him touch her hand, but she moved off and disappeared into the market crowd.

'Sriram had a wild hope that she would let him touch her hand' is an honest and straightforward description of a state of mind and it can also be regarded as an ironic comment on the conventional sentiment of a typically romantic Indian lover.

Exactly the same sentiments are shared by Chandran in 'THE BACHELOD OF ARTS'. During one of his ramblings on the river bank he sees Malati, a beautiful girl and he imagines that he has fallen deeply in love with her. The incident begins very simply:

One evening he (Chandran) came to the river and was loafing along it, when he saw a girl about

Contd....P/423.
fifteen years old, playing with her younger sister on the sands. Chandran was in the habit of staring at every girl who sat upon the sands, but he never felt the acute interest he felt in this girl now. 58.

He contemplates going to see her again the next day:

He was going to stare at her and take in a lot of details regarding her features. He had not made out yet whether she was fair or light brown; whether she had long hair or short, and whether her eyes were round or almost shaped, and he had also some doubts about her nose. 59.

These two never meet or talk together; their only contact is by means of 'optical communion'. Chandran gives her an imaginary name, and imaginary life and imaginary virtues. This is a fantasy which still grows out of observed facts, for example, the colour of her clothing, the days in the week she comes to the river and the little girl she brings. A great deal of Narayan's irony consists of honest description of a particular state of mind without the conventional selection or rejection. Therefore, while certain passages can be clearly pointed out as ironic, in other passages a lingering doubt remains about the author's intention. There are almost no traits of Narayan's humour or irony in 'THE ENGLISH TEACHER' but it is difficult to know whether certain
passages are to be taken seriously or not. The young
English Teacher is a poet. He writes poems - nature is
the dominant theme of his poems. Now the question is,
whether we should regard his nature poems as serious
attempts of self-realisation or whimsical exercises at
verse-making or foolish imitations of Wordsworth. Here is
a passage from the novel that describes a moment of Krishna's
close association with nature:

There are subtle invisible emanations in nature's
surroundings: with them the deepest in us merges
and harmonizes. I think it is the highest form
of joy and peace we can ever comprehend. I
decided to rush back to my table and write a
poem on nature.

The last sentence of the passage implies an irony
of recognition. As in the case of Sriram and Chandran in
the two other passages quoted earlier, the experience of
the English Teacher recorded here is all too familiar to
the Indian reader and the irony depends on this element of
recognition. Narayan never deliberately attempts to be
Indian but because he deals with convincing human beings
in authentic situations, and records their responses and
reactions honestly, and because these human beings happen
to be Indians, he succeeds in achieving that difficult

Contd......P/431.
task writing in genuinely Indian way without ever being self-conscious about it. Narayan's writing is a perfect example of the fact that matter and the style of a given piece of writing cannot be separated. He writes in an easy flow without ornate rhetoric or an excess of solemnity. Here is another example from 'THE DARK ROOM':

I can't exist without a copy of 'THA RUBAIYA'; you will always find it under my pillow or in my bag. His philosophy appeals to me. Dead yesterday and unborn tomorrow.... In this world Khayyam is the only person who would have understood the secret of my soul. No one tries to understand me; that is the tragedy of my life .... I am as wind along the waste. 61.

Here is another passage from 'THE GUIDE' that shows the evenness of diction finely blended in lyrical fragrance:

he went down the steps of the river, hatting for breath on each step, and finally reached his basin of water. He stepped into it, shut his eyes and turned towards the mountain, his lips muttering the prayer. Velan and another held him each by an arm. The morning Sun was out by now; a great shaft of light illuminated.
the surroundings. It was difficult to hold Aaju on his feet, as he had a tendency to flop down. They held him as if he were a baby. Raju opened his eyes, looked about, and said, 'Vela, it is raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs.' and with that he sagged down.

UNOBTRUSIVENESS OF NARAYAN'S PROSE DICTION - A RARE CHARACTERISTIC IN THE MAJORS BULK OF INDO-ANGLIAN WRITING

Such passages in Narayan's novels are a characteristic that appears right through his fiction. The unobtrusiveness of his style seems to be an easy task. At first this might seem no great achievement. But when we look at the style of some of the other famous Indo-Anglian writers we realise how a great bulk of Indo-Anglian writing is marked by heavy and ornate style laden with excessive imagery and deliberate academic archness which are conspicuous in Narayan by their absence. True, Narayan's prose style is frequently pedestrian to the point of reader-frustration, yet he is successful because essentially he speaks in his own voice - a raconteur's voice of effortless narration.

Let us cite an example of a meretricious, ornate and academic prose extract from Balachandra Rajan's novel 'TOO LONG IN THE JEST' to show in contrast the authenticity and strength of the mild unpretentious manner of Narayan's writing:

Contd...P/433.
She herself joined in this universal ritualized insanity, inched furiously through five miles in four hours and desperately drove two hundred in three and a half ... She was drawn to the many sidedness of New York, to the turbulent harmony of its tongues and races, to the mammoth stores that refused to be undersold and the small shops perpetually pretending to go out of business ... She liked the people with their welcoming, decent vulgarity, their worship of children and cheese-cakes, their demented escapes into weekend mirages, their homely dedication to the twenty-one inch dream. 63.

The exalted style and the self-conscious rhetoric are perhaps the main causes why Rajan's novels fall short of its desired goal. To quote from 'The DARK DANCER':

It should have shocked him, and to some extent it did, but was the shock anything more than superficial, a tingle on the skin of his upbringing? And under the skin did his muscles not move to surrender, did his blood not sing in that deep fascinated curiosity of acceptance which his reason resisted while his emotions curved to the pull? He had the strange sense of

Cont'd... P/434.
detachment once again, of being both the dancer and the dance, of being the ritual and the ritual's object. 64.

...in both his novels Ajan writes consistently in a self-conscious style. Even Bhavani Bhattacharya, W. V. Desani, Kamala Markandaya, N. A. Anand and in many occasions Daja Rao write in the same style using extravagant rhetoric and an excess of solemnity, overtones and under currents.

Thus Kamala Markandaya writes:

Only the selves remained apart, not by will alone, but by an irresistible process of drift. That distance between them widened, whose presence Clinton had decreed and precisely defined as essential to him, passing out of the control of both. 65.

Or

There were indeed no limits, no frontiers which he would not cross or extend, so long as the power lay with him. Whatever the departures or deaths, the suicides in baths of repentant water, one would continue. 66.

The style of Kamala Markandaya has the smooth,
uniform ease of public school English but it is doubtful whether it is the desirable style in fiction where one has to deal with particular human beings rooted in their narrow regional identities.

Bhabani Bhattacharya punctuates his writing with sentences that are heavy and complex and ornate:

Moments that lived briefly, futility mounting from day to day, year to year. It was as though he had been scribbling on a sheet of paper with a pen dipped in clear water - the curious image came to his mind - the water dried and the words were gone. 67.

Or

But the end of one tale was the beginning of another. For like a quenchless heritage of hate, the bonfire of boats was imprisoned and ever-alive in each fistful of ash. 68.

The pretentious and wordy style of the first extract and the sentence laden with heavy alliteration ('heritage of hate' and 'bonfire of boats') in the later extract indicate Bhattacharya's idea of desirable literary style.

In Raja Rao's language there are marked Indianisms and an excess of spiritual emotions and metaphysical analogies which give his novel their peculiarly

Contd....P/436.
Indian literary style. The use of Indo-English dialect is obviously intentional. The leisurely, gossipy pace of 'KANTAPURA' is a transmutation of a village woman's vernacular style; in 'THE ADVENT AND THE NOPE' the scholarship and intellectuality of the narrator is reflected in his language; in 'THE CAT AND SHAKESPEARE' the narrator is a "Babu", a clerk and Raja Rao captures many of the phrases and usages current in the world of clerks. In all three novels, and especially in 'THE CAT AND SHAKESPEARE' there is a very definite flavour of the sanskrit masters' seeming simplicity of style:

Water is our best protection against sin. To smell is sin. To do is no sin. To gulp is sin. To purge is bounty. Disease is unnatural. Death is natural.

After reading Raja Rao one realises why Whitman's earthy sublimity is so well understood in India. Ramakrishna Pai muses:

The cattle see me, and urinate. The smell of dung and urine of kine is sweet to me. Purity is so near, so concrete. Let us build the house. Lord, let me build the house.

Contd...P/437.
Even Mulk Raj Anand who is always conscious of the general weakness of Indo-anglian writers and never wants to show off the mastery of the alien language, can not always stick to his principle. When he is not engaged in linguistic experiments, he writes in an ornate, adjective-ridden style which he denounces in others. We wonder how a writer who frequently speaks of 'the rigid class barriers which have prevented the lower classes from contributing their vital and homely influence to English prose style' in his 'KING EMPEROR'S ENGLISH', can punctuate his writing with the weighty ponderous sentence structure imitating the journalists and orators or the sentimental prose imitating the poets. Here is a single sentence from Anand's 'THE BIG HEART':

A turbulent spirit and wanton in reaching out after life, he seemed now and then the poise of a furious calm in himself like that of a leaf suddenly come still in a storm, especially after he had been struggling like a tormented beast in the cage of his soul, in his recurrent dreams or in odd moments even in day light. 71.

About the sametime as M.R. Anand's paper 'THE KING EMPEROR'S ENGLISH', G.V.Desani published his first and only novel, 'AII ABOUT A. HATTA'( 1948), in which he used the
very Indian English that Anand condemned, to great comic effect. In this novel, the main character, Hatterr, speaks a kind of Anglo-Indian slang while his friend Bannerjee uses Babu English:

"Excuse me, Mr. Hatterr, but my heart bleeds for you. As your innermost confident, I am aware that you are passing through hell on earth and varied allied emotional phases of the spirit. You are going through a terrible spiritual notredame...or don't mensh. Cable me a condolence. Between vous and moi, make it February 31st. Second notions, don't wire me. Radio moi un coup de telephone!

The Pseudo sages on the other hand speak in a debased orientalized style:

'The utter unmentionable urge', he said to the disciple, assails only the votaries of the flower-clad Kama, to wit, the God of Desire. We two belong to the haloed celibacy class. Rejoice therefore!"

If Hatter were merely a parody of the different English styles in India, it would still be very funny. But Desani never stays at the level of parody. The book has a very serious purpose which can only be expressed through Contd...P/439.
the hillariousness and tempo of its language and incident. His style is characterized by a facetiousness, the use of heavy ponderous technical sounding jargon to convey rather trivial information.

When we contrast the style of these Indo-Anglian novelists with the graceful and simple style of Harayan we begin to realise the inherent strength of his writing. Harayan writes in a different way from all Indian writers, but his method also differs from that of others. He has the art of using the language in an individual way. It is to the ease, the refinement and the exquisite naturalness of his prose that we owe a large part of our pleasure in reading them.

- EXPERIMENT IN IMAGERY - A SPONTANEOUS PROCESS:
- INDIAN IMAGERY CHARACTERISTIC OF INDO-ANGLIAN STYLE -

Experimenting with diction and syntax is usually a conscious process, but imagery reveals the author's natural mode of awareness. While experiment in diction and syntax are generally and deliberately done, the third category, that is, the experiment in imagery includes a great deal that is spontaneous. Strictly speaking, imagery cannot be an experimental device, because it is part of a writer's mode of perception, but it is included here.

Contd.....P/440.
along with the other two because style here has been taken to include idioms, tone and imagery.

When an Indian novelist records his real responses to life, his writing is bound to have a quality which we may call 'Indian' imagery. This does not simply mean comparisons with the roses or the moon but finding connections in experiences, events and objects from real life. Since this is primarily an un-self-conscious process, it offers the literary critic a clue to the authenticity of the writer's vision. Before we examine the imagery of A.K. Ramanujan the authenticity of the style of other writers should be judged from the quality of their imagery. In the case of almost all writers whose writing is strewn with similes and metaphors, an examination of the texture of their style often reveals a great deal about their response to life.

In Raja Rao images and metaphors are the natural mode of expression and in this respect he depends very little on English literature. His language in the first two novels is laden with similes and images taken from real life. Here are three representative sentences from Rao's 'The Cow OF The BARIDASES' and 'KARThAPURU' respectively:

Contd....P/442.
On the high palms two vultures sat, with their fleshy neck, bald as though they had eaten their own skin. 73.

Or

Some body was walking down the twist of the ravine, an ass behind him. His shadow is black as congealed blood. 74.

Or this

..... and when Moorthappa comes let the rice be fine as filigree and the mangoes yellow as gold, and we shall go out, horn and trumpet and gong before us and break coconuts at his feet. 75.

The effect of imagery here in the above extracts depends mainly on the strength of observed details. Raja Rao does not always speak of mangoes and coconuts and the 'sun rising behind the jackfruit tree like a camphor censer slit', though quite often he does so from his real observation in life.

Raja Rao's style is distinguished by two clear phases of development. In the primary phase as in 'KAAMTHAPURA' (1938) and in 'THE COW OF THE BANDICUITS' (1945) there are clear signs of dwelling on the particular and the concrete imagery. Such, images of the sky -

Contd..... P/442.
as a blue as a marriage shawl',
of women as
' beautiful as new-opened guavas and the other
tender as April mangoes',
of young boys as
'bright as banana trunks' are distinctly absent in the later novels written after a gap of more than a decade. This concrete and clear-cut imagery is replaced more and more by metaphysical reflections and abstract speculations in 'THE SERPENT AND THE ROPE' (1960) and 'THE CAT AND SHAKESPEARE' (1965) perhaps due to the increasing metaphysical nature of his themes. On very rare occasions a description like the following startles the reader:

Saroja's presence now obsessed me sometimes,
like one of those nights with the perfume of magnolia..... I was intoxicated with Saroja's presence, like a deer could be before a waterfall, or an elephant before a mountain peak ... 

Or this,

.... in that blank, that silent, wise blank
between books and behind them I felt the presence, the truth, the formula of Savitri. She was the source of which words were made, the Mother of sound, Akshara-Lakshmi, divinity of the syllable;

Contd.... P/443.
The night of which the day was the meaning, 
the knowledge of which the book was token, 
the symbol - the prophecy. 

Or this, 

...... and taking me into myself, I transpire 
as the truth, as though touched by itself, like 
the earth that was spread out and was called 
Hadeline. 

'THE SERPENT AND THE HOPE' is written wholly in 
this metaphor-laden language based on abstract speculations. 
The use of images is wholly philosophical. It is undoubtedly a literary style characteristic of Raja Rao. 

There is another Indo-Anglian novelist whose 
authenticity of style can be judged from the quality of 
the intensely individual imagery is Anita Desai. Her imagery reveals her natural mode of awareness and it is almost the natural component of her style. Anita Desai records her real responses to life without echoing second hand literary modes of perception. It is because of these characteristics that her style shows a strong individuality. Her imagery in both her novels, 'CRY, THE PEACOCK' and 'VOICES IN THE CITY' is marked by three characteristics: sensuous richness, a high-strung sensitiveness and a love for the sound of words. Her tremulous response to life. 

Contd... P/444.
often becomes overwhelming in its intensity and unbearable in its richness:

The tremulous flower-tinted air is vibrant as a violin string set into motion by the fine tender legs of a brilliant grasshopper. High incessant sounds form out of the very sun and air on such a morning like crystals in syrup.

The most striking passages are the description of summer, both during the day in its violence and at night under the moon:

Here was a carnival to enjoy, merry-go-rounds, and roller coasters, brass bands, fried food stalls, cavorting clowns.

Anita Desai describes the violent night under the sky thus:

The moon ..... when it rose out of the churn of my frenzy ..... it was not the gentle moon of love ballads and fairy revels ..... It was the mad demon of Kathakali ballets, masked, with heavy skirts swirling, feet stamping, eyes shooting beams of fire.
Anita Desai's second novel 'VOICING IH THE CITY'
has some of the earlier intensity and richness but it
lacks the extravagance of imagery which we find in the
first. From a close reading of her novels as well as
those of raja Rao it appears that both of them did not
use imagery deliberately and consciously. It was almost
spontaneous and a part of their vision of life.

It should be remembered in this context that
metaphors and similes are not the natural component of
all Indo-Anglian novelists. A.K. Narayan, for example,
does not write in a language strewn with similes and
images. His language is simple, almost deceptively so,
his sentences are straightforward in syntax and unobtrusive in diction, free of high-flown images and general
reflections and philosophical speculations of Raja Rao
and intensity and richness of Anita Desai. There are no
doubt similes and metaphors scattered all through his
novels but the authenticity of his style cannot be judged
from the quality of his imagery, for the simple reason
that his imagery is not the only vehicle of his perception.

An examination of Narayan's use of imagery
shows that it is not a spontaneous factor of his style.
In general he uses a single clear image to prove a point — that too, a single clear image. He always prefers the concrete to the diffuse:

Sriram went towards it like a charmed moth.

or

What a fellow to marry, rough as emery paper.

Or

She had disappeared into the market like a bird gliding on wings.

Or

The Summer Sun shone like a ruthless arc lamp — and all the water in the well evaporated and the road - dust became bleached and weightless and flew about like flour spraying off the grinding wheels.

Narayan's images are simple but highly effective:

He picked up his pen; the sentence was shaping very delicately; he felt he had to wait upon it carefully, tenderly, lest it should elude him once again; it was something like the very first moment when a face emerged on the printing paper in a printing tray.
Or

A complexion, not white, but dusky, which made her only half visible as if you saw her through a film of tender coconut juice. 83.

Or

Rocket-like she soared. 30.

Or

They rankled in his mind as if he had a splinter in his skull. 91.

Or

As I kept thinking of it, it magnified itself, until I felt that I had dynamite in my pocket. 32.

Or

I am like a bamboo pole which cannot stand without a wall to support it. 93.

Or

She (Mangi the prostitute) went about her business with such assurance, walking in and out of the place like a postman. 94.

Narayan's similes are very commonplace and matter-of-fact. He uses common materials for his imagery, but in such new ways that they are arresting. Jagadish, in 'WAITING FOR THAMAMA', produces two very lively images, the first of which shows the kind of folk etymology, popular in Tamil, at work in spoken English:

Contd....P/448.
As a soldier I will not cry over split milk.
'Is it split milk?' Dhiram asked nervously.
'Of course it is,' asserted Jagdish. 'When milk goes bad, it splits into water and solid, you know. It's no use crying over split milk,' he repeated.

Hay I come and join you because I will gasp and die like a stranded fish unless I see you and talk to you.

Narayan's images are marked by clarity and exactness i.e. by the rare quality of saying exactly what is intended as unmistakably and simply as possible without false or straining after effect. One complaint that the reader could have against Narayan is that his imagery is so simple and transparent, so ordinary and colourless that it leaves him disappointed. But this is at the same time his strength because it is the natural mode of expression for his uniquely personal vision.

In spite of the comparative smallness of images Narayan's style does not lose much of its strength and inherent growth. Description for its own sake has little interest for him. The rare quality of precision of detail
in syntax, diction and imagery characterises his visual descriptions, and such descriptions are in general confined to descriptions of crowds, scenes of nature or of two favourite times of day: afternoon and dusk. The description of crowds in a vehicle:

It was a long seat running end to end below the windows. On Lagans other side, there was a man from the forest with a string of beads around his neck, holding on his lap a small wooden cage containing a mottled bird which occasionally let out a cry, sounding like doors moving on ancient, unolioed hinges. When it made the noise, it drowned the conversation of passengers (quite fifty of them in a vehicle expected to accommodate half that number legally, some with tickets, some without, for the conductor pocketed the cash and adjusted the records accordingly; for which purpose he was constantly pulling out his pad and making entries). Remarks, enquiries, advice, announcements, the babble of men's talk, women's shrill voices and children laughing or crying, formed a perfect jumble and medley of sounds, constantly overwhelmed by the shriek let out by the mottled bird. 37.

Contd....P/450.
Of
Through archways and ringing cries of 'Gandhi Ki Jai,' Gandhi drove in the huge Bentley which the chairman had left at his disposal. People sat on the trees, and rooftops all along the way and cheered Gandhiji as he passed ... there were police everywhere .... All shops had been closed and all schools, and the whole town was celebrating. School children felt delighted at the thought of Gandhi. Office goers were happy, and even banks were closed. They waited in the sun for hours, saw him pass in his Bentley, a white-clad figure, fair-skinned and radiant, with his palms pressed together in a salute. 38.

Here is a description of a scene of nature compared to heaven:

The Peak House was perched on the top most cliff on Kemoi Hills - the road ended with the house; there was a glass wall covering the North Verandah, through which you could view the horizon a hundred miles away. Below us the jungle stretched away down to the valley, and on a clear day you might see also the Sarayu sparkling in the sun and pursuing its own course far away. This was like heaven to those who loved
wild surroundings, and loved to watch the game which prowled outside the glass at nights.

The grief, anxiety and fear of Dwami's father searching for his missing son along the bed of river are reflected in nature:

He looked far up and down the river which was gliding along with gentle music. The massive peepul trees overhanging the river sighed to the night. He started violently at the sight of the flimsy shadow of some branch on the water; and again as some float kept tilting against the moss-covered parapet with muffled thuds.

The agony of the agitated mind shared by nature cannot be more touching than this.

How exquisitely again the sorrow of the people of Malgudi at Mahatma Gandhi's departure as shared by nature is conveyed visually in a few words:

The sky became redder and darker and the Seven Down moved away, taking the Mahatma to Frichy, and then to Madras, Bombay, Delhi and out into the universe. Night fell on the small station, and the little station master proceeded to light

Contd... P/45g.
his gas lamps and signals. 101.

The symbolical implications of the last lines indicating the vast loneliness of the station catches our imagination.

The same precision, brevity and vividness of detail characterises Narayan's visual descriptions, specially when he narrates the picture of dusk (cf. the common place 'cow-dusk' scene of much Indian literature and painting):

The Sun was setting. Its tint touched the wall with pink. The top of the coconut trees around were aflame. The bird-cries went up in a crescendo before dying down for the night. Darkness fell. 102.

Narayan's choice of words and images has magic power. His individual use of words can be seen first of all in certain favourite adjectives. In the above passage 'pink' is used to describe an effect of reddishness. 'Aflame' is chosen to describe the glow of beauty. 'Crescendo' gives more than the desired object - the choric cries of the birds gradually progressing towards climax invite the darkness of the night. Simplicity and clarity of his style is mainly the result of his use of

Contd.... p/453
the very language of everyday life and his scrupulous adherence to the accepted patterns of sentence structure and choice of words.

PARTICULARITY AND CONCRETENESS OF REFERENCE: AN ANALYTIC REALIZATION

In the rest of his work, Narayan's style is characterised by its particularity and concreteness of reference. Very often he uses the adjective 'bare' to describe a meal: 'Don't blame me if the meal is bare' and 'bare rice'. 'Coarse and raw' have been used to describe grief: 'The coarse, raw pain he had felt at the sight of Kali on that day remained petrified in some vital centre of his being'. 'Exacting' is used to imply worthiness or perfectness:

Our Kabir street citizens had exacting standards of morality.

'Elegant' is used in many different ways: 'elegant wink', 'elegant sip of coffee'. The adjournment lawyer 'elegantly' avoids going into prison. Krishna's father makes his own ink and prizes it for its 'elegant' shade. These words and phrases become important only if they serve some purpose in the context, become integral with the total pattern and if they perceptibly enhance the scope of the language. A writer's first obligation is...
to himself; and in whatever language he writes, he has to remake it for his own particular purpose. Relevance and clarity are perhaps the two prime criteria in any experiment with diction, though no fixed rules can be formulated. Each writer has to experiment for himself and decide where the use will suit and where it will become an unnecessary impediment. The important point in the use of the above instances is that they serve their purpose in their context, and they are more vivid than any other accepted English expressions that might have been used in their place. Can any simile be more appropriate and vivid in its context than the following where Narayan describes the face of Mr. Vasu peering over the curtain:

    "a tanned face, large powerful eyes under thick eyebrows, a large forehead and a shock of unkempt hair, like a black halo."

The 'black halo' simile is the first hint of Vasu’s demonic character and role (a Makshasa or man-killing monster). The characteristic of his style is that it becomes inseparable from the content.

- A NARRATIVE DEVICE OF DIGRESSIVE NATURE: AN INDEX OF THE OBJECTIVITY OF THE CHARACTERS AS NARRATORS -

A favourite stylistic device in Narayan’s novels are the short passages of a digressive nature.

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The inner wandering is used both as a narrative device to link the past with the present and the present with future hopes; and also to explore the character's state of mind and indicate his metaphysical attitudes and responses. By this means the author gives his characters an inner life while retaining his objectivity as narrator. Sometimes this inner wandering is made deliberately incoherent, it conveys no more than a state of mind or feeling.

Savitri squatted down and wiped the dust off the dolls and odd memories of her childhood stirred in her. Her eye fell on a wooden rattle with the colour coming away in flakes, with which she had played when just a few months old. So her mother had told her. There was a toy flute into which she had wasted her babyhood breath. Savitri felt a sudden inexplicable self-pity at the thought of herself as an infant. She next felt an intense admiration for her mother, who never let even the slightest toy be lost but preserved every thing carefully, and brought it all out for the navaratri display. Savitri had a sudden longing to be back in her mother's house. She charged herself for neglecting her mother and writing for several months now.... How frightfully she herself and her sister used to

Contd.....P/456.
quarrel over these dolls and their arrangements! Who would have dreamed that she would grow into a bulky matron, with a doctor husband and seven children, away from everybody in Burma? That reminded her; she had not answered her letter received a month ago; positively next Thursday she would write so as to catch the Friday steamer.

Narayan's style like that of Hardy is deliberate and characteristic. He impresses his scenes and characters upon us by the accentuation of a hundred little touches and details, not by any impressionistic gift. But although his narrative as a rule sweeps along in an orderly, progressive way, he has a real dramatic instinct that enables him at times to seize upon some crisis and present in terms of subtle dynamic conflict the characters he has been gradually unfolding for us. A long passage in 'SWAMI AND FRIENDS', following upon the taunts that Swami suffers, shows how Narayan deals with the emotional crisis in this situation. A trivial incident is reported with unusual detail because it comes after what was to Swami an intense personal experience; the series of actions closely relate to the boy's changing state of mind:

A dark volume of water was rushing along. Odd pieces of paper, leaves, and sticks floated by.

Contd... P/457.
A small piece of tin was gently skimming along. Swami had an impulse to plunge his hand in and pick it up. But he let it go. His mind was inert. He watched the shining bit float away. It was now at the end of the compound wall; now it had passed under the tree . . . . Swaminathan ran in, got a sheet of paper, and made a boat. He saw a small ant moving about aimlessly. He carefully caught it, placed it in the boat, and lowered the boat in the stream. He watched in rapture its quick motion. He held his breath when the boat with its cargo neared a danger zone formed by stuck-up bits of straw and odds and ends. The boat made a beautiful swerve to the right and avoided destruction. It went on and on. It neared a fatal spot where the waters were swirling round in eddies . . . . The boat and its cargo were wrecked beyond recovery. He took a pinch of earth, uttered a prayer for the soul of the ant and dropped it into the gutter. 106.

Where Narayan wants to indicate the metaphysical speculation of one of his main characters such as Margayya or Srinivasa or Raju, the ebb and flow of the inner wandering is subjected to analysis or comment by the character himself and a clearly formulated thought emerges:
I felt like telling Mani, 'Be careful. She will lead you on before you know where you are, and then you will find yourself in my shoes, all of a sudden! Beware the snake-woman!' I knew my mind was not working either normally or fairly. I knew I was growing jealous of her self-reliance. But I forgot for the moment that she was doing it all for my sake. I feared that, inspite of her protestations to the contrary, she would never stop dancing. She would not be able to stop. She would go from strength to strength. I knew, looking at the way she was going about her business, that she would manage - whether I was inside the bars or outside, whether her husband approved of it or not. Neither Meitner Karco nor I had any place in her life, which had its own sustaining vitality and which she herself had under-estimated all along. 107.

The point is more aptly indicated in the following passage:

Mixed sounds reached him - his wife in the kitchen, his son's voice far off arguing with a friend, the clamour of assertions and appeals at the water tap, a pedlar woman crying 'Brinjals' and 'greens' in the street - all these sounds

Contd...P/459.
mingled and wove into each other. Following each one to its source, one could trace it to a human aspiration and outlook. 'The vegetable seller is crying because in her background is her home and children whose welfare is moulded by the amount of brinjals she is able to scatter into society, and there now, somebody is calling her and haggling with her. Some very old man very fond of them, some school boy making a wry face over the brinjal... ....' Srinivas was filled with great wonder at the multitudinousness and vastness of the whole picture of life that this presented; tracing each noise to its source and to its conclusion back and forth, one got a picture, which was too huge even to contemplate. 'That is clearly too big, even for contemplation', he remarked to himself 'because it is in that total picture we perceive God!' 108.

The trains of thought in these digressions are often connected to and started by sensations of colour, smell, sound and touch although, except in parts of 'The English Teacher', Narayan does not dwell on the sensations themselves.

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Narayan has a limited vocabulary. The limitations of his vocabulary are accentuated by his proneness to economise on words. But there are passages that are spectacularly successful because of this very quality. The opening chapters of 'THE ENGLISH TEACHER' are a striking example of Narayan's effective economy of words. He communicates an atmosphere without having said anything abstract. We are told of Krishna's daily routine that is punctuated with lovers' quarrels and lovers' reconciliations over such mundane issues as grocery-buying, and yet what is transmitted is not monotony but an ethereal sense of total fulfilment:

We treated each other like strangers for the next forty eight hours - all aloof and bitter. The child looked on this with puzzlement, but made it up by attending to her toys and going to the old lady for company. It was becoming a torture. I could stand no more of it. I had hoped Sushila would try to make up, and that I could immediately accept it. But she confined herself to her room and minded her business with great concentration and never took notice.

Contd......P/461.
of me. I caught a glimpse of her face occasionally and found that her eyes were swollen. I felt a great pity for her, when I saw her slender neck, as she was going away from the bathroom. I blamed myself for being such a savage. But I could not approach her. The child would not help us either; she was too absorbed in her own activities. It came to a point when I simply could not stand any more of it.

Sometimes, Narayan's economy of words succeeds in rapidly and effectively summarizing a passage of time. In doing this he allies rich inventive power with a sense of symmetrical development which as a rule characterises the works of Scott, Dickens and Thackeray. For all his minuteness of method Narayan tries not to lose sight of the harmonious whole. His detailed yet precise touches have ever their special significance in unfolding the burden of the story along with the passage of time. Here he shows the economy of the great artist. 'The GUIDE' offers several examples: Jaju's self-education from the books at the Railway book stall, or still better, the ninth chapter which traces Jaju coming into his true colours, which are that of a vainglorious rogue who, with the gaining of wealth and stature, becomes not only a snob but a possessive villain who stifles Josie more callously than Marco had.

Contd. . . . P/462.
Besides this, the economy of Harayan's technique depends on the suggestion, rather than description, or emotion. Thus gesture takes on great significance, as when after his wife's death Krishna comes to terms with his loneliness, accepting it as a law of 'life':

We come together only to go apart again. It is one continuous movement. They move away from us as we move away from them. The law of life can't be avoided. The law comes into operation the moment we detach ourselves from our mother's womb. All struggle and misery in life is due to our attempt to arrest this law, or get away from it, or in allowing ourselves to be hurt by it. 110.

And when Savitri returns to her family and accepts her place within it by offering to serve her husband his meal:

The car sounded its horn outside. Kamala and Sumati ran to the gates to announce: 'Mother has come.' 'Has she?' Ramani asked, and went into the house. He hesitated for a fraction of a second on the doormat and then passed into his room. Savitri sat in the passage of the dining room, trembling. What would he do now? Would
The problem of marriage in the age of the Nanda dynasty is a question of great concern. How did the society deal with the issue? One of the solutions was to bring the woman back to her own home. After an hour, Hamani came towards her. She started up. He threw a brief glance at her, noted her ragged appearance and went into the dining room. He said to the cook, 'Hurry up, I have to be at the office ........'

Savitri stood at the passage for some time. She stepped into the dining room and stood before him, watching his leaf. She noticed a space in the corner of that leaf.

'Shall I call for some more beans?'

'No', Hamani said without looking up.

'Curd?' Savitri asked.

'Yes'. Savitri went to the cupboard and took hold of the curd vessel.

Harayan uses the same suggestive style to describe the scene of death of Mahatma Gandhi in 'WAITING FOR THE MAMA' dwelling on the action and gesture than on the emotion:

As the Mahatmaji approached the dais, the entire assembly got up. At this moment a man pushed himself ahead of the assembly, brushing against Bharati, and Sriram cried petulantly, 'why do

Contd....P/464
you push like that?" Unheeding, the man went forward.

I am sorry to be late to-day," murmured the Mahatma. The man stood before the Mahatma and brought his palms together in a reverential salute. \(\text{Mahatma Gandhi}^1\) returned it. The man tried to step forward again. \(\text{Mahatma's grand-daughter}^1\) said, 'Take your seat,' and tried to push him into line.

The man nearly knocked the girl down, and took a revolver out of his pocket. As the Mahatma was about to step on the dias, the man took him and fired.

Two more shots rang out. The Mahatma fell on the dias. He was dead in a few seconds.

Narayan's 'imaginative reason' is an intensely subjective affair. His description of anything is soaked in the atmosphere of the mood which it evokes in him, with all the attenuant trains of thought it suggests. With taste and accuracy he selects the typical features of the scene and leaves them to rouse appropriate emotions in the reader:

As the musicians turned their instruments and played the famous snake-song, Malliai came gliding on to the stage. She fanned out her fingers slowly, and the yellow spot light playing on her white, upturned...
palm, gave them the resemblance of a cobra hood; she wore a diadem for this act and it sparkled. Lights changed, she gradually sank to the floor, the music became slower and slower, the refrain urged the snake to dance - the snake that resided on the locks of Shiva himself, on the wrist of his spouse, Parvathi, and in the ever-radiant home of the Gods in Kailas. This was a song that elevated the serpent and brought out its mystic quality; the rhythm was hypnotic. It was her masterpiece. Every inch of her body from toe to head rippled and vibrated to the rhythm of this song which lifted the cobra out of its class of an underground reptile into a creature of grace and divinity and an ornament of God.

The scene is vividly presented to the eye, but still more vividly does Garayan penetrate beneath the material facts to reveal their imaginative significance. 'The yellow spot light playing on her white, upturned palm, gave them the resemblance of a cobra hood' ...

'Every inch of her body from toe to head rippled and vibrated to the rhythm of this song which lifted the cobra out of its class of an underground reptile into a creature

\textit{Contd.\ldots P/486.}
of grace and divinity and an ornament of God'. These sentences are the operative sentences in the passage and they are operative because they drench it in a poetic light. They infuse into the bare facts of the dance scene that mystery and magic which make it memorable. This mystery and magic spring not from the scene so much as from Narayan's reaction to it, the way in which it sets his fancy working. His creative power shows in his ability to communicate to us, not only the facts of the scene, but its significance to the imagination. It is a good method of description but not one usually found in a novel.

Narayan's style is capable of greater effects than those of far more competent Indo-English writers. Good style is not a negative thing, dependent for its success on the absence of faults. It succeeds in so far as it gets the author's meaning fully across, in so far as it completely incarnates his conception in the medium of words. Narayan's style can do this, though not always. For one thing, it is a style. His strange individuality does contrive to imprint itself on his actual use of language. Even though he uses cliches, the final effect...
of his writing is never common place. We can never mistake a paragraph by Narayan for a paragraph by anybody else. Notice, for example, the following paragraph:

Naju soon realised that his spiritual status would be enhanced if he grew a beard and long hair to fall on his nape. A clean-shaven close-haired saint was an anomaly. He bore the various stages of his make-up with fortitude, not minding the prickly phase he had to pass through before a well authenticated beard could cover his face and come down his chest.

The distinguishing elements in his personality - his comic view of life, his strangeness, his integrity, his dignity, his naivete and above all, his unvarnished simplicity distinguish every paragraph of his novels. The use of the individual words and phrases in the above paragraph such as 'Clean-shaven close-haired saint'; 'not minding the prickly phase'; 'a well-authenticated beard' etc. enables Narayan to rise above to a level of expressiveness which other competent craftsmen do not get within sight of. His words have always been the words for his purpose. We can not think of any alternative for 'A clean-shaven close-haired saint was an anomaly' or 'He bore the various stages of his make-up (of sainthood) with fortitude...... before a well...
authenticated beard could cover his face and come down his chest, which would give anything like the same effect. Narayan, unexpectedly enough, at such moments has satisfied Flaubert's ideal of style. He has discovered the 'most juste', the single word which can along express the shade of meaning he has in mind. His words do more than clothe his conception - they are its embodiment. In the following sentences such as -

The essence of saïnhood seemed to lie in one's ability to utter mystifying statements. 115

Or

A case in his hands was like dough; he could knead and draw it up and down. 116.

Or

The unbeaten brat will remain unlearned. 117.

Or

Half the trouble in this world is due to women who cannot tolerate each other. 118.

Or

No one lost his head so completely over a question of discipline as the parent of an only child. 119.

Or

To the dustpot with your silly customs. 120.

Cont'd... P/469.
Or
This education has reduced us to a nation of morons; we were strangers to our own culture and camp followers of another culture, feeding on leavings and garbage. 121.
Or
I am searching for something, trying to make a meaning out of things. 122.
Or
The true manyasi has no need to live on anything more than the leavings of God. 123.
Or
A flash of his eyes can make a picture. 124.
Or
They rankled in his mind as if he had a splinter in his skull. 125.
Or
It was ineffably lovely - a small pond with blue lotus; a row of stones leading to the water. 126.
Or
Cash untethered is always fleeting. 127.
Or
We come together only to go apart again ... The law comes into operation the moment we detach ourselves from our mother's womb. 128

Contd.... 2/470.
Or
Her cheeks glowed, the rest of her person were lost in the shadows of the temple hall. etc.

Narayan's use of words and phrases do go beyond his logical meaning to suggest all the subleties and overtones of the mood in which he regarded it. Narayan instinctively modulates sound to make it correspond to the movement of the emotion it conveys: This is language used creatively. Raju suggests simple, pre-ordained fate in 'The Guide':

It is written on the brow of some that they shall not be left alone. I am one such, I think. Although I never looked for acquaintances, they somehow came looking for me ... 'I never said I don't know'. Not in my nature, I suppose. If I had the inclination to say 'I don't know what you are talking about', my life would have taken a different turn. 130.

Remark how the roll of the first sentence proclaims grandly, and as it were, impersonally, the moral of the story. The frustrated rhythm of the next sentence cut short conveys an uprush of emotion, suddenly checked as by a strong effort of will. Then the straight narrative goes on.
in toneless, abrupt cadence, as if it were the utterance of a spirit drained by sheer intensity of feeling. This is language used creatively. The truth is, that two elements go to make a good style. The first is what we may call the element of understanding: that grasp of the nature of the English language which enables an author to write it clearly, accurately and economically. The second is the element of sensibility: that feeling for the flavour of a word and the flow of a rhythm which enables him to write it expressively. The first element is intellectual, the child of the critical sense; the second aesthetic, and is the product of imagination. Narayan as one might expect has both the elements in a considerably higher degree than the other Indo-Anglian novelists.

Narayan himself tells us that his aims are 'to subject the particle to an intense scrutiny', 'to convey unambiguously the thoughts and acts of a set of personalities'; and he writes of the value he sets upon 'psychological explorations', and the fascination of characters and people. Thus his method is always to begin with and describe the concrete, the particular and the historic as experienced and observed facts, and to imply at the same time their place in a determined order of events.
Style is always an integral part of a man's vision and not an element that can be isolated from the content or theme of a novel. The sincerity of Narayan's style is thus an inalienable part of his vision. We have no doubt about the authenticity and strength of his medium. His style is the microcosm of his talent exhibiting all his faults and virtues in their most characteristic form. No doubt, he is a maturer artist than other Indo-Anglians, his work is an extraordinary mixture of merits and defects. Both are equally of its substance: they are both present in everything he wrote at all times in his life. It would not be true to say that his work shows no development. There is a development in his mood, attitude and in technique.

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