CHAPTER- VI

CONCLUSION

Narayan is at once the most popular and at the same time the most adversely commented among Indian novelists. He has been criticized to be working on a limited worldview, the lower middle class South Indian life, with no great social relevance. Even those who chose to admire him did so only with reference to his rootedness in Indian religion, family system, etc. There are studies on his humour and irony. But practically there is none who systematically studies his grip on Narratology. It is his narratological stances that helped him to gain western recognition – Greene(1937), Warren French (1967) et al. He is often compared to Chekhov. So a fresh look at the rigorous application of the tenets of narratology to the study of Narayan will help a reader recognize his rightful place as a novelist. There are a number of Narayan studies that have studied his major themes, characters, plots, setting, point of view, etc in isolation and his humour, irony, burlesque pattern, romantic comedy, ideas and fable. The present study undertakes to examine select novels of Narayan with reference to all these aspects of Narratology wholistically.

Narratology is broadly defined as the study of the novel and other narrative forms. Speaking on some of its aspects Manfred Jahn (2005) observes:

All narratives present a story. A story is a sequence of events which involves characters. Hence, a narrative is a form of communication which presents a sequence of events caused and
experienced by characters. In *verbally* told stories, we also have a *story-teller*, a narrator. (2)

As Mieke Bal (2004) writes, a narratological expert, expresses his findings as,

‘A story or a fabula is presented in a certain manner. A fabula is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are experienced by actors. An event is the transition from one state to another state. Actors are agents that perform actions....Narratology includes the ordering these various elements into a story. The principles of ordering which are described in narratology have a hypothetical status only, and their purpose is to make possible a description of the content material we come across in the story.’

- The events are arranged in a sequence which can differ from the chronological sequence.
- The amount of time which is allotted in the story to the various elements of the fabula is determined with respect to the amount of time which these elements take up in the fabula.
- The actors are provided with distinct traits. In this manner, they are individualized and transformed into characters.
- The locations where events occur are also given distinct characteristics and are thus transformed into specific places.
- In addition to the necessary relationships among actors, events, locations, and time, all of which were already describable in the layer of the fabula, other relationships (symbolic, allusive, traditional, etc.) may exist among the various elements.
• A choice is made from among the various 'points of view' from which the elements can be presented. The resulting focalization, the relation between 'who perceives' and what is perceived, 'colours' the story with subjectivity.

Narratology as a discipline is an offshoot of structuralism. It developed at the time, criticism prided itself to be a pure science, and structuralism as a dominant force, strove to device parameters to assess a literary work. In the study of the novel, narratology confined itself to its formal features. The Russian scholar Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) is considered the founding work. Narratology concentrated on the basic distinctions of what is narrated (eg. events, characters and settings of a story) and how it is narrated (eg. by what kind of a narrator, in what order, at what time). To quote Prince (1987)

> Narratology studies the nature, form and functioning of narrative (regardless of medium of representation) and tries to characterize narrative competence. More particularly, it examines, what all and only narratives have in common (at the level of story, narrating, and their relations) as well as what enables them to be different from one another, and it attempts to account for the ability to produce and understand them. (65)

Shklovsky, Barthes and Genette are its chief exponents. According to them a narrative is autonomous, self-centered, self – motivating, context free objects which exist independently from the pragmatic concerns of everyday
Thanks to the contributions of Bakhtin and Foucault, the social structuralists, the tenets of narratology underwent serious revision. So, in recent developments of contextualized narratology, the context of production gains emphasis, and the socio-cultural matrix is the determinant of the narrative. However, the recent developments do not preclude the relevance of the structuralist narratology. They are only complementary to what we have learnt from the structuralists and thus form valuable addition to the heuristic of the study of novel by integrating the two approaches – structuralistic and contextualistic – for the present analysis, a new paradigm is developed to study the novels of Narayan. This new paradigm consists of five kernels:

- Theme
- Plot
- Character
- Settings and Socio-Cultural matrix
- Point of View

They are applied rigorously to the study of five of the novels of Narayan.

R.K.Narayan in *The Vendor of Sweets* criticising the role of technology penetrating into even creative writing makes Mali import a story writing machine. Mali describes that if theme, plot, character and setting are ordered in different slots, the novel will be ready. The crucible of creative process is not that simple. They all blend organically and result in the product. In the study of narratology they are studied as separate entities, more to enable better comprehension.
An attempt is made to present Narayan’s predilections to chosen aspects of narratology through a set of pie diagrams.

Among the aspects of narrative, as is shown in the pie diagram, Narayan concentrates more on point of view, social ethos and character creation than on plot and theme. His signification is implicated through point of view. He critiques the lack of commitment towards any serious goal on the part of the well to do Indian. The peace loving Indian also slumps to be complacent and withdrawn from social life. Life in the post-independent era allows a majority of Indians to pursue their personal and domestic life, to the preclusion of social, political or religious commitment. As an archetypal theme, the protagonists undertake a quest for self-development themselves on, but lose their way as it is all too materialistic. Propelled by a will to power, the protagonists often remain unconscious of the stages of their own development or decadence. The Dark Room is one of the early novels of R.K.Narayan.
THEME

It is, as in most of his novels, cast in the mould of a typical aesthetic pattern in which the protagonist sets out on an unconscious quest for identity, keeping herself within certain socio-cultural ambience. The realization of true identity of the individual only brings to mind her duties to herself and others and also to check her ego and to see her action in perspective. The quest here is more an identification of the place of woman in the orthodox milieu of Indian patriarchal society. Savithri in *The Dark Room* protests against the patriarchal rudeness of her husband and steps out of her house. She soon realises that her lack of proper education renders her fit only for a degenerate life. So she returns to her husband’s house, where at least she can discharge her maternal duties to her children.

PLOT

The quest of Savitri for her freedom follows the chronological order. Her breaking away from the family fold is provoked by her husband’s infidelity. But the decision taken in a highly charged and emotional situation, subjects her to humiliations and she returns home to her familial responsibilities. It is a typical tragic comic plot of misunderstanding and reunion with greater comprehension on both sides.

CHARACTER

In terms of textual prominence, Savitri is the main character. This well-to-do middle class woman thinks too precisely on her husband’s infidelity and
protests against his patriarchal rudeness. The experiences she undergoes are educative of her limitations and she recalls to herself her family responsibilities.

Her husband too sheds his rudeness and accepts the role of his wife in the family. The third prominent character is Shanthabai. She is a foil to Savitri. She too protests against the patriarchal dispensation and steps out of her family, develops economic independence, but her independence does not result in her reaching any stature and strength of leading a socially relevant purposeful life. She ends up as a flirt. The majority of other minor characters are also women and they represent variable dimensions of man-woman relationship. Among the other male characters, Mari, though a petty thief, is human. The temple priest is callous.

**SETTING AND SOCIO-CULTURAL MATRIX**

The setting for all of Narayan’s novels is Malgudi, a country town that gradually gets transformed from rural to modern urban society. It is the microcosm of the slow transformation of the Indian society from colonial period through the years of independence and a democratic administration. To quote William Walsh (1979)

> The location of his novels, the southern Indian town of Malgudi, an imaginative version, one feels of Narayan’s beloved Mysore, is as familiar to his readers as their own suburbs and infinitely more interesting. The neutral flavour of Malgudi, Oriental and British, escapes like a scent from the press of detail and one comes to know the geography and
feel of the place as well as, and perhaps better than one knows one’s own town. (9)

*The Dark Room* published in 1935 reflects colonial India providing employment to a few educated Indians, like Ramani who gets into managerial positions in a British-Indian corporate. Other people are complacent and live their half-lived lives, accepting castism and power equations as irresistible way of the world. In such a society Savitri’s protest passes as a storm in a tea-cup.

**POINT OF VIEW**

In most of Narayan’s novels the author retains himself as the narrator. But he resorts to focalization through the characters when they have some strong feeling or thought to convey. This operation of poly-modality does not make clear as to when the third person becomes / implicates ‘I’ person. To miss this technique of Narayan is to misread him. Here, in this early novel, Narayan focalizes, the ‘Place of Women’ in the orthodox milieu of the society through Savitri. This enables Narayan to distance himself from the strong feelings about it, as otherwise it would have become a feminist tract. It is the limitations of Savitri as a character resulting in unreliable narrator, that helps Narayan to keep the novel within the realistic framework.

**THE GUIDE**

It is the magnum opus of Narayan’s writing. It reveals enormous maturity in his handling of the narrative strategies.
THEME

The theme remains a young man, Raju’s unconscious quest for self expression. Being unequal for the task, he mixes falsehood with truth in the roles he plays. But, in the last role he assumes namely that of the Sadhu, the illusion forces self-realisation. So in Raju’s persisting with self-actualization rather than a route of escape, the novel is unique. It has also a parallel theme of a woman, Rosie, in her quest for self – expression. She reaches the level of self-reliance.

PLOT

The story begins in medias res i.e. very near the last role that Raju is about to assume. He is out of jail, and helplessly wanders in the neighbourhood of Malgudi. He is taken as a Sadhu and the story ends with how he gets affected by this new role. The early life of Raju is worked out in a series of flashbacks, when Raju reminisces his past life from time to time. The plot structure is relevant because, it is in the last role that Raju is carried to great heights of his character and his self enquiry results in self-actualization.

CHARACTER

In terms of the title and predominance, Raju is the protagonist. He is a representative of the aspiring middle – class men, where aspirations are not backed with adequate equipment and endowment for the role. He being a flotsam takes anything that comes his way. He is not equipped to be either a tourist guide, impresario, or anything. His falsehood can carry him only to a limited extent till he gets exposed. In playing the role of the Sadhu, he is forced to go into
intronspection. Rosie, belonging to a dancing class, tries to rise above its social discrimination, through her education and marriage. But her instinctive craving gets the better of her and her further humiliation and gradual rise under the protection of a self-seeker leaves her confused. It is only when she understands the limitations of Raju, she charts a career of her own. She represents the scope for women to become self-reliant and pursue a purposeful career. The other characters are essentially minor. Velan, the maron makes Raju a sadhu and his fellowmen clamp the fast or Raju for bringing rain. Raju’s father was down to earth practical man of business, and his mother and uncle are orthodox Hindus.

SETTING AND SOCIO-CULTURAL MATRIX

Malgudi is rife with castism, with its high and low classes. It has grown to be a pilgrim tourist centre, with a railway station and the Mempi Hills having cave sculptures. People in the countryside remain uneducated, and are full of superstitious beliefs. They take any saffron-clad man as a sadhu and propose to live and work under his guidance. They are eager to be entertained and anything out of the way, is attraction to be converted into a full length mela, and the government and the media make a mountain out of a molehill. So individuals are carried away by the socio-cultural matrix.

POINT OF VIEW

In telling Raju's story in The Guide, R.K.Narayan alternates third-person and first-person narration and uses such cinematic techniques as flashbacks and jump cuts. When we first encounter Raju, he is about to meet Velan, and he is
seen at this point from the perspective of an omniscient Narayan narrator. Then Raju takes over the narrative chores and relates his progress from early life in a series of flashbacks with irony to start with and later without hiding the progress in the hero. The author delicately shuffles the past and present through the narration to fix the stages of Raju’s growing awareness and his illusion gets transformed into a greater reality, when he comes to accept responsibility to what he undertakes. Now, the irony of the author turns on the holiday loving crowd and their controlling officials.

**THE VENDOR OF SWEETS**

*The Vendor of Sweets* is a novel where Narayan’s mature handling of narrative techniques are sustained to great artistic achievement.

**THEME**

The theme of *The Vendor of sweets* is widely acknowledged to be the East-West encounter. Jagan the titular hero passes as the champion of Indian and Gandhian values and his son Mali the adopter of American pattern of life. But both observe the two values in superficialities. Jagan is more preoccupied with earning of more and more money, even with cheating of tax officials. Even his embracing ‘vanaprastha’ in the end of the novel is more an escape than a renunciation. His son, Mali assimilates some of the very ordinary elements of the western way of life like sartorial equipment, meat, wine and free sex, with practically little knowledge about any mechanical contrivances, parades as a knowledgeable individual, seeking distinction with mere possession of telephone,
scooter, car and the story – writing machine, and the facades of modern commercialisms such as foreign collaboration, prospectus, etc., with practically no business transacted. This kind of superficial qualities will result only in frustration in their interaction. Better understanding would prevail if both go by the deeper values of the east and the west. Thus the novel suggests a synthesis through implicature. Jagan and Grace understand each other and build a stable relationship. It is Mali’s selfishness that breaks his marriage with Grace.

PLOT

The plot is a simple linear plot tracing the disquiet of Jagan from a prosperous sweet stall owner to a sanyasi who decides an vanaprastha and Mali’s goings on from a spoilt child to a good-for-nothing adult. The novel reaches the climax with Mali’s return to India with a Korean –American girl and reaches an inconclusive ‘denouement’ in Mali’s arrest and Jagan’s retirement into the forest.

CHARACTER

Jagan and Mali are two main characters and the father-son relationship gets strained when Jagan resists Mali’s exploitative tactics on his father. Both are guided by the superficial values of the East or the West and remain frustrated. Though they are the dominant characters, there is very little growth in them. Their quest for money, devoid of any higher values is bound to fail. Grace is the one foreign imports in Narayan’s novels. This misguided young lady, willing to work and adopt to a changed environment is a victim of circumstances. The cousin is a typical figure, a man about the town essentially a helper character.
SETTING AND SOCIO-CULTURAL MATRIX

The novel portrays the average opinion of the Gandhian movement, how little people understood and followed it. It was looked upon as a disturbance to the hierarchical structure of the society. Those who followed him were ostracized for courting arrest and mingling with all sections of the society. Again, the marriage systems were rigid and the problems of the young wife in the joint family were accepted as a matter of course. In the absence of the modern concept of living in, Mali’s living with Grace without marriage brought the wrath of the relatives. Business cannot be carried on any more to the whims and fancies of individuals. Jagan ran into trouble with other sweet vendors when he tried to promote his sales through unreasonable methods.

POINT OF VIEW

In *The Vendor of Sweets*, Narayan the author is the narrator. But he is unintrusive but often focalizes through Jagan’s voice. So the reaction of Jagan are to be dealt with circumspection; Jagan’s hyper-carefulness regarding matters of money and his fear of displeasing his son and his relish of the traditional values of the joint family, marriage system and retirements are often should be viewed as Narayan’s own. But he only ironically deflates the value systems by allowing it to be championed by a man of average understanding.

THE PAINTER OF SIGNS

*The Painter of Signs* is the second novel where Narayan deals with a social problems comprehensively. Here it is population control in the other *The Dark Room* it was place of woman.
THEME

In 1970s India was burgeoning with the problem of over-population and the government was seeking desperate remedies. People steeped in tradition could not easily be persuaded to adopt family planning. And it called for zealots like Daisy to make it a mission of their lives, even at the cost of their personal life.

PLOT

This again is a chronological linear narrative that has the structure of a romantic comedy. As Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labours Lost*, it brings two ideologues one rational man, who is committed against marriage, Raman, and the other the missionary of family planning, Daisy together. How they fall in love with each other and what is the outcome of it constitute the plot of the novel.

CHARACTER

Daisy is the representative of the modern woman with independent thinking, employability. Raman, the painter with his professed rationalism tumbles along uncertainly through the challenges of life. The village schoolmaster is objective and detached observer and the temple priest is looked upon as a man endowed with magical powers. The aunt of Raman is a typical representative of old world values. They are all flat with no tendency to grow. This helps to develop a sustained comedy.

SETTING AND SOCIO-CULTURAL MATRIX

The setting continues to be Malgudi and its neighbouring villages, where the family planning mission is attempted to be carried out. With very little
understanding of economics of population on the part of the general public, the government’s efforts to control population was a failure of sorts, with political leaders toppled and enthusiasts losing their lives. Narayan’s comprehensive understanding of the problem renders the situation comic. The appalling, health and sanitary, conditions of the villages and the lack of proper education and their representations are frightening.

POINT OF VIEW

Except in the animal fable *A Tiger for Malgudi* and the experimental foray of twin narration in *The Guide*, Narayan retains for himself the position of the narrator. Here too he focalizes constantly from the point of view of Raman, his own limited understanding of the ways of the world is responsible for most of his overreactions to the situations.

THE WORLD OF NAGARAJ

*The World of Nagaraj* is the last of his major novels. It carries signs of Narayan’s creativity fading, as it sprawls on and on.

THEME

The theme is the quest for life’s deeper meaning in the title character, Nagaraj. He has neither the equipment nor endowment of a great quester, and his efforts to write the biography of Narada, the divine messenger, remains postponed from time to time on some pretext or the other. The joint family system and its possible exploitation by his brother and nephew constitute the major theme.
PLOT

The story starts in the middle when Nagaraj has settled down to a unitary family life with his mother as the only addition. But, he reminiscences his past from time to time and gives an account of his family’s past. Once Tim his nephew settles down with him, the story moves on the forward.

CHARACTER

As in all Narayan’s novels, the characters are all average. Nagaraj’s own quest for self-realisation remains a quest. He is too committed to the joint family system and too timid to be drawn to any serious thought or action. His brother is more dynamic and forceful in character and looks at things from a practical point of view. The women folk in the house – Nagaraj’s mother is orthodox, his wife though capable of independent thinking, accepts the traditional role of a housewife, Tim and his wife are modern wastrels exploiting the joint family system.

SETTING AND SOCIO-CULTURAL MATRIX

As the title suggests, it is too limited a world of the well-to-do middle class Indian idle life. None has the eagerness to achieve things of a higher order value. They are all satisfied with their own family problems, one significant variation is Nagaraj’s brother setting up a model farm in the village introducing technology in farming. Sign of modernity also appears in the introduction of sophisticated hotels like kismet for the well to do, with regular music, dance and other programmes.
POINT OF VIEW

Narayan maintains the authorial point of view and resorts to the polimode when Nagaraj’s strong thoughts and feelings come to the fore. So with the limitations of Nagaraj to comprehend his own world. The narrative is to be viewed ironically and Narayan does not approve of such personality.

PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION

Narayan has moved along with the times. We may discern the change in his attitude and style in all his novels and it could be viewed by taking the elements of the paradigm together.

The common theme is quest for identity in all the chosen five novels. In *The Dark Room* Savitri fails to reach her quest of independence being an uneducated woman comes back notwithstanding the challenge. In *The Guide* Raju’s predicament and subsequent confession, show his efforts in achieving his
identity. Rosie finds her way to live by her own and identifies herself as a dancer. Jagan in *The Vendor of Sweets* tries to identify himself in vanaprastha, but not completely, his love for money and his son prevent him from higher realization. In *The Painter of Signs* both the protagonists identify themselves in their profession and in *The World of Nagaraj*, Nagaraj, though he fails to achieve identity, understands that his family is identification more than his writing. Thus the quests do not reach fruition as the characters are too ordinary.

Narayan’s craftsmanship in plot-construction does not reveal a consistent quality. He begins in a tentative and episodic manner, with linear movement of the chronological order in *The Dark Room*, definite sign of maturity is seen in *The Guide* by beginning from the end moving front and back, The realistic and fantastic demarcation is viewed in *The Vendor of Sweets*; He is very much successful in two demarcation into an organic whole in *The Painter of Signs* and in *The World of Nagaraj* negative concept into a positive and an ordinary into an
extraordinary by starting with Nagaraj’s ignorance and many flashbacks and future steps and succeeds in completion of his novel which is not possible by the hero.

Excellence in the traits of the protagonist grows from first to the last novel. In *The Dark Room*, the protagonist Savitri is shown to be a person of changing moods and conflicting responses, talks and acts in turn like an orthodox Hindu woman and modern feminist, brooding over fate and at the same time an active personality. In *The Guide* Raju speaks like a connoisseur of dancing, shows reverence and sensitive admiration to Rosie’s art, shows eagerness to promote her and works as a manager who craves only for fame and becomes a fraud, fraudulent swami and grows to be a swami of selfless service. His own self objects the proposal of fast, and accepts it because of the people’s faith in him. Rosie in *The Guide* works sincerely for her profession and out grows her submissive attitude to her husband Marco and promoter Raju. Grace in *The
Vendor of Sweets remains submissive and loses all the money, Daisy in The Painter of Signs shows a lot of importance to her own wish and likes. Sita in The World of Nagaraj has a control over everything her husband and household together.

Narayan from the first novel to the last is at his best as a smiling spectator of all that is absurd and incongruous in human nature, social environment, cultural tradition and the material advancement of the modern days. This is very much vividly expressed in all his novels. As P.S.Sundaram (1977) corroborates the ideas of O.P.Mathur, when he comments:

There is a hydroelectric project somewhere in the Memphi Hills, jeeps and lorries make traffic difficult on Market Road, and Hippie-like youths with side burns recall by their appearance Stevenson and Faraday. More than all this there is a young lady entirely uninhibited in matters of sex. (3)
ROLE OF WOMEN

A careful reading of Narayan’s novels and stories would reveal a writer very sympathetic to the plight of women. Narayan’s women characters stand both for change and resistance to change. The struggle by society to accept new modes of living and being are presented very subtly and delicately, by a series of external contrasts and counterpoints between outsider or newcomers and local Malgudi people. *The Dark Room* concentrates on the plight of woman locked up within the confines of an orthodox society. The exploration of women’s role within marriage and their negotiation for their spaces within a patriarchal society becomes feminist concern from 1930 onwards. Rosie in *The Guide* moves on to becoming a professional artist in a modern world, outside Malgudi eventually controlling and managing her own life.
WESTERN INFLUENCE

In *The Dark Room*, the hero Ramani is influenced by the West in way of dressing relationship with other gender and sophistication. In *The Guide*, Rosie and Marco live a sophisticated Western way of life. In *The Vendor of Sweets*, Mali represented Indian life under the strong impact of the West. He talks of manufacturing novel writing machine, with the least knowledge of any activity. In *The Painter of Signs*. Daisy is almost like a representative of western life, her way of living, her attitude towards meeting the villagers without any shyness or fear, holding contradictory views on marriage against Indian Culture. In *The World of Nagaraj*, Tim is influenced by the Western way of living by going to kismet, enjoying the western style of living.

In general, Narayan adopts Omniscient Point of view with focalisation through the main protagonist with varities. In *The Dark Room*, the story is told from the neutral omniscient point of view with Savitri providing the focalizing point. In *The Guide* it is flash backs and jump cuts. Raju shares the narratore role with the
narrator. In The Vendor of Signs, it is omniscient point of view, focalization through Jagan, the protagonist. In The Painter of Signs, Raman speaks in two voices, one audible and the other inaudible. The audible constitutes his soft skill in dealing with others very courteously. The inaudible is at times critical of self and others, at other times his pressing statements of the moment. In The World of Nagaraj it is internal and external point of view.

SUMMING UP

Thus, the close analysis of five of Narayan’s novels with special reference to their theme, plot, character, setting and point of view reveals that Narayan’s range of observation is limited. He is confined to the upper middle class people and their doings. He is against politics and does not attempt to enquire into the rich religious and spiritual tradition, which does not touch the average Indian life. He touches on the social problems like the place of women, family planning, education, etc. But the technique of presenting the material is his chief merit. He uses the polimode narration in all his novels, and often the unreliable narrative voice as in The Dark Room. His handling of narrative speed through summary and scene in the novels like The Guide, and his signification through implicature narrating his criticism of his socio-cultural matrix establish his achievement as a novelist. It is best to conclude with the observation of Warren French (1967):

R.K.Narayan is one of those novelists who have realized life as they have lived it and have watched it lived by their mad neighbours … he demands too
much of readers and critics who cannot transcend their own apprehension of Doomsday. (6)

Again William Hogan (1958) comments similarly:

I think it is just R.K.Narayan, an Indain who writes in English about his people, with relish, affection, and certain amount of incredulity. He is certainly a writer to know about, and to enjoy. (35)

A study of Narayan’s characters reveals that Narayan is a realistic writer with an eye for the weakness in human temperaments and aspirations and the contradictions of human experiences. Almost all of his characters are anti heroes and heroines i.e. they aspire to achieve their goals without the equipment and endowment required for such greatness. Naturally they fail in their interaction with the outside world. They are so average they do not sit up and think why things went wrong. But as readers we can understand their weaknesses responsible for their failure. Being a realist, Narayan does not force his characters to any great disgrace for their folly. If there is one reason Narayan misses his position as a great writer it is his sticking on to the average. But the average is the positive (Taranath). His characters except Srinivas, Rosie, Raju and Daisy are too much concerned and satisfied with their domestic life. Narayan hesitates to construct characters of higher order values. The heroes are only average people, they do aspire to rise in a material sense but end up only in frustration. Mali in The Vendor of Sweets and Raman in The Painter of Signs fall into this category. The other characters figuring in the novels are subtle variations of the heroes, but
do not rise to any dignity or individuality, but most of them are prototypes of what Narayan encountered in real life. Because the characters are all average people, their way of looking at people or experiences do not constitute the norm. Narayan maintains himself as the narrative point of view and focalizes when a character has strong feelings, he is more a witness than a commentator of the human comedy. When strong feelings overtake the heroes, he surrenders his narrator role and focalizes through those of the heroes. Unless the reader is aware of his technique, he is likely to misunderstand the feelings and thoughts of the characters as Narayan’s own. The point of view may reflect the dominant ideology of the society or it may provide challenges to it, Narayan does neither. By adopting an unreliable narrative point of view the writer challenges the orthodox views and promotes awareness, without disturbing the existing systems. It is this technique of narration that gains him distinction and reveals his signification. He is neither a strong upholder of the statuesque of social mores, nor is he downright critical of them. If other aspects of narratology help a reader to identify Narayan’s limited world view, the point of view, helps a reader to identify Narayan critiquing the socio-cultural matrix. It is here that Narayan’s signification asking for change of the dominant ideology is subtly managed. His basic outlook seems to be our blind commitment to orthodoxy, joint family system, aping the western ways in our own pursuit of material advancement to the total neglect of values of life like honesty, sincerity, commitment and sacrifice, are sure to lead us to self defeating frustration, which all his heroes experience at the end of their pursuit. The variations in signification across the
spatio-temporal axis and across persons in it are managed mainly through
Narayan’s technique of narration, the non intrusive authorial point of view and
his constant focalisation on the characters. It is not claimed that this study is the
last word on Narayan’s signification. It is only an extension of previous studies.
It is able to glimpse Narayan’s signification, by studying the gap between
Narayan himself as non-intrusive narrator and his focalisation of the characters
from time to time. Failure to identify this bisociative perspective results in
getting lost in the other technicalities of the narrative and missing the signification
that is mainly managed through implicature.