CHAPTER - III

CAMPUS POLITICS

Politics, in general is a subject that interests many. It is of many kinds and its meaning is varied. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2000) defines politics as “the activities involved in getting and using power in public life, and being able to influence decisions that affect a country or a society.” It also explicates that politics in disapproving terms would mean, “matters concerned with getting or using power within a particular group or organization” (977). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia on the internet, defines politics as “a process by which groups of people make collective decisions.” It says that “the term is generally applied to behavior within civil governments” but it has also “been observed in other group interactions including corporate, academic and religious institutions.” It consists of “social relations involving authority or power” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/politics/).

This chapter deals with politics on campus as exhibited in the various novels taken for study. Different kinds of politics and academicians’ different ways of politicking are displayed in each of these novels, and this can be variously classified. A broad classification of campus politics exhibits teacher-centered politics, student-oriented politics and caste politics. In teacher-centered politics, the focus is on the politics that exists among the teachers, and between teaching staff and administrative staff. It propounds the various machinations employed by teaching staff in order to politick and their intentions behind politicking. It shows the power struggle of the teachers and their attempts to achieve success.

In student-oriented politics, the political practices of the students are brought out. Students involving themselves in politics concerned with teachers, with peers and with outside politicians are brought out. The last kind of politics proposed to be studied in this chapter is
caste politics. This segment intends to bring out the play of caste in educational institutions and their role in perpetuating social stratifications, as culled out from the various campus novels taken for study.

The teacher-oriented politics is an interesting study since this study brings out the novelists’ interest in showing the teachers as being far from ideal Gurus. The self-effacing nature of ideal Gurus or teachers is replaced with self-interested tendencies by these novelists. It is this nature of self-interest that makes teachers selfish and leads to involvement in politicking. It is the interest and love for their own selves that make them pull down the others, irrespective of their position. The interest in self is because of the competition that exists in the academy for acquisition of power. Janice Rossen proclaims that “academic fiction almost always takes this competitiveness as part of its basis showing its characters’ ambitions to gain more stature within the profession and often dramatizing this in terms of professional rivalry” (4).

Rossen believes that the “influence of power structure within academe and in relation to the world outside, the constant dialectic between competitiveness and idealism – or scholarship as a means to an end or as an end in itself” (4) is what leads to too much of satire and irony in academic novels.

The teachers’ politicking in the campus involves the usual backbiting, scheming and bickering deals. The novelists Prema Nandakumar, Rita Joshi, Rani Dharker, Anuradha Marwah Roy, Prabhanjan, Panjangam and Jaisakthi propound the aforementioned tendencies amidst the Professors or teaching faculty they have pictured. They show how the inmates of the campus lack the usual virtues like honesty, simplicity, humility, reliability, nobility and knowledgeability that are usually associated with successful teaching and learning. These
writers portray them as power-mongers who are keen on their own development above everything else.

Eli in his entry posted on the web entitled “Against the Concept of Academic Politics” (2009), with an invitation for responses to it, calls academic politics as “a form of internal quarreling central to the reproduction of institutional order” (par. 2). He says that internal politics aren’t actually politics… but the scheming, bickering and back-room deals are matters that involve structures of power and domination, (occasional) resistance and (very seldom) subversion that most of the times make people call it politics (par. 3).

He feels it a trivialization to consider the above in academy as politics because these are only means used in politics and not politics itself.

John B. Bennett in Academic Politics, Leadership and Hospitality (2003) says that in the campus, “competition can be keen and strategies both imaginative and devious – though afterwards we often laugh at colleagues’ foibles and escapades, and perhaps even incorporate them into institutional narratives and mythologies” (par. 1).

Academic politics often involves power struggle and is more concerned about personal achievements and benefits rather than the idealistic pursuit of acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. In the attempt to concentrate on one’s personal development comes jealousy, hypocrisy and enmity. These things make academicians suspicious of one another and there is a tendency among them to believe the worst about one another’s actions and intentions. This leads to what Bennett calls, “Individual isolation and institutional fragmentation” (par. 4). He comments about some of the inhospitable practices of the individuals and says that these practices actually trammel the celebrated inquiry. He further states:
Particularly in the heat of the political moment, well-constructed arguments give way to clever but careless innuendos, modest propositions are replaced by exaggerated claims, and openness to assessing contrary positions fairly turns into suspiciousness and willingness to believe the worst (par. 3).

Bennett says that at these times, individuals are set upon insisting on their individuality, on emphasizing their own ways of doing things, and even firmly resisting or ignoring, altogether, others’ efforts to present the merits of their position. He opines that when this insisting on one’s individuality happens, then “adversarial energies overcome collegial instincts.” It is at these times that “individuals turn against colleagues, faculty against administrators, and vice versa” (par. 4). Bennett further elaborates:

When enmity and jealousy pervades the atmosphere then the quality of discourse and interchange is cheapened, interest in collaboration is diminished, and the satisfactions of working together are reduced. Individual isolation and institutional fragmentation are heightened. Some individuals become more aggressively combative than usual. Others simply withdraw, resign from committees, flee from campus, and become physically as well as psychically unavailable. At these times, our self-correcting academic mechanisms prove inadequate and the standards to which we ordinarily hold ourselves accountable are relaxed or even forgotten. Truth claims become suspect and the foundations of civil discourse and intellectual interchange are diminished and corroded (par. 4).

Michael Bishop in responding to Eli’s web entry posted on “Against the Concept of Academic Politics” states that academic politics
refers to the fact that professors implicitly and explicitly debate the goals of the department and how to achieve them. How much research, teaching, and other responsibilities are required. How does the department encourage individuals to go beyond the minimum, what do they do if people don’t perform the minimum… who should be hired and tenured, what courses should be offered and which ones required? How should the budget be allocated?

There are disagreements based upon values, interests, differences of opinion about questions of fact, strategic factions or coalitions, etc. (par. 36-37).

As these writers point out, academic politics refers to the fragmentation of the institution wherein the academicians squabble with one another, mainly for power. These squabbles lead to the disunity of the staff and to isolation where individuals hold conversations on a highly impersonal or sometimes even an unfriendly note. They also want in their turn to ruin the others.


The novel *Atom and the Serpent* best “portrays the politics and sterility of life in the campus” (Pandey 44). It’s very opening suggests that the novel is certainly going to be about a struggle for power. Vatsa hints at this in the inception itself when the grim, imposing structure
of the University makes him contemplate about the will power the inmates, especially the Vice-Chancellor will have to possess in order to keep up his position. Usha Pandey points out in her review of *Atom and the Serpent* that Prema Nandakumar’s intention to highlight “the intrigues and imbalances rampant among the academics” (44) is clear. There is “a constant struggle for power at various levels” (Hedge 230) in the novel and the most prominent among them being the direct as well as the indirect ‘wars’ between Dr. D. K. Adhyaksha, the Vice-Chancellor and Dr. Dattatreya, the Principal.

*Atom and the Serpent* shows the Vice-Chancellor, who is a great scholar in the beginning of his career, losing his intellectual activities and becoming a full-fledged politician as he grows up in the academic hierarchy. Prema Nandakumar, commenting on Dr. Adhyaksha’s politicking nature in order to keep his academic and ministerial staff intact, says, “Now the scholar was a memory while the politician has become the reality” (AS 19).

Adhyaksha with his ‘Chanakya’ like quality keeps scheming and manipulating the affairs of the University. He is quite busy with his intrigues and this once renowned scholar, gradually gains the name of Tribal Chief who constantly struggles to keep his vicious and barbarous tribals – the academicians - in control.

Prema Nandakumar showcases through the Vice-Chancellor and the various other characters how the campus is turned into an arena of politics from being a temple of learning. In doing so, she asserts that through this campus novel she is only attempting “to project essential realities” and “not particular actualities” (AS iii, Author’ Note).

M. E. Hedge, in his essay, “Power of the Glory: A Thematic Analysis of Prema Nanadakumar’s *Atom and the Serpent*” takes D. K. Adhyaksha as the best example for showing the “rotten politics for power which is capable of draining out the best in any man” (230).
opines so since Adhyaksha has completely submerged himself into intrigues and politics that he himself sometimes creates problems among the staff. He welcomes screams, revolts, and does not feel disturbed by those since he feels that these deviations entertain his otherwise dull life.

A similar novel that portrays direct and indirect wars between the Vice-Chancellor and another staff, Professor Azhagesan is Prabhanjan’s Kagitha Manidargal. This is a novel that like Atom and the Serpent brings out the power play and political moves of academicians. Like Adhyaksha, Subramanian, the Vice-Chancellor in Kagitha Manidargal too spends his time supervising the teaching faculty of his University.

However, unlike him, Subramanian solves problems in a straightforward manner. He lacks Adhyaksha’s cunningness and scheming nature. For instance, as soon as he takes up his position as Vice-Chancellor in the university, he learns about so many issues through students’ letters. The first one is about Professor Parimelazhagar Perumal’s sexual advances towards his students. Parimelazhagar is not only a lusty professor but also a corrupt one and the students’ charge against him is that he delays the correction of M.Phil. and Ph.D. thesis papers and their results, and flirts with the girls. The Vice-Chancellor immediately goes to Parimelazhagar Perumal’s chamber and questions him about it. He frankly asks Parimelazhagar Perumal if he expects any bribe from his students in order to do his duty. He also advises him of his social responsibility and makes him promise not to indulge in any corruption.

Subramanian, like Adhyaksha, does not do things in a sly manner but openly faces the staff. Once he denies Prof. Madanagopal, who is popularly known as “flying Professor”, “Seminar professor” (KM 41), the opportunity to attend a seminar in Mysore University. He asks him to give a chance to the other Readers and Lecturers also. Thus, it is by being frank and open, Vice-Chancellor Subramanian earns the hatred of the staff of the University. Like
Dattatreya, the ardent enemy of Dr. Adhyaksha, Professor Azhagesan, is the arch villain of the novel.

*Atom and the Serpent* and *Kagitha Manidargal* hint, in the opening scene itself, at the fact that the University consists of internal quarrelling and structures of power and dominion. *Atom and the Serpent* pictures Vatsa uncannily witnessing the members of the teaching faculty being in groups and exchanging “occasional furtive glances.” He finds them involved in hatching a plot against one another in a “subtle, suave, poisonous way that is perhaps characteristic of the provincial universities” (AS 12). He does not fail to guess that the University community is divided.

In *Kagitha Manidargal*, the complaint letters that the Vice-Chancellor receives against his staff soon after his appointment sets the mood for quarrel and domination. This kind of exhibition of domination through various ways, scheming and plotting against one another characterizes academic politics. Academic politics, according to Eli involves “structures of power and domination” (par. 3) which he calls is a mere form of internal quarrelling that takes place in institutions.

In *Atom and the Serpent*, the subtle fight between the Vice-Chancellor and the Principal is prominent. In *Kagitha Manidargal*, there is a significant fight between the Vice-Chancellor and Professor Azhagesan. Just like how Dattatreya wishes to usurp the position of the Vice-Chancellor, so does Azhagesan.

Dr. Dattatreya wishes to covet the position of the Vice-Chancellor, since his family has been in the University service for generations and has worked in all capacities except as Vice-Chancellor. However, Azhagesan’s main intention is to somehow overthrow Subramanian and
rise to the position. His main intention is revenge against his Vice-Chancellor who intervenes in his sexual intrigues with the students and who does not support him in his unfair activities.

In the very opening Chapter of Atom and the Serpent, Dattatreya has a heated conversation with the Vice-Chancellor in the matter of segregating his department into three. Vatsa, taken aback by this, finds company in Sheela Rani, a gossipmonger and a “scandal-scatterer.” It is she who initiates Vatsa into the politics of the University. She tells Vatsa that “Nothing, of course” is more interesting than “University politics” and believes that academics and their interactions are more interesting to watch than the Trade Cycle movement in her subject, Econometrics. Vatsa, eager to be initiated “into a few of these secrets,” enjoys the mechanisms of power-related things (AS 14). The Vice Chancellor’s power politics is spelled out to him initially by Sheela Rani. Sheela Rani’s sympathies are with Dattatreya, whose empire, according to her, is all the while sliced up by the Vice-Chancellor. Although Dattatreya is a powerful man who easily wages war against the Vice-Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor too is equally powerful to destroy all his attempts in rooting him out. The constant feud between Adhyaksha and Dattatreya divides the university community into two groups and Adhyaksha always has a few people like the university Librarian, Mr. Rahulkar, who is also an elected syndic, at his side in order to “manage and manipulate the University’s affairs.” He uses him as a “necessary tool” to achieve his political end (AS 21).

Dr. Kavali Matsyachari is a medical doctor in the university who often humors the Vice-Chancellor with political intrigues. He visits him daily and updates him with various stories of his rivals. Kavali knows pretty well “the gambits of a courtier” and knows that flattery “is a tonic to the best of men” (AS 26). By hinting at the intense argument at the Staff Association Dinner the previous night, Kavali adds fuel to the Vice Chancellor’s anger against
Dattatreya. He appreciates the Vice Chancellor’s angelic patience against the arrogant Dattatreya who, he says, shouts as though the Vice-Chancellor and the others were “laggards” (AS 26). He viciously speaks of Dattatreya and his wife Sheela Rani and guffaws at Sheela Rani’s boasts about herself. He tells the Vice-Chancellor how Sheela Rani fussed about a negligible cut she got while cutting vegetables, and how Dattatreya screamed at him about the University administration. He also tells the Vice-Chancellor how he had to sit and write out “a prescription as long as the notes Mrs. Dattatreya is said to dictate” in order to ease out Dattatreya’s irritation. As an attempt at increasing the already existing anger of the Vice-Chancellor, he adds that he “prescribed vitaminettes aplenty and three bottles of Vit.B syrup” for her who “is already suffering from over-health” (AS 29).

Prema Nandakumar pictures the gossips that entertain higher officials and shows how even learned, knowledgeable scholars become victims to gossips and how it is very much a part of their administration.

The same situation is found in Kagitha Manidargal but the difference lies in Subramanian acting alone without any regular adulating companions like Mr. Rahulkar or Dr. Kavali Matsyachari. His opponent, Dr. Azhagesan, like Dr. Dattatreya of Atom and the Serpent, troubles him and is backed by the State Chief Minister and other Ministers. Prabhanjan’s Vice-Chancellor, unlike Prema Nandakumar’s, does not entertain gossips and lacks the quality of being flexible. He is indifferent to complaints lodged by the staff if he is convinced that the staff are in the wrong. This is what provokes Azhagesan to act against the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor, instead of believing Professor Azhagesan’s false complaints, simply dismisses him stating that he should not be so narrow-minded with regard to students and their affairs. This irritates Azhagesan, and hence, he waits for a chance to pull the former
down. Moreover, like Dattatreya of Atom and the Serpent, Azhagesan too aims at becoming the Vice-Chancellor. He joins hands with the Chief Minister’s men, whose ill will too the Vice-Chancellor has earned, to overthrow him.

Subramanian not only wins the hatred of the staff in the university by not complying with their wishes but also earns the irritation of the Ministers of the State. His straightforwardness and un-politicking nature does not allow him to use the art of flattery. He, like Adhyaksha, is not pleased by flattery and gossip, and at the same time, does not go out of the way to please people in power. His belief in doing his duty and doing things according to his conscience makes him go against the wishes of the Chief Minister. He refuses to confer the Doctorate degree to the Chief Minister since he feels him to be an undeserving fellow.

This leads the Ministers of the State to find means to overthrow him. Corruption charges and various other false accusations like sexual harassment, bribery, receiving commission for tenders and so on are fabricated against him with the help of Azhagesan. In addition, his other enemies like the DSP and some of the staff of the University support this.

All these put together causes a great upheaval in his routine life. The Vice-Chancellor becomes the recipient of inimical feelings from various sides. He is projected as a betrayer of Tamil culture and its tradition and hence is decided to sack him. Finally, it is with the help of the strike conducted by the students against the injustice caused to him that he is protected. However, the novel ends with him resigning and pronouncing his wish to dedicate himself to research.

In Kagitha Manidargal, although Subramanian has the reputation of being a straightforward and uncorrupt person, he is not able to escape the wiliness and cruelty of cunning people. He, like Adhyaksha, has a good relationship with the menials and low
ministerial staff and even helps them occasionally. However, his strict and uncompromising nature puts him in trouble. Dishonest and corrupt people whether inside the university or outside, hate him.

A similar incident where a staff is supported by the students, although deserted by the colleagues, is gleaned from Ranga Rao’s *The Drunk Tantra*, a secondary source. Here, it is the students, who support Mohana, a Lecturer, during her suspension. Mohana, the protagonist of *The Drunk Tantra* works under the principal-ship of Hairy. Hairy dislikes her since she admires the former Principal Daash and prefers him to Hairy. Moreover, Mohana is indifferent to him, and hence, is not in his good books. He does not trust her and would not do anything that would bring her to limelight.

These are some of the political games, the higher officials involve themselves in, in order to suppress or put down colleagues they dislike. Hairy, as an act of suppressing Mohana, fails to give her any duty but is forced to hand over the charges of being the hostel warden to her since it is the decision made by the Chairman. Always considering the Chairman’s wishes as his own, he makes Mohana the warden. Mohana’s tenure improves things in the hostel. But at the same time, her complaint against the ill practices of the staff there makes Hairy talk to her about inquiry committees. He slyly threatens her in the names of the inquiry commission and tries to suppress her. However, Mohana’s stubborn nature makes him promise to take action against the cheating staff members of the hostel.

Although Hairy complies with Mohana’s wish to take action against the corrupt staff, he later suspends her on some unjustified grounds. During this suspension, Mohana, like Subramanian of *Kagitha Manidargal*, is not supported by any staff but only by her students. When her suspension orders are released, the students, both boys and girls rise up to the cause,
they raise slogans against Hairy and his sidekicks and are even ready to attack them. They are all prepared for a gherao, but Mohana, like Subramanian, of *Kagitha Manidargal* asks them to stop worrying about her suspension and tells them that she can defend herself. However, the students, ignoring her request, confine Hairy to a room and wrench away all the telephones. Hairy’s wife seeks the help of his Minister Cousin and his Cousin cautiously deals with this since there is the talk of mid-term polls. Even the Chairman is seized and confined to one of the classrooms and the police beat up teachers and students alike.

The matter politicized, the public is outrageous at the atrocity at St. Jaans. The guardians of public morality and the Press force the Chairman to step down from his position. The opposition party avails this opportunity to constitute a joint parliamentary committee to go into the atrocities of St. Jaans. The Education Minister is asked to resign by his leader and only when he offers an apology, the people, especially the press, are satisfied. Thereafter, the problem is resolved.

Thus, we see that Vice-Chancellor Subramanian and Mohana are being defended by their students when in trouble and deserted by their colleagues. If Subramanian quits his job and is suppressed by the evil materialistic forces that surround him, the Vice-Chancellor of *Atom and the Serpent* is able to manage and survive the politics of his university. He survives because of his equally intriguing and scheming nature. He himself is a politician who is engaged in gossiping and plotting against others. Hence, even in his most critical moment and during moments of crises he solves any problem “without giving in to the monsters of belligerency.” He is a “wily Chanakya” who enjoys the political games of the university, whereas Vice-Chancellor Subramanian lacks the Chanakya - like manipulations and this finally leads to his downfall (AS 285).
Similar to the unity of the enemies of Subramanian of *Kagitha Manidargal* is the unity of the opponents of Dr. Adhyaksha. The power conflict between Adhyaksha and Dattatreya creates division in the University. According to Sheela Rani, the people inside “are either abject toe-kissing slaves” or “reckless sword-hitched enemies of the pinch back Tribal Chief who calls himself the VC!” (AS 161) The two extremes give birth to two recognized associations within the university. Kshema Rao, Sheela Rani’s brother and Dattatreya’s brother-in-law, formed an association called the Employees’ Union in order to conduct his opposition against the Vice-Chancellor. Although he does not belong to the university, he gathers the menials and administrative staff, and being a brief-less lawyer, poses himself as fighting for the people. However, behind every feud or demonstration against the Vice-Chancellor operates his cunning notion of bargaining with him, the promotion to professorship of his sister. Dattatreya instigates Kshema Rao’s actions and behind every move of Kshema Rao there is the master mind of Dattatreya. Dattatreya’s main aim is to overthrow the Vice-Chancellor and to covet the position. Hence, he acts as the motivating force for Kshema Rao. The Vice-Chancellor, cleverer than Dattatreya encourages Bansi Ram’s Karamchari Sangh in order to counter attack the Employees’ Union. Knowing pretty well that Bansi Ram has a reputation of being an “enterprising smuggler”, (AS 83) the Vice-Chancellor uses him to control the Employees’ Union. He himself sometimes instigates Karamchari Sangh to participate actively in shouting slogans and causing riots.

One such political incident that takes place on campus between these two associations is a fight for housing allowance. Kshema Rao, holding a hand-mike, screams every few minutes, appropriate capsule slogans like “VC Saheb!” “Down, down!” “Employees’ Union!” “Zindabad!” “Housing Allowance!” “Wanted!” and so on (AS 83). Kshema Rao’s different
slogans baffle the low ministerial staff and there is a kind of “disorderly orderliness” (AS 79). Kshema Rao’s motives are dual – the covert intention being to drag the Vice-Chancellor into a negotiating situation with regard to professorship for his sister, and the overt one of getting housing allowance for the menial staff.

Karamchari Sangh, on the other hand, cries out against the Employees’ Union. Being defenders of the Vice-Chancellor, they are nicknamed the “VC’s Stooge” and in turn, they call the opposition, “Principal’s Pig!” and “the Principal’s Puppy” (AS 83). Ignorant of this interplay of politics, the lower cadre ministerial staff believe that everything is being done for their welfare. Thus, Prema Nandakumar here highlights how workers are cleverly confounded by the literate power mongers to achieve their political ends.

The screams and revolts do not disturb the Vice-Chancellor, and he, in fact, enjoys these slight deviations in his otherwise “dull” academic life. Rahulkar reverberates the Vice-Chancellor’s sentiments stating that a shouting enemy is better than a sullen friend. The Vice-Chancellor, in fact, convinces the disappointed Vatsa “that these excrences are almost welcome distractions” (AS 82) and his Chanakya-like mind knows how to tackle the small strike.

The clever and arty Vice-Chancellor, according to Hedge, is a “veritable Chanakya who is ever full of self-confidence.” He, “with his keen intellect and sharp memory... could grasp the situation quickly, and could turn almost everything to his advantage with least effort” (230). Hedge also comments on Adhyaksha’s acumen for ‘divide-and-rule’ oriented administration that actually helps him to solve problems immediately. Even Dattatreya, his ardent enemy, accusingly says that he has a way “of making the other person look guilty” (AS 12).
Such a clever and skilful Vice-Chancellor makes an impact among the workers with his very presence. Moreover, Adhyaksha eases the workers by “talking their language with reassuring colloquial ease” and “speaks as though he were a benevolent Caesar moving around in his imperial people among the common citizenry.” His “persuasive ingratiating voice” (AS 84) exhibits the concern he has for them and they little doubt his sincerity. Finally, he impresses the crowd who had come to counter him by saying that he had thought that they had come to thank him for signing the increase in their Dearness Allowance and for putting in, the special benefit house allowance. The crowd happy at this unexpected benefit showered upon them, immediately shouts in favour of him. Kshema Rao, fully aware of the wilier ways of “the old pumpkin” nevertheless decides to keep up appearances for the moment, and so praises and applauds him. He pretends to be overjoyed and adulates the Vice-Chancellor saying, “all is safe in our Vice-Chancellor’s hand!” (AS 86).

Nevertheless, at the back of his mind, he had hoped for some tough bargaining through the strike. He actually planned to help the Vice-Chancellor by withdrawing the demand for special benefit house allowance, if only he could have struck a private deal in favour of his sister.

The Vice-Chancellor, on his exit, asks the Registrar to get him the DA files to be signed. He also comforts Rahulkar who comments about Dattatreya’s “willingness to wound and cowardice to strike” (AS 87). He also does not seem to hold any anger against the two associations as he feels that they are mere arrows of the vicious Dattatreya. Here, it could be noted that Prabhanjan’s Vice-Chancellor is as benign and helpful to his employees as Prema Nandakumar’s Vice-Chancellor. However, the difference lies in their exhibiting the kindness. Prema Nandakumar’s Vice-Chancellor helps others in crucial moments but does it in an
attention-seeking manner, while Prabhanjan’s Vice-Chancellor is a person who helps in a quiet and unostentatious way.

In Prabhanjan’s *Kagitha Manidargal*, no such political riots, especially riots caused by the non-teaching staff within the university are depicted. Prabhanjan, in fact, shows the least interest in bringing in scenes of commotion and even shows Subramanian tackling problems all by himself without any colleagues coming to his support. Even the last scene of the novel shows him declining any support from his students, whereas Prema Nandakumar portrays Adhyaksha always amidst his supporters. She also shows two other riots caused within the campus, the second, more vigorous and dangerous than the first.

The second political incident is the one that is created by Principal Dattatreya. Dattatreya directly induces Kshema Rao to cause trouble to the Vice-Chancellor, and Kshema, utterly determined not to rest until his sister is given the post of Professorship, exploits the workers. He induces them to strike once again, and this time lists out his demands in a ruthless and unsophisticated manner. He starts the riot not only with the help of the University workers, but also with “hired ‘unsocial elements’ from outside” (AS 240). The hooligans cause total damage to the cricket ground, and finally, attack the Registrar’s office and the Vice Chancellor’s villa. The rioters attack the vehicles in the university with “a fierce flow of insanity in the eyes” and with what could be described only as “the sheer perversion of pleasure” (AS 240). The Vice Chancellor’s son Raj’s car is damaged beyond repair. The trouble-makers from the university as well as from outside carrying lethal implements with them are eager to hurt the inmates and to damage their belongings without any hesitation. The power-greedy Kshema Rao screams hysterically raising slogans against the Vice-Chancellor. He shouts for workers’ representation, deputation and increase in holidays. He searches for the
university drivers whose help he could seek for recruiting hooligans from the town. However, all the drivers, supported by the Vice-Chancellor, hide in the bathrooms of the Vice Chancellor’s villa and the angered Kshema Rao orders for destruction.

Many including Vatsa, the Vice-Chancellor’s son Raj, his daughter-in-law, Satya, and Prof. Rajeswara’s daughter, Lakshmi, witness a “rampageous spree.” The way the crowd displays “an infernal aptitude for destruction” makes Vatsa think of the university as a madhouse that is going through a demented phase, where violence is endemic in the campus and “unreason has the better of reason” (AS 251, 250). It is thought of as a place where “one was always at the mercy of the unpredictable” (AS 250).

Vatsa, who was earlier “enamoured of the Vice-Chancellor Adhyaksha’s statesmanship” (Pandey 44), now thinks of the Vice-Chancellor as an “old bandicoot” who is not able to handle his “position and power” to its fullest and who “couldn’t ensure the sanctity of the hearth.” He wonders why the Vice-Chancellor maintains silence and does not take forceful measures, such as calling in the police. He also wonders if the Vice-Chancellor nurtures the “absurd notion that the police shouldn’t contaminate Saraswati’s sanctuary” (AS 251).

Although Vatsa and the others are extremely worried about “the systematic unleashing of the denizens of Hell, by that Arch-priest of anarchy, Mephistophelian Kshema” (AS 254), the Vice-Chancellor does not seem to have been ruffled so much about it. This is only because of his adeptness at practicing politics. Adhyaksha is such an expert in the play of academic politics that he could twist and turn any incident to his favour or advantage. He is always busy with his intrigues and having done a remarkable study of the evolution of political intrigue in the times of Chanakya and Ilango during his youth, Adhyaksha manages the unruly affairs of
the university wonderfully well. He, in fact, does not regard such riots and feuds as problems, but rather as welcome distractions in his otherwise monotonous academic life. He has perfected the art of politics to such an extent that he cleverly and cunningly deals with Dattatreya and Kshema Rao. He is arty in whatever measures he adopts for the university. He is of the opinion that one in such a high position should always have to proceed on the assumption that students, teachers, and the rest are committed lawbreakers and wreckers. It is this preparedness and the anticipatory nature of the Vice-Chancellor that sees him through moments of trouble.

In fact, the Vice Chancellor’s son Raj is so immensely affected by the power play and politics of the Vice-Chancellor that he despises to be the “hated VC’s son” (AS 261). Although he and his wife “are not directly connected to the campus politics… the poison of politics… drains their capacity for endurance and sterilizes their very existence by forcing upon them the predicament of self-alienation” (Hedge 230). His wife Satya says that she is sick of her life in the University and “one reason is that Hell has already taken over the university.” She believes that there is a crisis every day, “a gherao every night” (AS 273) and would only be too happy to leave the place soon. Prema Nandakumar has also taken care in showing how the politics of the higher officials affect their family. This element is absent in Prabhanjan’s novel. In fact, there is no mention of the family of Prabhanjan’s Vice-Chancellor and he is shown purely as an administrator without familial affinity.

Raj, the Vice Chancellor’s son, instead of feeling proud of his father’s power and position is deeply affected in his youth by the Vice Chancellor’s constant entrances and exits into and out of prison and politics. He is frustrated at his father’s endless intrigues just to stay in power, and hates his machinations in achieving it, especially with academic toadies. He is
tired of the sordid political game that his father constantly plays and hates the university where there is “neither knowledge nor justice: it is but \textit{ajnanakshetra, adharma kshetra!”} (AS 262)

Raj is well aware of his father’s position as a Vice-Chancellor. He knows that his father has to fight against a powerful sect of people like the Principal of the University who is behind Kshema Rao’s shenanigans. Still it is his father, who angers him. He feels that his father, just like playing dirty politics in the affairs of the university, has also played with his life by insisting on him marrying Satya, whom he feels is nothing but a strong medicine to make him alright. However, the end of the novel shows a positive resolution of Raj and Satya’s marital problems.

The Vice-Chancellor, knowing for sure, that Kshema Rao created the workers’ strike and riot only at the inducement of Dattatreya and Sheela Rani, promises a solution without actually giving in. One cannot but help constantly comparing him with Chanakya, for in this incident, he uses Kshema’s personal interests in his sister and brother-in-law, to solve the problem by simply promising Kshema that Mrs. Dattatreya would temporarily be promoted as Professor above the other contenders. Kshema, having got his real wish fulfilled by the Vice-Chancellor, begs the hooligans to move away from the villa. At the same time, the Vice-Chancellor’s dislike in promoting Sheela Rani to professorship is clear when he tells the Registrar to ask Kumar, the other eligible candidate to file a writ petition, so that the temporary appointment would be blocked. Spelling out his plans and signing the files of Sheela Rani’s temporary appointment to professorship, the Vice-Chancellor proudly announces his clever role in the “pyrrhic victory” of Kshema, thus momentarily solving the problem (AS 298). This political cunningness of the Vice-Chancellor is aptly presented by Prema Nandakumar, and she, in fact, is successful in the delineation of this admirable politician administrator Adhyaksha.
Unwittingly, even as readers, our admiration rests on Adhyaksha, and when it comes to Subramanian of Kagitha Manidargal, the readers are impatient with his lack of tact and arty nature.

Adhyaksha’s political intrigues and his intellectual weavings and unweaving, though admired by Vatsa, does not have the poise and the inner spiritual strength of a person like Professor Rajeswara who carries on his work wholly unaffected by the dust and din around him. The Vice-Chancellor, however, is not disturbed by the riot and destruction and remains calm even after everything is over. He, in fact, holds court in the drawing room where he speaks eloquently to the menials and the ministerial staff. He speaks so cleverly and even makes the menials blame the Principal for what has happened. He makes them understand Dattatreya’s role in the problem and finally they tell him, “Master, they gave us no time at all. It is all the Principal Saheb’s doings, Sir. Without his backing Kshema Saheb cannot wag his tail so much (AS 289).

The Vice-Chancellor, enjoying Dattatreya being accused compares him to a cockroach that has survived the centuries but even while making unsavoury comparisons his crafty nature creeps out, for even at this juncture, he is conscious that what he is saying might be heard by one of Dattatreya’s spies who might carry it to him. Hence, with a benign, all-forgiving expression, he states that it is not their dharma to judge others. Such is the clever Vice-Chancellor who has faced several demonstrations, and who is ready to face similar crises that will inevitably arise in the future too. He is clever because he understands that “there’s no academic community here” but “only competing power groups.” The Vice-Chancellor’s success lies in him setting “the triangle of forces – students, teachers (and) the rest against one another in order to save his own skin, albeit with minor scratches” (AS 265). Manipulations
and scheming is missing in the character Subramanian of *Kagitha Manidargal*, who is unable to save his position.

Despite his old age and other personal worries, Adhyakasha is able to manage vicious people like Dattatreya and Sheela Rani. He manipulates against them in order to destroy their cunningness on face. In fact, the Vice-Chancellor takes enough care not to openly express his anger against people like Dattatreya. He even confesses this to Dattatreya. He tells him, “I never get angry, for I avoid being in the wrong with academics like you” (AS 13). He also flatters Dattatreya by praising his efficiency: “with you as the patriarch, everything ought to be under control” (AS 13). Nevertheless, in his absence he criticizes him as being a bit unbalanced with visions of self-righteousness and even encourages people like the librarian and Dr. Kavali to backbite about him. He resolves to teach Dattatreya a lesson when he feels that Dattatreya is trying to frighten him with a stupid demonstration. No matter what, the Vice-Chancellor Adhyaksha retains his power and position mainly by his wily, arty nature in order to save his position from those who try to covet his. He manages, using some of the university staff, to stay in power. Subramanian, however, resigns his position as the Vice-Chancellor since he is not able to play politics like Adhyaksha and does not even attempt at dividing his staff with his cheap manipulations. He lacks Adhyaksha’s cunningness and sly nature that finally leads to his fall, perhaps bringing readers to the conclusion that politics is the name of the game, and that wiliness and manipulations are administrative necessities for survival.

If Adhyaksha is to some extent disturbed in his administration by staff politicking and Subramanian to a greater extent, which even results in his resignation, the Vice-Chancellor of *The Virgin Syndrome* meets with death itself, due to this. Rani Dharker’s *The Virgin Syndrome* like Prema Nandakumar’s *Atom and the Serpent* exhibits the politics in educational institutions.
Like *Atom and the Serpent* and *Kagitha Manidargal*, this novel too shows the existence of three groups in the university. One group is in favour of the Vice-Chancellor and keeps genuflecting before him, the second is against him and participates in campaigns and revolts, but it is the third group, belonging to neither of the aforementioned two, which is clever by sitting on the fence and taking sides as situations warrant.

Groupism is found in almost all campus novels and is one important characteristic feature of Campus fiction. The various groups found in *Atom and the Serpent* and *Kagitha Manidargal* have already been taken up for discussion but groupism is also found in novels like *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam* by Panjangam, *No Onions Nor Garlic* by Srividya Natarajan, *Matthiyillulla Manidargal* by Panjangam, *The Drunk Tantra* by Ranga Rao and so on. Panjangam’s two novels – *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam* and *Matthiyillulla Manidargal*, although devote only a few pages to academy, propound the politics in educational institutions and show the existence of various groups among the staff and students. These two novels clearly portray the staff members of the college divided among themselves. There are scenes where two groups – pro and anti-Head - contest with each other. These two groups always wait for a chance to politicize and make an issue of what the opposition says.

The novel, *The Awakening: A Novella in Rhyme*, also showcases the members of the staff divided among themselves. There are clear-cut followers of the Principal and of her non-supporters. Her supporters support her even when she exhibits despotic behaviour. They support her, and act as spies who inform her about the gossip circulating in the staff room and thereby, escape from being victims of her despotic rule. The anti-group resists her autocratic moves and tries to bring out her hypocritical nature.
A notable incident in the novel is the revelation of the dictatorial nature of the Principal and the various reactions of the two groups of the college. Once, the Principal deflates the tyres of the cars of the staff in order to teach them a lesson not to park in the drive. This incident causes unrest and agitation among the staff. The anti-Principal group finds the action mean and crooked, and takes it a disgrace meted out at them. They protest against the wicked act of the Principal and hold a meeting to decide their reaction against this “dictatorial leanings” of the Principal (ANR 70). The pro-principal group, although convinced of the principal’s malignity, are annoyed at the accusations levelled against their Head and refuse to hear any such abuses against her. They inform the Principal of this, and the Principal becoming alert meets them and pretends innocence. She manages to stop the protests of the staff and somehow escapes their fury.

However, JR, the protagonist of the novel is utterly convinced of her guilt and her fury finds an outlet in a satiric, vehement article on the rough and tough ways of the Principal. This act of retaliation upsets the Principal and she is annoyed with her. While she accuses her of being “Brutus”, many other staff congratulate her for having channelized her energy in the proper way (ANR 73).

Ranga Rao’s *The Drunk Tantra* too portrays similar such squabbles between the Principal and a teacher. Mohana dislikes Hairy, the Principal, because of his inefficiency. She belongs to the anti-principal group and fails to extend her support to him. When Hairy is selected as Principal over Mr. Daash, she is furious, and along with some other staff and students protest against the appointment. It is only at Mr. Daash’s advice that she gives up her protest and non-cooperation. It is this behavior of Mohana in the beginning that irritates Hairy and makes him dislike her.
In *The Virgin Syndrome* too, the unnamed protagonist belongs to the anti-VC group. This opposition of the Vice-Chancellor seals her doom in the university. She joins the institution as a temporary lecturer and goes about with her innovative methods of teaching. Her growing popularity among the students is not liked by the Head of the Department and her teaching is condemned as being unconventional and adventurous. She is advised to give up her romantic notion of teaching and is asked to do the ‘sacred duty’ of teachers in training the students to write their exams well.

The Narrator, despite her Head’s advice, is stubborn in continuing her way of teaching. A part of the story of *The Virgin Syndrome* runs the same course as other campus novels. John O. Lyons, in his book *The College Novel in America* (1962) states that

> There are many novels of academic life in which the protagonist is a teacher who serves the author as commentator on a philosophy of education. The usual formula for this type of novel is to place a young instructor full of grand ideals about serving the world by educating the young, in a new teaching position. There he finds that he must fight the hoary traditions of the school, the equivocations of his superiors, and the backbiting of his colleagues so that reason and common sense might rule in the college. He is usually unsuccessful, and, like the undergraduate hero, he wishes a plague on all academic houses and leaves the profession (135).

The idealistic teacher quitting teaching due to unsuccessful opposition against the ill practices of the administration is a frequent ending of most of the campus novels. Lyons suggests that a sour solution where the academician rejects the academy in favour of a better life only shows the campus novelists’ premonition that “there is little hope for education” (Lyons 135).
The Narrator of *The Virgin Syndrome* too is unable to bear the politics of the university and rejects it, and decides to dedicate herself to art and life. The same conclusion of the protagonist leaving the institution dejected is found in *The Awakening: A Novella in Rhyme* and *Kagitha Manidargal* also.

*The Virgin Syndrome* shows that a rift always exists between the permanent and the non-permanent staff. The Narrator, being close with Rajesh and Neeta, two other temporary staff of the department, has her tea in a corner, along with them, isolated from the permanent staff. They enjoy talking about things happening in the university and how the Vice-Chancellor has spies all over the campus. They also get daily reports on the activities of the Vice-Chancellor from Ashish Naidu, a colleague of theirs.

This Vice-Chancellor of *The Virgin Syndrome*, unlike the good-natured Vice-Chancellors of *Atom and the Serpent* and *Kagitha Manidargal*, is an administrator who adopts rigid rules and barely helps his staff. He often uses his emergency powers to take action against his dissenters. He frequently demotes the staff and inquires into their activities. He also believes whatever his group of supporters who adulate him say. It is his autocratic rule that Ashish and the protagonist go against. Ashish is dead against the Vice Chancellor’s misuse of powers, and hence, forms a group who would help him in his actions against the Vice-Chancellor.

One day, Ashish informs the Narrator and his friends that an enquiry committee has been ordered to look into the affairs of their department and he says that he himself is particularly in trouble. They, in general, feel that a pattern is emerging where the Vice Chancellor’s victims are very often “the intellectuals of this campus” (VS 137).
Ashish, strong against the Vice Chancellor’s misuse of powers, resolves to fast-unt unto-death, in order to put an end to his unjust ways. He resolves not to submit to the “indignity of an inquest” (VS 137).

If Dattatreya of *Atom and the Serpent* and Azhagesan of *Kagitha Manidargal* are dead against their Vice-Chancellors with the sole intention of grabbing the prestigious position, Ashish and the Narrator of *The Virgin Syndrome* fight against their Vice-Chancellor only in order to put an end to his unsympathetic and autocratic rule. Hence, they along with some of their supporters raise a pandal, plastered with huge posters of the Vice-Chancellor with a Hitler moustache, and go on a hunger strike.

Speeches are in progress and Ashish is careful to stress that he is not fighting for himself but for the good of the institution. His politics lies in his clever selfless projection of the matter. Hence, he is able to gather support from various corners of the University. The Narrator who is fresh and new to the University, unlike Rajesh and Neeta, innocently proclaims her support for the protest without thinking of her future.

The Narrator plays an active role in the protest, and later, when she meets Rajesh and Neeta, they say that they did not show themselves anywhere near the place of protest. They point out to her that their absence from the scene is due to the temporary nature of their job and the Narrator does not understand what their being temporary teachers has to do with them not supporting Ashish. After seven days of the fast, the Governor asks the Vice-Chancellor to meet him. He asks the Vice-Chancellor to resign, which makes him collapse and die. Although the Vice-Chancellor is dead, the pro-VC members who are on the teacher’s selection panel for temporary posts take revenge on the Narrator by not selecting her for the job which ends her five-year career as a University teacher. They comment on her dress code and the non-
permanency of her in any career. They refrain from asking questions related to the subject and appointment. She is completely taken aback by the strange questions they ask and is shocked at their act of retribution. Here, the author shows the vengeful nature of academicians who lack a broader intellectual vision that would help intellectual progress.

A comparison of the three Vice-Chancellors pictured in the three novels Atom and the Serpent, Kagitha Manidargal and The Virgin Syndrome shows that only a Vice-Chancellor who is good at scheming and politicking to a great extent can survive in the university environment and the others who lack in this ability are sure to be doomed. Adhyaksha of Atom and the Serpent possesses this ability, and hence, he successfully manages to carry on in his position. He also excels in this job, and in fact, does not have any open enemies, who have guts enough to openly wage war against him. His enemies fight in a sly manner with him and he follows the same slyness to defeat them. Whereas Subramanian, the Vice-Chancellor in Kagitha Manidargal, lacks the cunningness and manipulativeness of Adhyaksha. He openly questions them and acts as per his conscience. He lacks the art of flattery and fails to please his own colleagues and people in power. Hence, it is easy for people like Azhagesan to put him down and usurp his position.

The Vice-Chancellor of The Virgin Syndrome, despite being autocratic and exhibiting his power to the fullest, falls because of his unsuspicious and credulous nature. He cannot weigh the qualities of his staff and acts without thinking about the ill consequences of his autocracy. His outright tyranny and despotism, lacking in sly scheming and manipulations, lead to his downfall. The principal of The Awakening: A Novella in Rhyme too falls because of her tyrannical and despotic administration.
The novel *The Virgin Syndrome* shows a group of staff overthrowing the despotic Vice-Chancellor and succeeding in their attempt to act against him with courage. The same is shown in Prabhanjan’s *Kagitha Manidargal* also. But the difference lies in the nature of the Vice-Chancellors. In *Kagitha Manidargal*, the good-natured Vice-Chancellor is defeated by evil materialistic forces, whereas in *The Virgin Syndrome*, the ill-natured Vice-Chancellor is thrown out of power by his victims and he also dies because of it. This novel not only shows the fall of the ill-natured Vice-Chancellor but also the fall of the unnamed, innocent Narrator who lacked the astuteness and intelligence that her other temporary colleagues possessed. She becomes a victim to the politics that encircled the university and the prime flaw that leads to her fall is opposing the Vice-Chancellor while being a mere temporary lecturer. Through this, the author states that the political practices or happenings in the university cannot be separated or erased since it continues in the form of other persons.

Another instance of an academician’s fall due to his opposition is gleaned from the novel *The Drunk Tantra* by Ranga Rao. This novel portrays the fall of Mr. Daash from Principalship to being a mere lecturer. The fall is mainly caused because of his straightforward nature. Like Subramanian of *Kagitha Manidargal*, Mr. Daash too is also unable to please and genuflect to people in power. Hairy is able to do it, and hence, he is successful in acquiring the post of Principal, whereas Daash lacks this quality and so loses his post.

Another novel, *The Awakening: A Novella in Rhyme*, too, like *The Virgin Syndrome*, shows a despotic and tyrannical administrator’s fall and it also shows the fall of a lecturer on probation, who fights against tyrannical rule. The lecturer here is JR who, like the unnamed Narrator of *The Virgin Syndrome*, fights against the corrupt and mean Principal SS. In the fight, both the Principal and the Lecturer fall victims to political machinations. It shows the heroine
quitting her job because of victimization by power-filled people. The over-ambitious Principal too is penalized and is removed from the job by obtaining early retirement. This novel, like the novels *Atom and the Serpent* and *Kagitha Manidargal*, shows the world of educational institutions as being filled with deceitful people who are interested in personal advantages rather than the pursuit of learning.

The Principal SS of *The Awakening* is highly manipulative and anything she does in the name of the institution is certain to be for her own personal needs. She, too, like the Vice-Chancellor of *Atom and the Serpent* has a group of sidekicks, who help her in manipulating the affairs of the college. If Adhyaksha uses his manipulations and scheming tendency to fight against his opponents who try to put him down, SS uses it for her own selfish gains. The pro-principal group keeps her informed of the goings-on of the staff, and they tell her of the various gossips among the staff. She is tyrannical and expects her colleagues to respect and fear her. She is cunning and crude enough to have her own way.

SS ironically hates the Teachers’ Association since the teachers use it for their own gains, and at times, to go against the bossy principal. She criticizes the DULA and is irritated by the Trade Unionism of the teachers since it opposes her monarchy. She gives different kinds of treatments to teachers belonging to various cadres, like teachers on probation, scrabbling or temporary and permanent. She victimizes the teachers on probation. JR is one such bullied teacher, who at one point of time expresses her tortures in an article. The Principal, rather than the development and welfare of the college, is interested in her own progress.

SS, like Azhagesan of *Kagitha Manidargal*, and Hairy and Mrs. Mocham of *The Drunk Tantra*, is in constant touch with political figures, and whatever occasion arises in her institution, does not fail to involve them. This Principal prefers Ministers as special guests,
since she can show off to people in power “her acumen for administration” (Paul 74) and would also indirectly work towards the increase in her chances for extension as Principal” (Paul 74). Such is the Principal’s vanity and personal ambition that her actions suppress and repress JR and most other staff.

John E. Kramer, in his article “College and University Presidents in Fiction” (1981) speaks about the vanity of people in power. He exclusively speaks of Presidents in colleges and says, “vanity in fictive presidents, in academic novels, is rarely content with their current positions” (83).

SS, the Principal of *The Awakening* is one such woman. Whatever she does, would be for her further extension as Principal, or for her selfish concerns. Her cunningness and plotting nature is evidenced in the conduct of seminars and guest lectures arranged by her. She takes enough care to avail the best of opportunities lying before her and to exactly put in Kramer’s words, SS, like the Presidents portrayed in various American college fiction, “employs a variety of tactics in their (her) quest(s) for upward mobility” (84).

JR, having entered the teaching profession with the enthusiastic notion of changing things, somehow, someday, is unhappy at the brash academic life. She broods over the unhealthy student-teacher relationship, at the fights among colleagues, the monetary strife faced by teachers, and feels disillusioned with the academia. She feels her college to be, as in Leslie Fiedler’s words “a small artificial Hell” (10) that has immersed her in “its small politics and petty spites, its institutionalized hypocrisy, its self-righteous timidity, and its endless bureaucratic ineptitude” (10). She regrets that the old ways have gone and feels that deterioration has crept into the ways of the universities. The petty politics of her colleagues and the contemptuous insincere behaviour of her Principal make her contemplate about leaving the
institution. Just like Subramanian, the Vice-Chancellor of Kagitha Manidargal who quits his profession at the end of the novel, JR too decides to do the same. In her case, the straw that breaks the camel’s back and causes her to resign is the Principal’s intrusion in the examination by unfair means. This event totally disillusiones her and forces her to reject the academia. Ashok Paul, a critic of the Novella expresses his views as follows:

How the present examination system is collapsing is shown at the end of the novella, when the Principal SS is accused of indulging in unfair means, as she helps her relative by going out of the way. Though the Principal manages to be acquitted of the charges, the incident mars her reputation. JR cannot bear this corruption and she decides to resign (75).

The Principal, on the other hand, is not in the least affected by her unfair action and is keen on escaping the charges levelled against her. Instead of graciously accepting the indecent act of hers, she throws the blame on the teachers who witness the corruption. She tells the enquiry commission that this charge is levelled against her in order to taint and tarnish her name. She unaffectedly and unconcernedly tells the commission that JR is a never-do-well and a rebel who keeps creating problems. The principal claims that JR, along with MT, planned this unwarranted charge against her in order to mar her reputation as an able academician.

The Commission, though convinced of her corruption, does not take any action against her and asks her to go on leave for a few days. Disgusted, JR resigns. Ashok Paul commenting on her resignation asks dejectedly, “will her resignation serve any purpose in the present circumstances where corruption is everywhere?” (75)
Paul, in his review of the novel, feels that “the novella depicts the sorry state of the present education system, but the resignation of JR, at the end is inappropriately termed as “The Awakening” as it is no solution to the problem: “her battle is neither lost nor won” (75).

The novella, thus, depicts the squalid politics of the powerful people of the academia and it portrays the squabbles of the teachers and their power mongering nature. The author by ending the novella with the protagonist’s resignation shows that the college is no place for sincere and straightforward people. She, like Prabhanjan, propagates that only manipulators and corrupt people dominate.

A similar sentiment is found in many satiric academic novels. Lyons, the famous academic novel critic, comments that the protagonist leaving the teaching profession at the end of the novel is a common pattern that emerges from many satiric academic novels. He quotes the example of the novel Purely Academic by Stringfellow Barr. Barr’s spokesperson, the representative of the foundation states:

Campus life! My God! I couldn’t take it. The place awash with perfectly dressed boys and girls, sweating through the most ghastly textbooks, copying down in their notebooks the appalling stupidities and ineptitudes that tired, under-paid repetitious, frustrated professors droned at them, trying to get a grade that would add up with other grades to get them a diploma, printed on imitation sheepskin for real sheep. Faculty wives, worn out with trying to make two ends meet, or gone hard and bitter and spiteful, carrying on social vendettas with each other. And, over all, an uneducated ex-general or ex-banker blandishing tax-avoiding donors into perpetuating their own egos. It’s a truly hideous picture of perfectly nice people caught up in an absolute web of pretense. Why,
I even began to develop obscure illnesses, due partly to frustration and partly to the low
diet I was on, thanks to my ridiculous salary (qtd. in Lyons 160).

The speaker of the above words, thus, exhibits his depression in having to be with the
foundation and expresses his willingness to leave the place any moment.

*The Drunk Tantra* by Ranga Rao is another Indian English campus novel that
propounds campus politics in a most satiric manner. Here too the protagonist Mohana is
equally depressed and disgusted by the academic ways just like JR, the protagonist of *The
Awakening: A Novella in Rhyme*. Mohana, like JR, is a Lecturer in English in Janayya College
familiarly known as St. Jaans or even at times, mockingly as St Yawns. The novel is a satiric
portrayal of the academic growth and development of Dr. Hari Kishen, a ‘non-teaching’
lecturer who begins his career as a Lecturer in Political Science and is on his way to becoming
the Vice-Chancellor of a university. This novel is highly satirical of the ways of the college and
its inmates, be they in teaching or administration. Most of the incidents that take place in the
novel are also farcical and the comic elements in it is bitter-some and pungent. Hairy, who
begins his career as a non-entity, becomes the Principal of the college and achieves a lot with
the help of his Minister Cousin and with expertise. He conducts an International Conference in
which he satisfies the participants’ wishes. He obtains grants from the Government, earns a
good name from the President and the Vice-Chancellor by taking care of their personal work
too. He also has the personal ambition of having sexual affair with 108 (a number that spurts
out from his mind) women, which includes a few of the college staff also. Ranga Rao exhibits
these incidents with utmost expertise. His satire and farce help him to exhibit the politics within
the institution.
John O. Lyons expresses that campus novels use the devices of satire and farce to exhibit the politics within. He illustrates his proposition with Stringfellow Barr’s *Purely Academic* (1958) which is as follows:

Barr’s method is so often farce that the University of which he writes gives the impression of being as safely remote as Swift’s Academy of Lagado. The hero, Professor Schneider, is the chairman of an impossibly acrimonious history department. The academic year is made exciting for him by competition for a foundation grant, speculation over the successor to the pompous president who is going to the state university and an affair with the wife of the glib professor of economics who is chosen president. During the year professor Schneider – who begins as the traditional impoverished, henpecked pedant – is able to get revenge on his wife, colleagues, and the profession itself (159-60).

Just like how Barr’s “… President spends his time dabbling in doubtful real estate transactions and goes about the country raising money from gamblers” (Lyons 160) so does Hairy, who does not “have the talent for hard work of any kind” (DT 10) and who tries his hand at various jobs. Ranga Rao, just like Barr, uses farce and satire to depict the academic world. He brings in the politics employed by people in power through the case of Dr. Hari Kishen (Hairy) known as Hairy. The author describes Hairy in a satiric manner. He says that Hairy is asked to stay away from the classrooms since “the students excited as though a stinkbomb had gone off inside” on his entry (DT 10). He is mockingly called as Lecherer Hairy since he keeps himself away from students and teaching. His ineffectual position is described by the author thus:
With one cousin or other in positions of political power, there was no chance of Hairy’s giving up his ‘teaching’. And where would the poor man go anyway – every man has to make a living and support his family! So Hairy remained on payroll of St. Jaans, making an occasional appearance in the college corridors or canteen or staffroom, wisely keeping away from the students and the students, even more wisely, keeping away from Hairy - Lecherer Hairy (DT 10).

The novel, thus, in the beginning itself shows the intervention of people in political power in the administration of the college and the university. Hairy, being distanced from teaching, spends his leisure hours contemplating about making money. He seriously ventures into the various trades available, and finally concludes that nothing would fit him. He is tired of his non-teaching lectureship and wants to try his hands in various other fields. The author thus, sarcastically pictures his desire:

(Hairy) frustrated in his attempts to win Goddess Lakshmi’s favour – his slice of the great world’s wealth – marketing an impressive range of items, including cereals and red chillies… he had to admit, at the end of it all, weary in spirit, that nothing outside the college walls was congenial to him, to his talents, his temperament. Except, of course, women (DT 72).

Hence, he switches his interest to women and makes up his mind “to sleep with just 108 women” (DT 72). With this in mind, he starts troubling the women faculty of St. Jaans. Mrs. Karan, humorously known as the fertility Goddess because of her frequent pregnancies, is afraid of his jazzy sexual innuendoes, and hence, avoids him.

Mr. Daash, a role model of a teacher initially, becomes the Principal-in-charge, later. During his administrative period, he handles situations most efficiently and his own efficiency
in handling a crises caused by a student gives him confidence in administration. Nevertheless, this same incident dethrones him also.

Dinkar, a student with political connections, misbehaves with a teacher called Kolleti Mahatma Gandhi, in the absence of Mr. Daash. Gandhi does not give the matter any importance, and ignores it, but when Mr. Daash returns, he suspends the boy. He also hands over the case to the proctorial committee headed by Professor Chari. The staff council unanimously supports the proctorial committee and asks it to go ahead with the disciplinary hearings. At this juncture, Dinkar meets the Principal Mr. Daash with his political gang. The members of the committee and the staff council are surrounded by students belonging to St. Jaans as well as from outside. There is also the former university student leader who was active during the college union elections. They are all set for a gherao. Mr. Daash firmly asks all of them, except Dinkar, to get out. He expresses unhappiness at Dinkar’s bringing outsiders into the college for support and advises him to settle whatever differences of opinion within the college. He firmly refuses to let the police in. Meanwhile, the Vice-Chancellor intervenes and advises Mr. Daash to revoke his orders of suspension. Mr. Daash, who promises the Vice-Chancellor that he would sort out the problem, refuses to pick up the call when it comes.

Mr. Daash is unmoved by the students’ anti-slogans and their gheraos. He, in fact, has his own supporters who support him with slogans challenging the opposition and he also goes on a hunger strike along with his colleagues and some students, until Dinkar gives up. Finally, Mr. Daash succeeds. However, his success is not relished by the Vice-Chancellor of the University or by the Chairman of the college governing body. Mr. Daash succeeds in this issue by foregoing the advice or order given by the Vice-Chancellor. He also ignores the Chairman’s request to give up the matter. This arrogance on his part disappoints the Vice-Chancellor and
the Chairman, and spoils his future prospects. The vengeful Vice-Chancellor and Chairman, unhappy in not having been able to oblige to the Education Minister’s plea, in Dinkar’s case, overtly congratulate him but make up their minds to destroy his successful career. They make up their minds that Mr. Daash will never make it to Principalship and this is conveyed to the latter. Mr. Daash, shocked by this, begins to have health issues. However, he does not tell anyone that the Chairman of St. Jaans had told him that after Dinkar’s affair, he had little chance of getting the Principalship. He, also, does not apply for the post of principal and tells the protagonist Mohana that he is not interested. He also hints that Hairy might take up the post since he knows about the intervention of political influence in appointments. Moreover, he knows about the political support for Hairy. Mr. Daash, like the unnamed Narrator of *The Virgin Syndrome*, loses his better prospects since he lacked the quality of obliging and genuflecting to people in power.

Around the same time of Mr. Daash earning the enmity of the Vice-Chancellor, Chairman and Education Minister, Hairy gives up his idea of sexually conquering 108 women. The abandonment of his plan is because of the bitter experience of his latest sexual adventure. Now that he has freed himself from sexual illusions, he applies for the post of Principal. Although Hairy had proved to be inefficient in teaching, he is brilliant in the art of politics. He defeats Mr. Daash by his politicking and wily nature. Grabbing the opportunity of Daash falling out of good books of the politicians and higher officials, he surrenders himself totally to his Minister Cousin. He is literally at his feet and seeks the post of Principal with complete confidence in himself. His rival, Mrs. Mocham, too, seeks the help of her cousin who is yet another Minister, a minister of a higher rank than Hairy’s cousin. However, this minister does
not intend to help her since he is disgruntled with her. Hence, Hairy becomes the principal of St. Jaans.

Mohana, like JR of *The Awakening: A Novella in Rhyme*, is frustrated and agonized at the political leanings of educational institutions. She dislikes Hairy because of his inefficiency in teaching and his immoral behaviour, and is advised by Mr. Daash to appear for the civil services exams. However, Mohana expresses her love for teaching, though convinced of its rotten system.

Many young teachers and non-teaching staff members protest at the outrageous selection of Hairy. They are unhappy at the stupid selection of the selection committee and the students even boycott classes. They raise passionate slogans against Hairy and the selection committee.

To think that a committee that included three professors including the Vice-Chancellor screened the list, interviewed the whole lot and finally chose Hairy! There is no satisfaction in knowing that the college has been spared another of the same caliber, Mrs. Mocham …. Political interference, no doubt about it. Talk of autonomy of educational institutions, the sanctity of higher education! (DT 129)

The protests subside only when Mr. Daash threatens to resign unless the protestors stop their agitation against Hairy’s appointment. He visits Hairy with his family and congratulates him. Mrs. Mocham follows him and this results in Hairy’s proposal of creating a new post of Vice Principal.

As soon as the anti-Hairy agitation is over, Hairy has to deal with the case of a young man stealing women’s underwear. As opposed to Mr. Daash who out rightly refuses to please the Vice-Chancellor or the Education Minister during Dinkar’s suspension, Hairy immediately
goes to the boy’s rescue when he comes to know that his father is a High Court judge. Such is his efficiency in handling crises, and he quickly and comprehensively realizes the principles of success. According to him, success stands in ‘service’. Hairy’s service is as follows:

Hairy rose early, worshipped at his wife’s niche - his piety unaffected by his lack of material success - and he was out by eight. His first stop was at the Chairman’s residence, the bungalow of the Chairman of the governing body of St. Jaans. There he took care of almost everything from finding a maidservant to wash their vessels, to problems with electricity and telephone departments; if somebody sneezed in his presence, he took the person to a specialist for the problem. Hairy also took care of the Chairman’s travel plans. The Chairman came to trust only Hairy and nobody else, for it was he who booked the room in a five-star hotel - the Chairman never knew who paid the bills - and Hairy managed to get someone to receive the Chairman at the airport and take him in a luxury taxi and attend on him for the duration of the stay… Hairy never failed to take a gift to any member of the Chairman’s family and he surprised them all with his memory for birthdays and anniversaries. Everyone in the Chairman’s family grew to depend on him, grew fond of him, including the poodle, Mark Antony.

Hairy’s next stop was the Vice-Chancellor’s lodge… (DT 135-36)

Hairy pays his respects to the other important officials of the university too like the Registrar and the Finance Officer. He also calls on the Secretary of the University Grants Commission once in every term with a box full of Havanas. Hairy pleases not only the higher officials but also the college staff by fulfilling their needs in time.

Now salary cheques were no longer delayed; dearness arrears were cleared within weeks of Hairy’s taking over; promotions were promised, the promises were trusted
totally and some promises were redeemed before the others. What more could a college expect from its principal? Hairy soon came to be called the Telling Principal, and not simply because of his ochre robes and prayer beads (DT 136).

He gives due respect to Mrs. Mocham and Prof. Chari and they hold the fort at St. Jaans. He attracts Varma to his side by proposing to set up India’s first genetic laboratory in St. Jaans, under him, and this is a chance for Varma to get his life’s dream fulfilled. Mohana could see this as a political move on Hairy’s part to garner Varma’s support, but is happy at the worthiness of the proposal. Hairy, in fact, gets the proposal passed with the help of his political cousin and everybody applauds him at the staff council meeting.

Mr. Daash frustrated at the political leanings of the college administration dies as soon as Hairy becomes the Principal. It is only later that Mohana comes to learn that he dies because of his having been sidelined by political forces for the post of Principal. Although he does not show himself as crazy for power, yet he has a deep desire for the post of Principal. Deprived of it because of political manipulations and snobbishness, he dies.

Here, a comparison could be drawn between the Vice-Chancellor of The Virgin Syndrome and Mr. Daash. The Vice-Chancellor of The Virgin Syndrome dies as soon as the Governor orders him to resign his post. Unable to tolerate the ignominy of losing his power he dies of heart attack. Similarly, Mr. Daash’s health deteriorates as soon as he learns from the Chairman of the College Governing Body that he could never make up to the post of Principal since he did not pay heed to his words as well as the Vice-Chancellor’s during the handling of Dinkar’s case. They inform him much in advance, that even if he applies for the post, his attempts would prove futile since he has incurred the wrath of the Education Minister, also, by not obliging them in Dinkar’s issue.
Outwardly, Daash does not seem to be upset by this, but the very thought that he will not be able to become Principal affects him mentally and physically and only his family members know the real reason for his deterioration. Mohana does not imagine, even for a second, that the cool and humble Mr. Daash too would be after power. It comes to her as a shock when she learns from an Inspector who is also a student of Mr. Daash that he died because of his frustration in being denied the principal’s post. Mohana could not believe that such a simple man as Mr. Daash, dedicated to the students’ welfare, was after power too. Daash’s problem is that he did not have any political backing. Moreover, he failed to have any non-academic connections with the Chairman and the Vice-Chancellor.

Like the Vice-Chancellor of Prabhanjan’s *Kagitha Manidargal*, Mr. Daash too fails to garner the support of men in power by sycophancy. Like the former, he deals with the problems in a straightforward manner, and hence like him falls from his position. But Hairy, like Azhagesan, knows how to climb the ladder of success. He readily gratifies people in power and does not even hesitate to do household chores for them. Also like Azhagesan, he is lusty and power-drunk, and does everything to come up in life. Everyone in the university circle and in the education ministry wait for the day when principal Hairy would be nominated as Vice-Chancellor to one of the several central universities.

Comparing Mr. Daash of *The Drunk Tantra* and the Vice-Chancellor of *The Virgin Syndrome*, we find that they both die because of their inability to cope with the pain of being brought down from their existing power. It is obvious that Mr. Daash and the Vice-Chancellor lose their power because they lack the art of flattery. Mr. Daash fails to flatter the people in power and takes his own decision during a crisis, whereas, Hairy gives importance to people in power, and acts according to ways that might be pleasing to higher officials. He also attracts
and keeps his colleagues and staff at his side by fulfilling their needs. This quality is missing in the Vice-Chancellor of *The Virgin Syndrome*, since he did things against the staff and exhibited autocratic rule. The same thing goes with SS of *The Awakening: A Novella in Rhyme*, who also ultimately falls because of her despotic acts against the staff.

Hairy, despite the several challenges he faces during his tenure as Principal, is able to come out successful because of his artful nature. He is able to handle challenging issues with the help of his political cousin, and thus, proves to be the best principal in the university.

Hairy, inefficient in teaching and academics, proves efficient in public relations, and thereby achieves success in his career as a principal. He succeeds in all his attempts by being a clever administrator, who with political leanings, manipulates and manages things. Mrs. Mocham too, like Hairy, tries to seize political opportunities, but with little success. Nevertheless, she too manages to win the support of the Vice-Chancellor, the Chairman and Hairy himself, and somehow succeeds in creating the post of Vice Principal. Although Mrs. Mocham does not go to the extent of serving people in power fully fledged like Hairy, she at times acts as hostess to the parties and other such occasions for people in power. Taking the example of Hairy, who with little efficiency for teaching or administering manages to even be considered for the post of Vice-Chancellor, Mrs. Karan-like people try to rise up the academic ladder. They too indulge in the art of sycophancy.

Mrs. Karan, initially scared and full of hatred for Hairy’s sexual innuendoes, now learns the art of politicking to achieve success, and pleases Hairy. She believes in him, and in order to attain things and win over her contender, Mrs. Mocham, surrenders sexually to Hairy. She also begets a son through him. Varma and Sharma, initially cold towards Hairy’s principalship, later support him for the benefits he showers upon them. Sharma visits foreign countries in the name
of presentation of papers and reports. Varma is happy with the construction of the lab. Prof. Chari is excited at the roles he plays in the college. Except Mohana, most others are outwardly drawn towards Hairy for the various benefits and favours they receive from him, for supporting him.

Hairy, like Adhyaksha of *Atom and the Serpent*, is an adept in politics. He applies his “divide and split” (DT 55) policy to gain strength. He conducts an International seminar that is a grand success, and through this, achieves certain political ends. His tactics are effective and his strategies in administering people are often impressive.

One of Mohana’s colleagues, Ved Vyas, better known as Stilts, openly criticizes the seminar as “a semi – literate barbecue” (DT 155). Hairy, furious at this, cunningly avenges this insult by not openly reprimanding him but by making him clear the playfield of the college, along with some teachers and students under the guise of social service. He also puts Stilts in trouble with the non-teaching staff. Because of Stilts losing his temper with a boy who serves tea inefficiently, there is a strike by the non-teaching staff, and it is called off only after strenuous mediation by Principal Hairy. Hairy’s principle seems to be “Demoralize and demoralize again. Administration by demoralization” (DT 156).

Like *Atom and the Serpent*, *The Drunk Tantra* too shows the administration’s fight with the non-teaching staff. This incident also shows a rift in the Hairy-Mocham relationship. Once, an Office Assistant commits adultery with an attendant from the library. This act calls for an inquiry commission presided over by Hairy. Hairy conducts the proceedings, and when Mrs. Mocham opens the proceedings, Hairy feels wounded since he should have done it being the Chairman of the committee. He feels glad that the vice principal’s post is still kept in abeyance. He feels that with such less power if Mrs. Mocham acts so, what would happen if she were
delegated with more power. He is also not happy with the Librarian who talks with confidence in the meeting. He regrets having included him – a non-teaching staff - in the inquiry committee since he takes the upper hand in the issue ignoring the Chairmanship of Hairy.

Kartik, the accused Office Assistant, barges into the room without their permission, and threatens them. He wants the administration to forgive the attendant and leave her in peace. He also proposes resigning his job on condition that the matter is not taken to his lover’s husband. Mrs. Mocham shouts at him and Hairy feels that she is precipitating a crisis in order to create trouble for him. Hairy feels that being a symbol of authority, he should do something about the Office Assistant’s threat. The man warns that if any unpleasing action were taken against the woman, he would bring about, in a series of articles in newspapers, news about ‘the most prestigious Jaans.’ He says:

there is a teacher here … who claimed false house rent allowances for years …. Let us see … aha, there is a teacher here, a so-called teacher, who took a whole lot of silver and gold and made an unauthorized sale of it in Bombay and the Income Tax Department does not even know of it! Let us now … oh yes, there is a teacher, here, a so-called teacher who fancies himself a leader. And this gentleman once entered a room for a good cause, like a burglar and was trapped there…. (DT 169)

This incident, although unbearable to the Principal and his staff, is settled amicably, and being relieved that it is over, a small party is hosted by the chairman of the college. The Chairman is praised by both Hairy and Mrs. Mocham. Mrs. Karan, who too has learnt the art of flattery, is all praise for the administration.

Mrs. Mocham resumes the art of flattery with the new politician Chairman and the new Vice-Chancellor who is also Hairy’s cousin. Mrs. Mocham also takes care of Hairy since he
has recommended Mrs. Karan’s name for the Vice Principal post instead of hers. She shows keen interest in renewing her friendship with Hairy. Ranga Rao explicates how power attracts people and flattery towards one through Mrs. Karan’s case. He clearly delineates the hypocritical and false behaviour of the academicians. The academicians and the administrative staff often squabble with one another because as Kartik pronounces in the novel, the academicians are not what they pose to be but mere intellectual frauds who cheat people in the name of high ideals.

Hairy’s success coincides with Dr. Varma’s narrow fall. Dr. Varma sends an office Assistant, one of Hairy’s favourites to bring up deadly crates of snakes from the cargo terminal, to his lab. On the way, the snakes slither out and they become a threat to the city. News reaches the public and once again, St. Jaans is in trouble. However, with ‘Operation Nagapanchami’ (DT 223), things are solved, and Hairy’s courtiers praise him stating that because of the snake catchers’ team, the place has become quite a safe place to reside in again.

Hairy, with all his personal and official problems solved, goes back to fulfilling his exotic vow of sleeping with 108 women. However, when he thinks he has achieved his goal, he contracts a sexual disease, Priapism, and is hospitalised in National Institute Hospital. There, Hairy being a peculiar case is examined with keen interest. The doctors belonging to various disciplines resolve to present his case in the next international conference. The doctors opine that priapism, unattended, would lead to impotency.

Thus, we see that Ranga Rao by showing an inefficient and worthless Lecturer succeeding to the post of principal and also aiming for the highest post, criticizes the present system of education. Teachers are appointed only if there is political influence as is shown in the case of Mr. Daash, Hairy and so on. Even the efficient and hardworking Mr. Daash is
selected after the interview because of the recommendation from his uncle. Hairy, unfit attains the post of Principal with the help of his Minister Cousin. In spite of his lecherousness and unworthiness, he becomes the principal with his art of sycophancy and his cunning political thinking. Rao uses farce and satire to project his unworthy hero’s success in the academic field.

The conflict between Adhyaksha and Dattatreya of Atom and the Serpent, Subramanian and Azhagesan of Kagitha Manidargal, Daash and Hairy of The Drunk Tantra, MT and SS in The Awakening: A Novella in Rhyme and Laurentia Arul and Ram in No Onions Nor Garlic is a fight for power. They struggle and squabble for acquisition of power. The fight between the above-mentioned pairs is to take over the power of the entire University or college. The authors taken for study portray how the higher officials indulge in unwanted manipulations and cheap scheming to acquire power. The same authors are interested in showing the petty squabbles that take place in the departments also.

For instance, in Atom and the Serpent, Sheela Rani, is in constant struggle with the Head of the Department and her colleagues. She is well known for her garrulity and gossiping tendency. In fact, it is she, who first initiates Vatsa to the politics of the University. She gossips to him about the Vice-Chancellor and the occupants of his “kennel” (AS 19). She leaves her classes unengaged and meets Prof.Yaugandharayana in order to scheme about the ways in which she could twist the Vice-Chancellor and get her professorship. She tells Yana that her Head has once again set out to give her trouble and says that “poky Professor of mine is talking of research and rules.” Yana teases her calling her “the leader of the powerful opposition flirting with despair” and fuels her anger further against her professor, by telling her that “if you are fit to be a Reader, you are fit enough to be a Professor as well” (AS 36).
Sheela Rani, having been incited by Yana, continues her serpentine fury against her Head of the Department. She is angry that her professor favours Kumar, a Ph.D. scholar, over her, for the post of professor. She daringly shows that “my professor doesn’t even suspect that a teacher who goes for so-called research merely wastes that much of time and his teaching must suffer.” She also mourns, “it’s an uphill task when the Vice-Chancellor also is against you” (AS 36).

Vatsa, listening to her, and getting interested in the politics of the University finds her interesting and encourages her to discuss more about the people who mattered in the campus, and she hypocritically confesses to him that she hates backbiting. Yana, well aware of her backbiting and gossiping nature, ridicules her directly by saying, “when has our dear parrot become averse to backbiting?” (AS 37)

Sheela Rani discloses to Yana that she has actually come to see him if he could convince the Royal Barber (the Librarian) who is his neighbour and also a syndic to support her if anything goes against her professorship. She denies that Rahulkar is “a VC’s man, almost the VC’s spittoon!” and believes that “he is a toady pure and simple.” This man with his ‘cat on the wall’ nature can jump anyway he likes – either on to the side of the Vice-Chancellor or the Principal, Dr. Dattatreya. Hence, she feels it safe to “humor him all the same” (AS 38). The political ploy of Sheela Rani is gleaned in this. She wants to be on the safer side with the syndicate members. She persuades Yana to talk to the Librarian since she needs his support. Although Sheela Rani criticizes the Librarian and talks ill of Yana behind their backs, she pleads with them or even comes down to the level of pleasing them as she wants things to be done through them.
Sheela Rani’s politics is enjoyed by Vatsa, but when he himself becomes a victim to it, is irritated by her. Another expert in the play of politics whom Prema Nandakumar portrays in the novel is Professor Yaugandharayana. Called Yana in short, Professor Yaugandharayana, the Head of the Department of Atomic Research, plays politics with his own colleagues. He, like Sheela Rani, is hypocritical and cultivates the friendship of people in power in order to achieve his own ends. He particularly shows proximity with Sheela Rani since she belongs to the powerful sect in the University that wages constant wars against the Vice-Chancellor. He says, “She has an enormous spy-ring, and she belongs to a powerful faction that wages a constant war against the Tribal Chief” (AS 100). He also voices his necessity in cultivating her friendship. He says, “I cultivate her because her goddamn friends on the syndicate could do irreparable harm to my schemes” (AS 100).

Yana often visits foreign countries, and influenced by the west, looks down upon anything that is Indian. He is even sarcastically called as “phoren monkey” (AS 108) by his colleagues since “there appears to be a mad craze for everything ‘phoren’ – foreign cars, foreign fridges, foreign stereos, foreign film-projectors, imported dining room set and what not” in him (Hedge 231). Even the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Adhyaksha is envious of his car, the Stud Baker and most of the times approve his foreign trips. He happily concedes to Yana’s travels since he would only be too happy at the temporary riddance of Yaugandharayana. Yana uses his students to throw parties in which he would get fully drunk and would be left at the mercy of his students to return home.

Yana is a constant source of irritation to his colleagues who least respect him. He, like Madanagopal of Kagitha Manidargal is popularly known as “seminar professor” and “flying professor” who neglects the welfare of his department. Vatsa, meeting such arty, selfish people
in the university feels that he has to be careful with such “a knot of vipers biting one another interminably” (AS 38). He finds the university an intriguing household and a place of animosity. The university staff seemed to do nothing but talk about the affairs of everybody else.

The petty world of university politics attracts Vatsa and keeps him spell bound until he meets Prof. Rajeswara, the Sanskrit professor. Professor Rajeswara is a professor who keeps away from politics and his dedication to his field of work changes Vatsa’s attitude. We do not meet any other character like Professor Rajeswara in any other novels taken for study.

The campus novels also interestingly show the superficial relationship among teachers. They, in fact, do not help one other in moments of crisis. In *The Virgin Syndrome*, this is portrayed in the case of the Narrator. The Narrator actually involves herself in the protests raised against the despotic Vice-Chancellor. Her friends Rajesh and Neeta keep themselves aloof in this matter and do not even advise her not to participate in the protest. They know well that protesting the Vice-Chancellor would doom their careers and that is why they are not found anywhere near the place of protest. However, they fail to help their friend and colleague by enlightening her on this aspect. They desert her and leave her to face the consequences of participating in the protest.

The same thing is found in *The Drunk Tantra* also. This novel features the teachers’ nature of deserting their colleagues during moments of crisis. Once a special examinee, who is on bail, was to take up his exam. Knowing well that this examinee might cause trouble, the cowardly Hairy absents himself from college on some other pretext deputing Professor Chari to stand in for him. He also conspires to split Dr. Sharma and Dr. Varma, and hence, deputes them as invigilators to the exam hall. He does this not only to separate their unison but also to have
his revenge on them for not accepting him initially as Principal. During the examination, as expected by Hairy, the young man - the examinee - resorts to violence. He takes out his knife and threatens the examiners and Varma immediately absconds leaving Sharma to tackle the situation. Sharma handles it by taking away the knife from him and reports the matter to the police. Later, he rebukes Varma for deserting him in his moment of crises, and as they walk a little distance, they are confronted by the goonda. He takes out his knife to attack Sharma and once again, Varma leaves him and flees. Sharma too escapes running for his life. This kind of deserting one another in moments of need is gleaned in Atom and the Serpent also when Sheela Rani deserts Yana unattended when he passes out from intoxication. Despite their friendship, she leaves him to fend for himself. Most of the campus novelists show that the academicians are fair-weather friends who do not help one another in times of need.

Even in the novel The Higher Education of Geetika Mehendiratta, Anuradha Marwah Roy shows how a few teachers help Geetika When she is pregnant out of wedlock while most others instigate the Principal to sack her off on moral grounds.

Until now, this work dealt with teacher-oriented politics highlighting the various political machinations of teachers against one another. It also focused on the squabbles and the divisions that exist among the teaching community.

Henceforth, this chapter will deal with the politics played by students. Students are seen actively participating in domestic as well as outside politics. Domestic politics is the politics that takes place within the institution and does not involve the politics of the outside world. In addition, student politics can conveniently be grouped as politics created solely by students and one that arises out of instigation and motivation of teachers.
The novels *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam* and *Matthiyullu Manidargal* (1982) exhibit domestic politics. *Snehamulla Singam* (1991) and *Nampally Road* (1992), on the other hand, show the politics played by the students as well as the interference of outside politics. These novels show students involving themselves in agitations and protest marches, and thereby, gaining confidence in becoming leaders. Their active part in gheraos and protests, and in elections of different kinds, leads them to act politically. In the novels that involve politicians, students are shown as being either positively or negatively involved with them. They are at times, shown as being inspired by them and this leads them to assume their role, and when they do this, they little succeed. Balakumaran’s *Snehamulla Singam* is one such novel that highlights the above. *Matthiyullu Manidargal* also shows a glimpse of this. Just like how the staff are divided amongst themselves, so are the students.

In *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam*, we find three student groups operating within the campus, especially in the hostel administration. One is Marimuthu’s group, the other, Sarvodhaya Arunachalam’s and the third belongs to neither of these. The first two student groups are interested in acquiring positions of power, and hence, politicize the issue of having chappatis and puris for dinner, provided in the hostel. Marimuthu, a student with a rural background, wins in the hostel students’ leader election mainly by attracting rural students by promising to remove tiffin from the menu for dinner. The two groups politicize this simple food matter into a kind of Northern, Southern issue. Sarvodhaya Arunachalam loses the battle mainly because he calls the above-mentioned dishes as national food.

Sarvodhaya Arunachalam, waiting for a chance to pull down Marimuthu, speaks of the squalid condition of the hostel’s toilets. He magnifies the problems faced by the poor *dalits*. He points out how the rooms next to the toilets are given to the *dalits*, and how they have to
undergo the torture of bearing the fowl-smell that emanates from the unclean toilets. He cleverly foregrounds the ill treatment and suppression meted out to the students who study under ‘quotas’. He uses Gandhiji and his khaddhar suit to put down Marimuthu. He says that Gandhiji and Vinobhaji cleaned their own toilets and so he would follow their path in order to maintain cleanliness in the campus toilets. Using the cunningness of politics, he wins the leader post, and many, including Balan, the protagonist of the novel, are attracted towards him.

In *Matthiyillula Manidargal*, Panjangam shows politics incited by the teachers. It portrays the workings of the pro-principal’s group in influencing the Principal’s decision-making also. Once, the Economics Lecturer is assigned with the duty of preparing a list of volunteers to participate in the ‘help camp’. When the list is shown to the principal, he removes a first year B.A. student’s name from the list. This incident that happens only between the two, comes to the knowledge of other teachers. The next day, complying with the wishes of a few of his favourite teachers, the Principal completely alters the names in the list. This enrages the students and incites them to go on a strike. The strike is against the principal who is nicknamed the ‘crocodile’, ‘Goyabelse’ (MM 98) and so on. The students circulate a notice against the principal stating the wiliness of the principal. They harshly criticize him and his sidekicks thus:

- Strengthen students’ unity
- Death to college principal’s authoritarianism
- Revengful idiot!
- You’re a Goyabelse who is unfit for any post
- Today we are propagating amidst students your revenge against them!
- Dear self-respecting students! Followers of Tamil culture!
- Listen! Think and later act against injustice (MM 98) (My Translation).
This makes the anti-principal’s group happy. The third party of teachers, which neither supports nor acts against the principal, waits for the announcement of the closure of the college for a week. Mani, the protagonist Pasiapalam’s colleague, comments on the strike of the students. He says:

Do you know how educational institutions have become stinking places? Is this a temple of knowledge? This is a leper’s place of stay! See how these tender students are being used as dice to achieve their own ends (MM 100) (My Translation).

Mani says that it is because of the politics of the teachers that the students are hurt. The anti-principal group, to achieve its own ends, and in order to cause trouble for the students, informs them about the Principal’s removal of names, his remaking the list and so on. They incite the students and make them act against the Principal. They are happy when the principal is in trouble. The pro-principal group supports the principal, and from them, it is learnt that the college would be closed for a week.

Thus, the novel shows how politics in the college among the teachers leads to big problems like students’ strike and closing down of the college. A few Indian English campus novels also bring this aspect to the fore. In *Nampally Road* by Meena Alexander, the teachers incite the students to protest against the autocratic rule of the state government that crushes down and stampedes the welfare of the people. Even the Vice-Chancellor is against such despotic rule and supports the students in their anti-government actions.

The novel, *No Onions, Nor Garlic* (2006) shows how Professor Ram incites his students to form various organizations to protest and go against certain actions of the university that he disliked. For instance, he hated the celebration that took place for the erection of Dr. Ambedkar’s statue and especially hated the way in which Dr. Laurentia Arul, a backward caste
professor “the most pernicious of the beasts that slouched towards Chennai University” (NONG 88) played a greater role in bringing the statue to the campus. Professor Ram was strongly against the Government’s Reservations Policy and deliberately incited his upper caste students to go against it. He prodded his somnolent upper-caste students into a state of spiritual awakening and conducted various activities instilling in them, intense consciousness in and pride of belonging to the upper-caste. He awakened them into considering themselves as superiors and taught them, ways of discriminations. He encourages them to fight against the lower-caste group called ‘Students for Democracy,’ under the name ‘TamBrahmAsses.’ He nudges his student Sundar, to gather a crowd to protest against the installation of Ambedkar statue. He, a teacher, who is supposed to enlighten the students on equality and who should serve to remove the bigotry of society urges the students to mobilize people against the statue. He and some of his other colleagues, consciously and knowingly divide the University and cause political protests and riots.

Another novel that shows the politics practiced by students is Balakumaran’s *Snehamulla Singam*. This novel deals with students politics completely, and there is no mention of any intervention of teachers. It shows the intervention of outside politics and politicians in the college, and how students are affected because of political interference. The protagonist Chittirai Pandian involves himself in politics when he is a student and it is this that leads to his deterioration. He is not satisfied in being a student but wants to be rich and powerful. In order to attain power, he thinks he should enter politics. He manipulates things during his college days in such a way that he gets leadership thrust upon him. Like Sarvodhaya Arunachalam and Marimuthu of *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam*, Chittirai Pandian is not satisfied with the power he gets from within the university. His aim is to enter outside politics with the help of
the acquaintances of political figures who are invited for college functions. Hence, he uses the chance of inviting a politician for the inauguration of the Tamil Association. Without prior permission from the Principal or his teachers, he invites the Opposition leader and is berated by the Principal for this. He is also in a tiff with a group of students who are against a politician being invited for an academic function. This fight leads to the murder of a student by Chittirai Pandian and to a subsequent jail sentence.

Later, released earlier than the actual imprisonment tenure because of his good behaviour, he joins college for his post graduation. Once again, despite his strong resolve, he involves himself in politics, which finally leads him to his re-imprisonment.

*Snehamulla Singam* portrays various protests of the college students, their differences of opinions in different issues and the politics among themselves. It shows how teachers, including the Principal, feel helpless and when situations are taken out of their hands by students seeking the intrusion of politicians. It, unlike the other Indian campus novels taken for discussion, shows the intervention of real politics in the campus and how, students involved in it do not thrive well.

Another such novel that shows academicians fighting against politicians and being involved in political riots is Meena Alexander’s *Nampally Road*. Academicians – both teaching members and students – join hands to fight against the injustices of the ruling party. They, including the Vice-Chancellor of the University, are against the autocratic government of the State and revolt against authoritarianism. Classes are cancelled as a mark of their involvement in the revolt against the government and students and teachers incite the public through press releases and notices.
Although the novel exhibits academicians’ protests and politics, the main track of the novel is towards the injustice caused to poor people, especially, women. It shows both teachers and students united in their fight towards the autocratic and tyrannical rule of the State government.

Meena Alexander here shows that the student generations are not only angry at the injustices caused against people but are also ready to fight those. They awaken the public to the atrocities of the government and are the first to revolt and protest against its evils. In this, they are also supported by the Vice-Chancellor and his team of staff.

Ramu, the protagonist, being a teacher, rises up to avenge the injustice caused to Rameeza Be, a poor raped woman belonging to a lower class. He is helped by another teacher Mira in this. These two teachers along with the students and with the help of the Vice-Chancellor denounce the autocratic rule of Limca Gowda and his men in a forcible manner. They tend to carry out riots and at the close of the novel are seen being successful in disrupting the celebrations of Limca Gowda and his men. The author ends the novel by predicting that more riots are soon to follow to put an end to the atrocities of the government.

This novel parallels a real life incident – the riots and violence that were caused by the students of Osmania University during the Telangana problem in Andhra Pradesh recently.

Balakumaran’s *Snehamulla Singam* shows students politics within the campus and shows the fall and deterioration of the student who involves himself in politics. But Meena Alexander’s *Nampally Road* portrays the active involvement of students and teachers in putting down the atrocities of the politicians. In the course of her narration, we are able to glimpse, not the problems of the students but of society itself.
The third kind of politics that can be gleaned from the study is caste politics in educational institutions. Caste politics is brought out in detail in novels like *No Onions Nor Garlic* by Srividya Natarajan and *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam* by Panjangam. Just like how some British and American campus novels discuss the issue of racism, so discusses the Indian campus novels, the problems of caste. *No Onions Nor Garlic* and *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam* show in detail how the teaching community politicize the caste factor and directly or indirectly assist in the perpetuation of caste stratification in society. The novelists Srividya Natarajan and Panjangam give a heavy blow to the people practicing caste division through their sharp satiric pen and show the important role teachers play in the removal or the perpetuation of the ill practices in society. Srividya Natarajan punctures the sanctimonies of the academicians and scorns at them for holding the belief of ‘upper - caste’.

In *No Onions Nor Garlic* and *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam*, Natarajan and Panjangam show the teaching community divided among itself. They again show how teachers are divided among themselves based on caste. One group of teachers pride themselves on caste and act with arrogance in belonging to the so-called ‘upper-caste’ – the Brahmins – and the other suffers from inferiority complex because of belonging to the so-called ‘lower caste’ – the *dalits*. There are also a group of teachers who belong to the middle strata and are generally termed the ‘Backward classes’. Here, arrogant and dominant behaviour is exhibited by the upper caste teachers and their dominance and arrogance are almost always towards the *dalits*.

The Brahmin teachers utilize all available opportunities to put down the *dalit* teachers and see to it that they never get an opportunity to come up. This is visible in *No Onions Nor Garlic* where Professor Ram, a Hindu of the Brahmin caste deprives *dalit* students of most of their opportunities. He deliberately does not circulate the ‘Call for Papers’ notices to the *dalit*
students and acts in such a way that they would be discouraged and scared even to approach him regarding attending any conferences. He would also openly berate students in harsh language and would make them lose their confidences during his classes. He would encourage Brahmin-caste students to prepare for presentation of papers in conferences and would sideline the backward class and *dalit* students.

Sundar, a Brahmin student is his favourite, and in the course of the novel comes to be his would-be-son-in-law. Despite Sundar’s laziness in his studies, Professor Ram thrusts upon him, various opportunities. Professor Ram, in fact, is forced to supervise a *dalit* student called Jiva since the Vice-Chancellor himself questions him about his record of having supervised only Brahmin students. He takes Jiva, a *dalit*, as his Ph.D. scholar, in order to escape enquiries and does not in the true sense of the word, really guide her.

If this is the case in *No Onions Nor Garlic*, in *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam* the situation is worse. *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam’s* protagonist Balan is a *dalit*. He is a teacher who experiences different kinds of insults and domination from his colleagues as well as students. Scared of directly exhibiting aversion for him, the upper-caste teachers would slyly give him problems. They would cunningly incite their upper-caste students to irritate *dalit* teachers and make them insult them. Balan, as a teacher, despite belonging to the upper rung of the academic ladder, is tormented by the ill behaviour of his upper-caste students who belong to the lower-rung. Adding to his worries, these students are supported by the Principal and his sidekicks.

Professor Ram in *No Onions Nor Garlic* has the advantage of belonging to the Brahmin caste as well as being a teacher, whereas Balan of *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam*, despite being a teacher finds it hard to exercise his powers because of being born a *dalit*. He
feels upset and tormented since his talents and positive qualities go unnoticed just because of an accident of birth. Panjangam shows this factor as fate and leaves it as such, but Srividya Natarajan deals with this differently. She attacks the so-called inherited status of caste and wittily demolishes the false sanctimonies attached to it. She deflates the ego and pride of Professor Ram in belonging to the Brahmin caste by revealing at the end that he is half-dalit, half-Brahmin.

In *Oru Dalit, Oru Adikari, Oru Maranam*, the higher caste Principal even goes to the extent of stopping the appointment of a *dalit* by planning to fill in the post reserved for *dalits* with an upper caste tutor. The same attitude is found in Professor Ram and his other Brahmin colleagues. They stop deserving lower caste candidates at the entry level itself by severe scrutiny of their applications. Professor Ram would see to it that no lower caste candidates make it to the interview level, and it is during his one-year’s sabbatical that his rival Dr. Laurentia Arul, a backward class teacher enters the university. She is a constant source of irritation to him and he considers her as one of his prime enemies. Such is his narrow-mindedness and caste bigotry that even education fails to eradicate.

Professor Ram not only stops deserving candidates from trying for the posts reserved for them and leaves the posts vacant but also forcefully threatens *dalits* to abstain from attending interviews. This is witnessed when Jiva his *dalit* Ph.D. student and his son Chunky apply for the Open Category post of Lecturer in the Drama and Folklore Department at Chennai University. With the advice of another Brahmin Professor, Professor Rangarajan and with his own corrupt tendency, Professor Ram asks Jiva to absent herself for the interview. He asks her first to do this as a mark of reverence for him. When Jiva refuses, he meanly threatens to fail her in the *viva-voce* examination.
Professor Ram also threatens Jiva to give up her love affair with Sundar who was formally engaged to his daughter. Professor Ram’s practice of caste discrimination is such that he even throws away the glass in which water is given to Jiva. But Jiva’s is made of sterner stuff. She attends the interview and is appointed. However, Professor Ram succeeds shortly in causing a rift between Sundar and Jiva. At the climax of the novel, it is revealed that the hardcore upper caste Brahmin Professor is a half-dalit whose biological mother is a dalit. When this news comes out, his thick Brahmin friends desert him, and his wife too ill treats him, by enforcing upon him, routine household chores.

Thus, the Chapter propounds the various kinds of politics gleaned from the study of select Indian English Campus novels. It highlights the various political nuances employed by the inmates of the University and other educational institutions. It shows the conflicts inherent in the university and shows how the idealism about the profession is not able to reconcile with the ways in which the inmates or appropriately, the scholars actually behave. In other words, Rossen in her book says that “the crux of the nature of academic politics is that the two entities are strange bed-fellows; while academic pursuits are characterized by the search for complex, often abstract pattern, politics is characterized by simplicity, negotiation and compromise” (5).

Three different segments, namely, teacher-oriented politics, student politics and caste politics are studied in this chapter. Dominance is given to the teacher politics since most of the campus novels concentrate on it. It could be believed that teachers are powerful since they are the ones who mould young minds. Students spend majority of their youthful days with teachers and hence, have the inclination to imitate them. This chapter shows teachers in a negative light because their politicking arises out of their over-ambitious nature, which ultimately leads them
to unbecoming ways. This also takes them to an unglorious path that is devious and unpleasant. Teachers can prove to be King Makers or criminal makers according to their mentality and efficiency.

It is ultimately the teachers, who are responsible for student politics and caste politics within the campus. Hence, only a little prominence is given to the last two kinds of politics mentioned in the chapter than the first one. Moreover, the novels possessing a dominating exhibition of student politics and caste politics are found in the books selected for secondary sources purpose only rather than the primary ones. Hence, the discrimination comes in the discussion of the segments mentioned earlier. However, what little discussions are made are sure to sow the seeds for further rewarding study in this area.