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CHAPTER – III

FORM AND FICTIONAL WORKS OF
R.K. NARAYAN

3.1 Introduction

The third chapter deals with the major literary works of Narayan in general and discuss in detail the novels, *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Guide* (1958) and *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967) and other selected stories from *Malgudi Days* (1942), *An Astrologer’s Day and Other Stories* (1947) and *Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories* (1985). It also evaluates R.K. Narayan as a novelist, a short story writer and a good student of psychology. Let’s discuss major novels and short stories in detail.

3.2 Study of the Major Works of R.K. Narayan

3.2.1. The Major Novels:

(1) *The Dark Room* (1938)

The present novel *The Dark Room*, like most of other works of R.K. Narayan, is a tale set in the fictitious town of Malgudi. This novel was first published in Great Britain in 1938 by Macmillan & Co., Ltd. London. In 1956 the first Indian edition came out. *The Dark Room* is about a dominant, prominent, excessively critical and
self centered husband, Ramani, Savitri and his maid servant Shanta Bai. Ramani attracts toward his servants and keeps relation with her. At the end of the story Savitri comes back to her husband’s home and she cannot raise a voice against her husband.

The present literary work is less of a novel and more of a novella. Narayan is effective in his depiction of Ramani, a vain, sarcastic, ironic, self serving man. Also, the part where Savitri leaves and encounters a different world is moving but the book as a whole has a few weaknesses. It is not as thriving in its narrative, the story runs rather quickly and doesn't look into too much into the complexities. Ramani’s fling with his junior is awkwardly handled, perhaps because Narayan was writing about an episode he may not have experienced or seen firsthand. The 'other' woman's character also remains shadowy.

(2) The English Teacher (1945)

*The English Teacher* is a 1945 novel which is the third and final part in the series, preceded by *Swami and Friends* (1935) and *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937). This novel is dedicated to Narayan's wife Rajam. The novel is not only autobiographical but also touching in its intensity of feeling. The story is a series of experiences in the life of Krishna, an English teacher and his quest towards achieving inner peace and self development.

As an English teacher at Albert Mission College, Krishna has led an ordinary and monotonous lifestyle comparable to that of a cow, but when his wife, Susila and their child, Leela, come to live with him, this took a turn. With their welfare on Krishna hands, he learns to be a proper husband and learns how to run the responsibility of taking care of his family. In the course of the life he felt and understood that there is more meaning to life than to just teaching in the college. However, on the day when they went in search of a new house, Susila catches typhoid after visiting a dirty lavatory, keeping her in bed for weeks. Throughout the entire course of her illness, Krishna continuously tries to keep an optimistic view about Susila's illness, keeping his hopes up by thinking that her illness would soon be cured. However, Susila ultimately surrenders and passes away. After her death, Krishna is shattered and has suicidal thoughts but gives them up for the sake of his daughter, Leela. He drives his life as a lost and depressed person after her death, but after he receives a letter from a stranger who designates that Susila has been in contact with
him and that she wants to converse with Krishna, he becomes more collected and cheerful. This leads to Krishna’s voyage in search of enlightenment, with the stranger acting as a medium to Susila in the divine world. Leela, on the other hand, goes to a preschool where Krishna gets to meet the Headmaster, a philosophical man who cared for the students in his school and teaches them moral values through his own methods. The Headmaster puts his students as his top priority but he doesn’t mind for his own family and children, ultimately leaving them on the day predicted by an astrologer as to be when he was going to die, which did not come true. Krishna gets to learn through the Headmaster on the journey to enlightenment; eventually learning to converse to Susila on his own, thus closing the entire story itself, with the quote that he sensed ‘a moment of rare immutable joy’.

(3) Mr. Sampath – The Printer of Malgudi (1949)

Mr. Sampath – The Printer of Malgudi is a 1949 novel which was adapted into the films “Mr. Sampath” (Hindi) and Miss Malini (Tamil) in 1947. The films were the only collaborative film script of his novels that R.K. Narayan involved himself with and were produced under the famous Gemini Studios banner.

The story is told mainly through the editor of ‘The Banner’ a fortnightly magazine, Mr. Srinivas, an idealistic writer who is keen on changing the world. He sets up his home in a modest place in a new town Malgudi, his office in yet another modest place and goes to work. He meets Mr. Sampath, the printer of Truth Printers, who agrees to print his magazine. And that begins a bond that one knows, will last forever. The enthusiastic, talkative and enterprising Mr. Sampath takes upon himself, as he takes upon all things in the world, the responsibility of bringing out ‘The Banner’. They run it as long as they can and when Sampath shuts his printing press due to lack of finances, Srinivas is forced to stop his publication as well.

The enterprising Sampath gets into the movie line and supports Srinivas, Mr. Editor, as the writer of the story. To add to their capers come Ravi, a tenant in the house where Srinivas stays, a brilliant artist searching for a girl he fell in love with many years ago. Enter Shanti, the film’s new heroine, who is a model of Ravi’s love, but who is also favored romantically by the married Sampath and everything goes haywire. The entire story comes winding down in a climax scene of the movie when
Ravi cannot hold his passion anymore leading to amusing but long lasting changes to all their lives.

The story has some autobiographical tones by the way it jumps from the press to the movie making business. R.K. Narayan gives an attractive good account of how the movies business is, writing down many common details of the business. It is light, easy and appealing of course and makes you want to come back for more of Sampath, Srinivas and Ravi and their lives.

(4) Waiting for the Mahatma (1955)

The Gandhian phase of the anti colonial movement for India's freedom finds recurrent expression in literary representations of the period. There was large scale support among Indians for Gandhi's involvement in the civil disobedience and Quit India movements. However, R.K. Narayan's novel Waiting for the Mahatma (1955) reflects certain ambivalence towards the freedom movement. There were many who were overwhelmed by the more gentle aspects of the British presence in India and Narayan's own writing came to depend heavily on patronage by British publishers and readers. He was apparently writing for an English audience and could not upset the colonial English system which supported him.

The novel is about a boy called Sriram whose age is around twenty. He lives with his grandmother in Malgudi. Sriram tries to investigate the outside world himself to decipher what interests him the most. He is drawn towards a pretty and patriotic girl called Bharati in a local festival. He tries to entice her and comes to know that she is working under Mahatma Gandhi for the freedom struggle. He somehow manages to creep into the freedom struggle movement even though he has no clue initially what it is for. The story unfolds as the experience of a conservative guy entering social life and his romance with a bold and beautiful girl.

Sriram deserts his old grandmother and travels across different villages of rural India along with Bharati to spread the message of the Mahatma. His encounter with different set of people like the shopkeeper who sells foreign imported biscuits is amusing. Sriram comes in contact with a terrorist called Jagadish and the consequences of his relations with him have been realistically portrayed. At some point of time both Sriram and Bharati are intended to be shut in jail indefinitely.
Whether Sriram could get the acceptance of Bharati to marry her and whether Mahatma approved their marriage are interesting narrated.

The best aspect of this novel is the capture of the simplicity of the India and its inhabitant prior to gaining independence. The ongoing freedom struggle which modifies the lives of different people like Sriram makes one feel about the numerous citizens who were forced to desert their families for their country. The comedy of error associated with the death of grandmother is thoroughly enjoyable. The novel also provides an insight into the minds of cunning people like Jagadish who manipulate and drag others into their troublesome ways. Having Mahatma and Netaji as characters in the story adds credibility to the story. The title of the novel is apt. In the whole story Sriram is waiting for Bharati who in turn is waiting for Mahatma’s consent. The conversation between the characters in the novel sounded too artificial.


“The Man-Eater is a man, not a tiger, an ego-centered man for whom the objective world is non-existent, a modern Rakshasa, who wants to kill the elephant that belongs to the local temple.”

(A.I.R. interview, Writers Workshop Miscellany)

The title utters the name of the town Malgudi where the main action takes place as in most of the other novels. The man eater, as R.K. Narayan himself says, is a man; but he does not belong to Malgudi. Just as Mr. Sampath cannot be considered the only man character of the novel with the same title, the present novel cannot be considered as a novel treating H. Vasu who is the man eater as an entirely main character, for it equally deals with the character of Nataraj, the printer. The title, thus, is misleading at least to a certain extent.

This story revolves around sun which is the life of an Indian printer named Nataraj. Nataraj lives in a huge ancestral house in Malgudi, a fictional town in south India. This place is near Mempi hills, which is very calm, pleasant and beautiful. He leads a pleased lifestyle, with his own circle of friends, such as a poet, a journalist
named Sen, and his one employee, Sastri. Like his other novel, Talkative Man, R.K. Narayan introduces a character who enters in the life of Nataraj and the town of Malgudi. The character, Vasu, is a taxidermist who comes to Malgudi in search of the wildlife in Mempi hills near Malgudi. His introduction begins with his arrival at Nataraj's printing press, where he demands the printing of 500 visiting cards. This arrival begins the relationship between Vasu and Nataraj. While Nataraj wasn't sure whether Vasu is a friend or an enemy, he likes the company of Vasu because being around him is fun.

Vasu is a bully and is once compared to a Rakshasa (a Demon) by Nataraj and Sastri. Vasu takes up dwelling in the attic of Nataraj's press by chance and persuades Nataraj that he would stay there as a guest (self declared) only for a few days until he gets put up some place else. Little known to Nataraj, Vasu sees the place very suitable for his activities as a taxidermist plans otherwise. Vasu is a 'pahelwan' (muscleman), proud of his strength. As the story moves ahead, Vasu encroaches on Nataraj's life, every now and then bullies away his friends, his customers, shoots someone's pet dog and many other animals and birds near the residential place, poaches wildlife from Mempi hills, creates stench in the neighborhood through his activities as a taxidermist, when Nataraj questions this, Vasu files a complaint with rent control authority on Nataraj as a self declared tenant, entertaining women in the attic, disturbs the peace of Malgudi, whom the narrator refers to as “the man eater of Malgudi”

As in Talkative Man, the end comes with the remembrance of a function. This time, it is for the release of a poetry book on Krishna by his poet friend. Rangi informs Nataraj that Vasu wants to kill Kumar, the elephant, which Nataraj had brought down from Mempi Hills to treat an ailment as a favour to one of his friends. Muthu tea shop owner helps Nataraj, when Nataraj happens to meet him under unexpected circumstance, owing to Vasu's adventures. Now Nataraj comes to know of the plans of Vasu to shoot Kumar, the temple elephant, for his collection and business. The protagonists recklessly try to stop him, but in vain. As Nataraj decides to talk to Vasu for once and for all, he finds Vasu sleeping, but the next morning he discovers that Vasu is dead.
The autopsy takes place with the verdict being that he was not poisoned and there were no signs of any physical injury. The case is closed, but the reputation of Nataraj’s press is ruined and his friends and other people start avoiding him. Later, Nataraj learns through his friend Sastri that Vasu was not murdered, but died in an attempt to smash a mosquito sitting on his temple. He had damaged one of his nerves with his powerful hand and died instantly. Eventually Nataraj was rid of Vasu and the story ends on the note that all demons-rakshasas, devils and monsters are the downfall of themselves. The narration is very humorous and lively all along and alone.

(5) The Painter of Signs (1976)

Narayan’s The Painter of Signs (1976) written after something like ten years silence, is both:

“slim and packed. It is not much longer than a novelette and yet by the end of it a character has been evolved, a predicament analysed, a world constructed, a point of view defined”.2

(Walsh, William. R.K. Narayan A Critical Appreciation)

The Painter of Signs is a novel of a young bachelor Raman, an inhabitant of Narayan’s fictional city Malgudi. He has always regarded his trade, the painting of signboards, as an art worthy of the highest attention. In fact he has lived a gay carefree life surrounded by traditional comforts provided by his aunt. Commissioned to paint a sign for a clinic, he falls in love with a young woman called Daisy who is obsessed by population control. Her modern rationality and commitment to her cause leave no room for his softer comforts. Caught up in his illusions, he first imagines she is trying to seduce him and then blindly follows her. At last taking her to bed, he thinks it is just a question of time before she will marry and settle down to the traditional role of an Indian housewife. She confined at home, preparing meals all day, rearing and nursing her many children. She will have none of this and agrees to marry him only if they have separate lives and no children and if he does all the household tasks. Enthralled by her strong will, he allows comfort after comfort until
on the day she is to move into his house, symbolically consummating a common – law marriage, she decides marriage is impossible for her and leaves to propagandize population control in remote villages. Raman’s aunt, who devoted her entire life to gossip and preparing food, has been stunned by his projected marriage outside traditional custom; her Hinduism awakened, she leaves for the Ganges where she will spend the remainder of her life in religious observances. If Raman has been defeated by the age of reason, he has given his aunt’s life a purpose which he had not foreseen.

(6) A Tiger for Malgudi (1983)

Narayan usually denies the existence of any “philosophy” or “message” in his writing. He even emphasized in an interview that he has not produced his “masterpiece”, nor would he plan one. But A Tiger for Malgudi (1983) contradicts his denials and is undeniably the greatest and the most mature of his works – his “masterpiece”, for several reasons.

A Tiger for Malgudi is a touching story of a tiger named Raja. It begins its journey from its home Mempi hills to a circus in Malgudi. In the village Malgudi, it is forced to perform various acts to please the audiences. The Captain is so greedy that he is not satisfied with what he earns from performances but he attempts to shoot a movie along with a film director on Raja. He puts the captain to death when he could take no more of the physical torture executed by the circus captain. Raja being caged for a very long time reveals his freedom as he explores the town of Malgudi. At a crucial juncture when the people of the town decide that it must be killed, a sympathetic saint comes to its rescue. Under his care Raja undergoes transformation, his soul longs for salvation as he thinks like an enlightened human being. When old age takes over him, the saint realizes that he must be sent to a safer place as jungle is subjected to poaching. He is handed over to the circus people who promise the saint that they will take good care of him. This thought provoking novel evokes a sense of contempt for mankind. Man who holds a supreme position among God’s creations has turned into a barbaric creature; his irrational behavior leads him to practice illegal, inhuman, unlawful and monstrous acts. A vicious and bloodthirsty animal like a tiger on the other hand thinks like an enlightened human being. This novel is an eye opening to those who wish to see their future generations enjoy the beauty of wildlife
with their naked eyes rather than read about them in books. It is high time that we protect Nature.

(7) Talkative Man (1986)

The novel Talkative Man was first published in 1986 by Heinemann. Talkative Man (1986) has an intrigue plot. It speaks of the secret love affairs of Dr. Rann and his outwitting the careful machinations of others to prevent him for his explosive sex exploits. Dr. Rann does not succeed in his efforts to elope with Girija; nor do Talkative Man and Sarasa succeed in transforming him. He continues to be his self. R.K. Narayan seems to be of the view that human nature undergoes no dramatic change.

(8) The World of Nagaraj (1990)

In The World of Nagaraj (1990), R.K. Narayan represents the typical South Indian village of Malgudi, which he had created and recreated over and over again in one novel after another since its genesis in 1935 in Swami and Friends. In The World of Nagaraj the penetration of postmodern self reflexive met fictional elements that commingle with the depiction of Malgudi life produces a new kind of Malgudi novel. In the novel Narayan focuses on the art of storytelling and the world of a storyteller through the protagonist Nagaraj's sole obsession with writing a magnum opus on the celestial storyteller Narada.

Nagaraj, a resident of Kabeer Street in Malgudi, is a satisfied man who lives on his father’s fortune in his family’s large house with his wife, Sita and the mother. He has a routine for every day. Waking up, going to the town to read the one leaf newspaper and going back home, writing letters, drinking coffee, doing some bookkeeping for his friend and sitting on his verandah watching the world.

His comfortable lifestyle gets disturbed when Krishnaji, known as Tim, who is the son of Nagaraj’s brother Gopu, comes to stay at his house. He is thrust upon the responsibility of taking care of the boy who has a troubled lifestyle of late night activities. There is also the smell of alcohol that comes from his mouth when he comes home. Later in the novel, Tim marries a girl who loves to play harmonium and
settles down in Nagaraj’s house. The tranquility of the house is broken with the sound of the harmonium and Nagaraj is greatly annoyed but unable to resist the harmonium.

The only dream of Nagaraj is to write a book about the great Sage Narada who is said to have led a spiritual life. The problem with Nagaraj is he has no right material to write the book. He goes to several people who fail to come up with the right content and ultimately he is forced to go to an absent minded priest who has some Sanskrit books about Sage Narada. It is interesting to read whether he succeeds in his attempt.

(9) Grandmother's Tale (1992)

_Grandmother's Tale_ is a novella by R.K. Narayan with illustrations by his brother R.K. Laxman published in 1992 by Indian Thought Publications. It was consequently released outside India as _The Grandmother's Tale_ by Heinemann in 1993. This book, more than any others, exhibits Narayan's experimental tendencies. The book is about Narayan's great grandmother who is forced to travel far and wide in search of her husband, as narrated to him by his grandmother.

3.2.2 Non-fiction

(1) Next Sunday (1960)

_Next Sunday_ is a collection of weekly essays published in 1960. The book provides insights into Narayan's writings and perspectives and the protagonists of his works the middle class common man. The book also includes his reflections on the themes and actions in his novels and short stories.

(2) My Dateless Diary (1960)

_My Dateless Diary_ is a collection of autobiographical essays published in 1960. The book was the output of a daily journal that he maintained during his visit to the United States on a Rockefeller Fellowship in 1956. While on this visit, Narayan also completed _The Guide_, the writing of which is covered in this book. The book is focused on Narayan's interactions with the American people and the people themselves. The book also highlights Narayan's view of the west, his appreciation and
admiration in general, but subtle disapproval of specific aspects while making it known that there isn't much of a gap between his values and those he has come across. The book offers insights into both, the author and his subjects.

(3) My Days (1974)

In his wryly funny style, R.K. Narayan shares his life story. In his youth, Narayan begins to write fiction against the advice of all. When one of his pieces is accepted by Punch magazine, his life becomes gradually filled with bumbling British diplomats, strange movie moguls, evasive Indian officials and the blind urge to fall in love. In his usual winning, humorous style, R.K. Narayan shares his life story, beginning in his grandmother’s garden in Madras with his ferocious pet peacock. As a young boy with no interest in school, he trains grasshoppers, scouts, and generally takes part in life's excitements. Against the advice of all, especially his commanding headmaster father, the dreaming Narayan takes to writing fiction, and one of his pieces is accepted by Punch magazine. R.K. Narayan's larger than life perception of the human comedy is at once keen and forgiving and always true to it.

(4) Reluctant Guru (1974)

Reluctant Guru is a book published in 1974 by Orient Paperbacks. The book consists entirely of discursive essays, some of which were his weekly contributions to The Hindu. Some of the essays relate to the topic of his American stay, describing with his characteristic irony, the expectations of Americans that he would show them the key to the spiritual life of Indians. One criticism of the book is that the essays were too short and therefore lacking in depth.

(5) The Emerald Route (1980)

The Emerald Route is a 1980 travelogue which was published by Indian Thought Publications. It is a pseudo travel guide for Karnataka, India. The book was commissioned by the Government of Karnataka and the primary non commercial version was published in 1977 as part of a government publication. The book is focused on local history, culture and heritage and doesn't exhibit much of Narayan's characteristic personal narrative.
(6) A Writer's Nightmare (1988)

*A Writer's Nightmare* is a collection of essays published in 1988 which was published by Penguin Books. The essays incorporated in the book are about topics as diverse as the caste system, love, Nobel Prize winners and monkeys. The book provides readers a unique view of Indian life. The essays were written at various points in time between 1958 and 1988; the book includes a significant essay, *Misguided Guide*, expressing Narayan's displeasure with the film *Guide*, based on his book *The Guide*.

3.2.3 Mythology

(1) Gods, Demons and Others (1964)

It is a collection of short stories, adapted from Indian history and mythology, including epics like *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. In this book, Narayan provides both vivacity and an original viewpoint to ancient legends. The selection of stories includes only those that center on outstanding personalities who transcend the boundaries of time and age. The book consists of 15 stories.

(2) The Ramayana (1973)

It is a mythological book by R.K. Narayan. It was first published by Chatto and Windus, London in 1973. The book is a shortened, prose adaptation of the Tamil *Kamba Ramayananam*. In 1938, Narayan made a promise to his dying uncle that he would translate the *Kamba Ramayana* to English, however, he did not think about this promise until 1968 when he began work on this effort. He later wrote *The Mahabharata*, published in 1978.

(3) The Mahabharata (1978)

It is also a mythological book which is a modernised, shortened and translated retelling of The Mahabharata. It was first published by Heinemann, London in 1978. The book was published as a result of a long endeavour that included three Hindu mythological works, *Gods, Demons and Others*, *The Ramayana* and finally *The
Mahabharata; in 1995, these works were republished as part of a new book, The Indian Epics Retold.

3.3 The Selected Novels

(1) The Guide (1958)

The Guide is a novel extended to eleven chapters but title of the chapters is not mentioned by R.K. Narayan. Each chapter deals with different incidents of the core story and all chapters are united with each other.

The first chapter opens with the protagonist of the novel. The whole story revolves around the Guide named Raju. The title of the novel is an apt. Raju presents himself as a guide throughout the novel. The entire novel follows technique of flash back and grand style of storytelling which is the specialty of R.K. Narayan. The novel opens with the entry of Raju and the place of a jail.

Raju, formerly a tourist guide, has just been released from prison. Having released from the prison he was in dilemma. He was thinking of where to go. Finally he decided not to go home because there was no one of him in his village and in his home and then he has taken refuge in an old, deserted temple on the banks of the river Sarayu and has been there for over a day. He got himself shaved on coming out of jail and after the shave the talkative barber had told him that he looked like a Maharaja. In this way his imposing appearance which impressed people and inspired confidence has been hinted at in the very beginning.

There he meets Velan a villager, who sits two steps below the granite slab on which Raju is sitting. He tells Raju that he lives in the village called Mangala on the other side of the river. There is coming pontifical, saintly, in Raju's appearance and this encourages the simple villager to confide to him troubles. He presents his problem of a step sister’s marriage to Raju and he looks to him for advice and guidance.

It was in this way that Raju came to know Velan and it was this meeting which was fated to involve him in endless trouble. He was a railway-guide, the habit of guiding others was ingrained in him and it always involved him in the troubles of
others. Earlier, the habit had resulted in his involvement with Rosie, now it resulted in his involvement in the affairs and activities of Velan and the other natives of Mangala.

The narration moves backward and forward, in a zigzag manner. The present is dramatised by the novelist, and Raju himself narrates his past to Velan at a much later date. The dramatisation of the present time alternates with the narration of the past in the first person by Raju, and in this way the past and the present are juxtaposed, the one serving to illuminate the other.

It was at a late date that Raju told Velan that he owed all his trouble to Rosie. He told her at the first opportunity what a great dancer she was and how she fostered our cultural traditions and it pleased her. He praised her and her art whenever he could do so without being heard by her husband. He was a queer man always looking like a permanent tourist or space traveller; he called him Marco and knew at once that he was a permanent customer for him.

The question may be asked as to why he became a railway guide. As a matter of fact, the railway was in his blood from the very beginning, for he grew up in the midst of railway- engines, coolies, station-masters, guards, etc. This was so because theirs was a small house opposite the Malgudi station. As Raju tells Velan;

“The house had been built by my father with his own hands long before trains were thought of. He chose this spot because it was outside the town and could have it cheap.”

(Narayan, R.K. The Guide)

He further says;

“A very busy man indeed. At midday he called me when he went in for his lunch and made a routine statement at the same hour: "Raju, take my seat. Be sure to receive the money for whatever you give. Don't eat off all that eating stuff, it's kept for sale; call me if you have doubts.”

(Narayan, R.K. The Guide)
From the past, the novelist now moves to the present and the narration is continued through the dialogue between Raju and Velan. Having listened to the problem of Velan, Raju asks him to bring to him sister and he would do his best for him. At this Velan rose, bowed low, and tried to touch Raju's feet. Raju recoiled at the attempt and said;

“I'll not permit anyone to do this. God alone is entitled to such a prostration. He will destroy us if we attempt to usurp His rights.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Guide*)

He felt he was attaining the stature of a saint. Velan went down the steps meekly and Raju pondered;

“I wish I had asked him what the age of the girl was. Hope she is uninteresting. I have had enough trouble in life.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Guide*)

Raju slept and awoke late the next morning and found that Velan was already there with his sister. She was a young girl of fourteen with tightly braided hair decorated with jewellery, which Velan had given to her. Raju told them to go in and wait for him in the hall of the temple. Soon after he himself went there and seated himself on a raised platform in the middle of the hall. Velan placed before him a basket full of fried nuts, banana, cucumbers and a pot of milk. He was hungry so he took the basket into the inner shrine, made due offering to a tall god with four hands, and kept the rest for himself. He then began narrating to him a story of Devaka which showed how by giving to the god, we multiply instead of dividing our belongings.

The story was told to him by his mother but Raju remembered only vaguely. As a matter of fact, his mother told him stories every night till he went to sleep. Raju remembered the stories only vaguely, and so could not complete the one he had begun to point the moral that to offer your gifts to God is to multiply them. So he stopped half way through the story. Velan and his sister waited patiently for him to complete it. After some time Raju came out from the hall of the temple and preached to Velan
and his sister. Once again he performs his duty as a guide as a result of that the words had their due effect on the 'difficult sister', and she went from there a changed girl.

Second chapter opens with the past incident of Raju at school. Raju noticed much activity in front of his house. A railway track and a railway train were to be built, and material needed for the construction was being piled up. There was great excitement and the question was frequently asked and discussed as to how long it would take for the railway to arrive at Malgudi. Of course, none could give a definite answer.

One day he was playing on the mound of earth, a boy, who was grazing his cows nearby, also came there to play. Raju asked him to go away and shouted at him vulgar abuses which he had picked up from the labourers. The boy complained to his father and repeated the exact words Raju has used. His father was angry and decided that he must go to school from the very next day. He will no longer be allowed to wander about and pick up bad language. So, Raju began to go to school. He was sent not to the Albert Mission School; for his father believed that there the boys were converted to Christianity, but to another school called the Pyol School. It was kept by an old man who lived in Kabir Lane. Raju tells to Velan about his childhood and about his friends’ activities. Raju told Velan about his old teacher. Raju was intelligent. He did well at school and within a year he was found fit to be admitted to the first standard in the Board High School. The old master himself took them there, and blessed them before leaving them.

From the past, the narration now returns to the present, and the narration is conducted by the novelist through the question and answer method. Velan comes to Raju and thanks to him and he also tells him about the well settlement about his sister and his family. Velan pressed him to come to the wedding but Raju refused to do so. The circle of Raju's admirers increased day by day. After finishing his day's work Velan would come to him, and soon more people began coming to him. They brought fruits, and packets of food as gifts, and Raju accepted their gifts with thanks. If he talked, they listened to him gratefully; if not, they sat in perfect silence and then went away as it began to grow dark.
Raju felt uncomfortable at thus being treated as a saint. He wanted to leave the place and go somewhere else. He wanted to do something to earn his living. He thought and thought, but could find no way out. He could not return to his village, for he would be ridiculed and mocked by the people. Moreover, he had already mortgaged his house, and no place to live in.

One evening before his devotees arrived, he hid himself behind a gigantic bush full of red flowers. They were much surprised when they did not find him on his usual seat, and went round the temple in search of him. He could easily overhear their remarks. It is so clear from the statements of villager that Raju becomes a great saint, a Yogi. After much more thinking about his future, Raju came to conclusion that nothing is left for him in his village as well as in his future. The only alternate is to remain a saint, of and for village. That evening he waited and waited for Velan and his friends to arrive, but none came. Will they never come again? He felt hungry, and soon grew panicky. Then he saw a boy grazing his sheep in a field on the opposite bank. He called him, and questioned him. He told him that he was grazing his sheep there, because his uncle had asked him to watch for a man in the temple. Raju asked him to tell his uncle that the man had returned, and wanted him to visit him that very evening. He gave the boy a banana to win him over.

The third chapter opens with the technique of flash back and Raju continued to tell the story to Velan about his village and his father. With the curse of time the Railway Station was constructed. There was great excitement in the village. This was a turning point in the life of Raju. Raju also told about the business of his father and hot and sweet discussion between his father and mother for the business. As days passed the business increased and there was a new idea for a new shop nearby Railway Station and ultimately his father got the approval of a policeman for open a new shop. In the beginning, Raju was left in charge of the old hut shop but then he was sent to the new shop at the station by his father. There the business was brisk, and Raju had to be very active.

In this way, his education came to end, and his connection with the railways began. Perhaps the fates willed that he should grow up to be Raju, the railway guide.
In the forth chapter the narration now forwards to the present and the novelist takes it up at the point it had been left in the third chapter. It should be remembered that Raju had given a banana to the shepherd boy and had asked him to go and tell his uncle that the man had returned. The banana worked miracles. The boy went from door to door informing all that the new priest was back in the temple. The result was that men, women and children came to have darshan of him in large numbers. Raju went over to this boy and that and asked them about their education. In the present chapter Raju pervade his views of education and tries to awake literacy among the villagers. For that purpose he calls the villager teacher. Raju gets a chance to air his views on life and eternity before the boys. He spoke to them on godliness, cleanliness, spoke on Ramayana, the characters in the epics; he addressed them on all kinds of things, the novelist humorously comments that:

“It is in this way that saints are made, and Raju was fast moving on the road to sainthood”.  

(Narayan, R.K. The Guide)

The element of satire is obvious and needs no comment. Suddenly Raju sleeps into the past, in memory of his father. Soon after the railway shop had been set up, his father died quietly and peacefully. His mother adjusted herself to the status of a widow. His father had left her enough to live on comfortably and Raju gave her as much of his time and money as he could. The old hut shop was closed and he began to develop new lines. After this plunge into the past, we are back again in the present and the narration is taken up by the novelist. The children were delighted by his talk, described the wonders they had heard from their parents who now came with them in ever increasing numbers. As the novelist tells us,

“…. It looked like a place where a great assembly was about to begin. Raju felt like an actor who had come on the stage.”

(Narayan, R.K. The Guide)

Thus, Raju becomes a perfect saint by curing the problems of the villagers.
In the fifth chapter the action moves down vertically into the past and Raju again takes up the story of his past, at the point he had left it. In the present chapter all the major as well as minor characters are shown. This is the longest chapter in the entire book. Raju proves as a perfect guide for the tourist and for the very first time he flirts with his dream girl Rosie and he captures the advantages of gaps between Rosie and Marco. Marco fails as a perfect husband but he proves as a great scholar. He pays all attention on his research in the caves and does not pay attention to his beautiful wife Rosie.

Raju becomes a perfect guide. He doesn’t say no to his customers about any place or anything whether he knows or not. For his profession he makes the best friend Ghaffar, a taxi driver. Actually here Narayan presents the technique of chorus in the form of taxi driver- friend, Ghaffar who warns Raju time to time for his deeds. As a result of his constant contact with the tourists, his own knowledge of the region increased. He realised that Malgudi had countless beauty spots and historical curiosities, and he made good use of his knowledge. Moreover, he learned to assess the financial resources of his customers and would plan out their sightseeing programmes accordingly. Raju himself confesses;

"I learned while I taught and earned while I learned, and the whole thing was most enjoyable."9

(Narayan, R.K. *The Guide*)

He thus earned a reputation of having considerable influence with the forest department. It was in this way that he came across Rosie and her husband whom he called 'Marco' because he was dressed as if he were an eternal tourist. This man was the first to arrive. Raju took him to the *Anand Bhavan Hotel*, and made arrangements for his stay there. Then after a day of sightseeing, in the afternoon, he suddenly announced that another person was coming by the Madras train. This 'other person' was none else but his wife, Rosie. He went to the station with Marco to receive her in his usual dress, a khaki bush coat and dhoti. Says Raju,
“the moment she got down from the train I wished I had hidden myself somewhere. She was not very glamorous, if that is what you expect, but she did have a figure, a slight and slender one, beautifully fashioned eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky, which made her only half visible—as if you saw her through a film of tender coconut juice. Forgive me if you find me waxing poetic. I gave some excuse and sent them off to the hotel, and stayed back to run home and tidy up my appearance.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Guide*)

Raju is attracted to Rosie for the very first time when he sees her at the railway station. As soon as she had set foot in Malgudi she had asked;

“*can you show me a cobra a king cobra it must be which can dance to the music of a flute*?”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Guide*)

Raju had replied that he could show such a cobra. But first he took them to the Iswar temple in North Extension on the walls of which are carved hundreds of verses from *the Ramayana* and leaving them there went at once to find out where a king cobra was to be seen. He collected the necessary information within a short time and returned to find Rosie bored and tired and her husband still busy with the verses carved on the temple walls. Rosie at once came with him and together they went to a group of huts on the other bank of the river where the snake charmer lived. The cobra was fairly large and hissed and spread its hood as it came out of the basket. Rosie suggested;

“*You must play on the flute, make it rear its head and dance*.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Guide*)

The man pulled out his gourd flute and played on it shrilly and the cobra raised itself and darted hither and there and then swayed. She also stretched out her arm slightly and swayed it in imitation of the movement. She swayed her whole body to the
rhythm - for just a second but that was sufficient to tell him what she was, the greatest dancer of the century. Then story goes ahead along with the characters. Marco is busy with his research and does not pay attention to Rosie. Raju is busy with both at the first then with her only. There is dispute between Rosie and Marco. In the curse of time and story, Raju dismisses his taxi friend Ghaffar because he doesn’t want Ghaffar to be constantly watching his movements. At the hotel scene Raju confirms his love with Rosie to pass a whole night with her in a same room.

It is to be noted that the entire chapter, a very long one, deals with Raju's past, and Raju is the narrator throughout. He played the role of a tourist guide to perfection and in this chapter he shows himself equally adapt as a lover. In his affair with Rosie lies the germ of all his future troubles.

The sixth chapter returns to the present with Raju performing the role of a holy man with zeal for Velan and his fellow villagers and enjoying his status as a saint. But there is bad news all around that the drought is getting severe, the cattle are dying, food is scarce, shopkeepers are hoarding supplies and charging much more prices and the tense and harassed villagers are getting into fights on the slightest pretext. Raju interferes and settles a major dispute, prompting villagers from the entire area to look on him as their saviour. Due to miss correspondence by Velan's half minded brother Raju has to keep the fast for rain. It is now that Velan informs him that they expect him to undertake a ritual fast to end the drought, Raju is in a dilemma. He knows full well that he is no holy man with supernatural powers. He decides that it is time to drop the pretence and confess to Velan. So when Velan arrived alone the next night, he took him to the river steps and began pouring his story into his ears. He began,

“I am not a saint, pay attention to what I am going to say. I am not a saint, Velan, I'm just an ordinary human being like anyone else. Listen to my story. You will know it yourself.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Guide*)
The river trickling away made no noise. The dry leaves of the peepul tree rustled. Somewhere a jackal howled. And Raju's voice filled the night. Velan listened to him without uttering a word of surprise or interjection, in all humility. Only he looked a little more serious than usual, and there were lines of care on his face.

The seventh chapter deals once again with the past action. Raju feels most crises in his life. It is as part of Raju's confession that we get to know about his affair with Rosie. While Marco remains busy with his work at the Peak House on Mempi Hills, Raju and Rosie spend endless hours in a hotel in Malgudi. Rosie feels that Raju is giving her a new lease of life by encouraging her to dance indeed, this is the main reason why she is attracted to Raju, even though she feels guilty about betraying Marco. However, she gives away her secret with a chance remark and the enraged Marco leaves Malgudi, refusing to take her with him. Rosie has no option but to move into Raju's house, where her dancing and indeed her very presence, scandalises Raju's mother and uncle. Raju's financial worries were also increasing. The sales were going down, his income was decreasing and the wholesale dealer refused to give him any more credit and soon the shop was almost empty. The travellers did not get what they wanted and there were complaints. His contract was terminated and the shop was given to another contractor. Frustrated and angry he beat the boy for he felt that he had been dishonest, must have pocketed the money and eaten up the stuff. His father, the porter, came up and told Raju that not his son, but the devil in his home, i.e., Rosie had deceived him. Raju was furious and tried to assault him. At this the station master intervened and asked him not to create disturbance, otherwise he will prohibit his entry on the platform. It was an ugly scene and the situation was saved only by the arrival of his mother who dragged him back to home. It was an unedifying spectacle and to his great charging Rosie had witnessed it all from the house door. Thus, Raju's association with the railways ended.

The eighth chapter deals with the troubles of Raju. Further complications soon arose. Raju's creditor was a Seth, a wholesale cloth merchant in Market Road and Raju owed him eight thousand rupees. Soon he visited Raju, told him that the due interest has not been paid for months and months and demanded his money. When Raju wanted some time, he said that he would grant him one week. At this Raju laughed despite himself and the Seth was highly offended. He filed a criminal case alleging that he had been beaten up when he went to Raju to recover the loan. Raju
was thus involved in litigation. He consulted Gaffur and engaged a lawyer who was reputed to be an 'adjournment expert'. The idea was that the case should go on and on for years and in the meanwhile Raju will be none the worse for it. But it all meant heavy expenditure and much trouble for Raju. Gaffur, the best and sincere friend gives him advice to earn money by Bharat Natyam. Raju asks for five hundred rupees to start his business. In reply Gaffar smiles at him and reply him negatively and also advises Raju to return back to his ordinary life. At this Raju was upset and said things which offended Gaffur. He went away telling him to call him if ever he needed a taxi and Raju knew that another friend had passed out of his life.

Raju’s mother doesn’t like Rosie in her home but Raju doesn’t listen to his mother. She writes a letter to call her brother who is physically as well as mentally strong. When Raju meets his uncle in his home he is surprised to see him in his home. He also advises and threatens Raju for Rosie but Raju is not ready to leave her. At this Raju lost all self control, attacked his uncle and ordered him to get out of his house. His mother came in running and blamed Rosie for all the trouble. Rosie sobbed and wept bitterly. Raju consoled her saying:

“Shut your ears to all that they say. Let them say what they like. Let them exhaust themselves. But you are not leaving. I’m going to be here, and you are going to be here. Others who don’t like the arrangement are welcome to leave.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Guide*)

They insist that Rosie should go away and return to her home and her husband. When Raju does not permit this to happen, the mother decides that she would leave them and go and live with her brother in the village. Raju must choose between his mother and Rosie. It is all very painful, but Raju cannot give up Rosie. The upshot is that his mother leaves for the village with her brother. After her departure, Rosie and Raju live as a married couple for all practical purposes. She dances and sings, he makes love to her constantly and forgetful of everything else. But the hard realities of life have to be faced sooner or later. And very soon, it is Rosie who awakens him to the reality. She has acquired sufficient practice, she must have the accompaniments and they must go out and do something for their livelihood. Raju agrees with her and began to make plans for their future. The only silver lining
is that, through Raju's efforts, Rosie gets her first commercial dance engagement at the annual social of the Albert Mission School. In keeping with her new persona as a serious exponent of Bharat Natyam, Rosie adopts the stage name 'Nalini.'

The Ninth chapter deals with the warm help of Raju, Rosie is at the top of sky in her career. She first performs her dance in the Albert College function. Nalini (Rosie) is on the tongue and in the hearts of the people. Raju has to sell out his father’s house as a court’s judgment to pay the debt of Seth. But now Raju has no grievances about his house and enjoys his days in mansion of Rosie. Their engagements multiply and they are paid whatever they demanded. Engagements are finalised three or four months in advance. They go to every corner of South India and wherever Rosie performs she draws packed house and it is heartily applauded and cheered. Raju manages all her affairs. She is devoted to her art and cares for nothing else. He opens an account in her name, for he is afraid that if the money is in his name it will be attached by the Seth. Raju himself confesses to Velan that he has a large staff of servants - a driver for car, two gardeners for the garden, a Gurkha sentry at the gate with a dagger at his waist and two cooks because their entertainments are beginning to grow. Wealth has clearly corrupted by Raju, though it has left Rosie strangely untouched. Raju's comfortable self serving existence is suddenly disrupted by two events. Inexplicably, Marco sends a copy of his book on the Mempi Hill caves. The insecure Raju hides it from Rosie for fear that it will lead her to admire Marcos accomplishments. Unfortunately, Rosie reacts a review of the book and then discovers that Raju has concealed it from her. The ensuing quarrel is the first major rift in their relationship. Then Raju intercepts a letter from Marcos lawyers addressed to Rosie, requesting her signature for releasing a box of jewellery, held at a bank in their joint names. Feeling afraid that Rosie might want to reestablish contact with Marco and yet not wishing to forego her claim to the jewels, Raju forges Rosie's signature on the document. Within days, he is arrested and imprisoned for forgery.

The tenth chapter narrates that Rosie succeeds in getting Raju out on a ten thousand rupee bail after three days in the police lock up, but their relationship is never the same again. She discovers that there is very little money left in her bank account and is amazed that her tremendous earnings have been wasted by Raju in luxurious living. After initially refusing to dance again, Rosie realises that she must continue, at least to be able to pay for Raju's trial. Once again she is flooded with
engagements but the difference now is that she manages her career herself, without Raju's help. When the trial begins, Raju's expensive adjournment lawyer (paid for by Rosie) tries to portray him as the hero who has saved Rosie from the clutches of an insensitive and diabolical husband. But the circumstantial evidence gleaned from Raju's secretary Mani, the postmaster and the handwriting expert are too damming, and Raju is sentenced to two years in prison. In prison, Raju is a model inmate, always ready to counsel and assist and tell moral tales and soon even the most hardened criminals begin to call him vadhyar or teacher. But his only visitor is Mani who informs him that Rosie has left Malgudi and has settled in Madras. The only thing she has carried with him is the book of her husband. She was able to look after her affairs well and continues to enjoy wide popularity. Raju is much pleased to learn that she has not gone back to her husband but is living independently. Rosie as well as his uncle (his mother having died in the interim), appear to have cut off all connection with him and so when he is released, he has nowhere to go.

Raju's long confessional tale is over in the eleventh chapter. He had hoped that by telling it, he would be able to prove to Velan that he was no saint and hence that he would not be able to redeem the villagers from the drought but Velan is unmoved. India has had a long tradition of saints who were formerly sinners and to his simple faith, Raju is yet another incarnation of that illustrious paradigm. So the die is cast and Raju has to fast, standing in the dwindling water of the river, praying for rain. For the first few nights he clandestinely eats from a secret hoard of food but soon that, too, runs out. In the meantime hordes of villagers flock from distant places to witness the holy ritual, newspapers report it, an American television company arrives to shoot the whole event as a documentary film and government officials send teams of doctors to report on the Swami’s health. On the eleventh day of the fast, an extremely weak Raju collapses in the water, muttering:

“Velan, it's raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs.” 15

(Narayan, R.K. The Guide)

And he sags down. Thus, entire novel ends with the end of the protagonist Raju. The novel opens with the entry of Raju and ends with him only.
(2) Swami and Friends (1935)

The present novel extended to nineteen chapters and names of the chapters are as following:

1. Monday Morning
2. Rajam and Mani
3. Swami’s Grandmother
4. What is a Tail
5. Father’s Room
6. A Friend in Need
7. A New Arrival
8. Before the Examination
9. School Breaks Up
10. The Coachman’s Son
11. In Father’s Presence
12. Broken Panes
13. The M.C.C
14. Granny Shows Her Ignorance
15. Before the Match
16. Swami Disappears
17. The Day Of the Match
18. The Return
19. Parting Present

The first chapter, Monday Morning opens on Monday as per its title suggests. Here we are introduced with some children Swaminathan or Swami, the child hero of the novel, to his school, The Albert Mission School, to his teachers and to his friends, Somu, Mani, Shankar and Samuel, the Pea.

The action takes place in the town named Malgudi as Narayan used to narrate, situated on the bank of the river Sarayu. The river has a bridge over it and it is visible with the trains passing over it, from the windows of the school.
Swami does not like to go to school on Monday, having enjoyed the freedom of Saturday and Sunday. Swami is a student of the First Form (Section A). He reaches the class in time and we are introduced to the fire-eyed Vedanayagan, the class teacher and also arithmetic teacher. Swami does not like him. Then comes the history period and the teacher is Dr. Pillai. It is followed by the scripture period and the teacher, Ebenezar who is an extreme Christian. He constantly criticises and abuses Hindu Gods who, for him, are merely so many pieces of stone. When Swami puts a question, his ear is severely pulled and pinched. Swami complains to his father who writes a long letter to the Headmaster asking him to take action against the teacher, otherwise Hindu boys will be withdrawn from the school and the matter referred to higher authorities. But nothing comes out of it.

Swami is not a good student but his life at school is not entirely unhappy for he has four good friends. We get detailed pen portraits of these friends. One of them is Somu, the monitor of the class. He was more or less the uncle of the class, adds Narayan in a humorous vein. Then there is Mani, the Mighty-Good-For-Nothing. Narayan narrates him as:

“Wearing his cap at an angle, with a Tamil novel under his arm, he had been coming to the school ever since the old school peon could remember. In most of the classes he stayed longer than his friends did.”

(Narayan, R.K. *Swami and Friends*)

Swaminathan was proud of his friendship. While others crouched in awe, he could address him as ‘Mani’ with gusto and pat him on the back familiarly. The third friend is Shanker, the most brilliant boy of the class. He gets marks as high as ninety per cent and can answer any questions that are put to him. Swami’s fourth friend is Samuel, called the Pea, because of his small size. There is nothing uncommon about him, for he is neither a good student, nor physically remarkable. The only bond between them was laughter.

In this chapter we remark the child psychology which is observed by Narayan.

The second chapter, *Rajam and Mani* opens with the Narayan’s word for his Malgudi. He praises about Malgudi;
“River Sarayu was the pride of Malgudi. It was some ten minutes walk from Ellaman Street, the last street of the town, chiefly occupied by oil mongers. Its sand banks were the evening resort of all the people of the town. The Municipal President took any distinguished visitor to the top of the townhall and proudly pointed to him the river Sarayu in moonlight, glistering like a silver bell across the north.”

(Narayan, R.K. Swami and Friends)

In the present chapter we have a new character named Rajam. Swami becomes the victim of Mani and Rajam for a while. Swami is much more impressed by Rajam, especially by his manners and his carefree conduct. He is as cleaver as Shankar. In a very short time he becomes a centre of attraction of the class. He dresses well with cap, tie and shoes with socks. He always comes to school by car. He has good command over English language but Mani does not like all this things and also warns Swami to stay away from Rajam. In addition Swami admits that he does not break his friendship for Rajam. But heart in hearts Swami likes Rajam.

Once in a class Swami stood between Mani and Rajam and played a role of mediator. The teacher came to know that Swami did not pay attention to the class so some questions were put to him. He was not able to give the answer and asked to stand on the bench. After the class Mani called Rajam to come next morning on the banks of the river near Nallappa's Grove. Swami once again becomes “the cord of communication”. Swami informed Mani that Rajam’s father is the Superintendent of Police but Mani does not care for it. From the conversation of Mani and Rajam we can enjoy R.K. Narayan’s humour. Finally they met on the decided place Rajam with gun and Mani with his clubs. Eventually they become a good friends and Swami is happy with their friendship. This conclusion was much to the relief of Swami, for he admired Rajam and wanted to be friends with him. As a sign of goodwill, Rajam offered some biscuits and Mani gladly accepted them.

The third chapter, Swami's Grandmother is actually devoted to the grandmother only. The second part of the same chapter deals with Swami's father and the third one is devoted to the visit of Swami and Mani to the house of Rajam. The
narration is enlivened from time to time by Narayan's verbal humour. Narayan narrates the grandmother’s room with humour; It was made of;

“five carpets, three bed sheets, and five pillows, a square box made of jute fiber, and a small wooden box containing copper coins, cardamoms, cloves, and areca nut.” 18

(Narayan, R.K. Swami and Friends)

Swami talks about Rajam and his father to grandmother. She might understand it and keeps on talking about her husband. Next, Swami begins to narrate the adventure of Rajam with two tigers one of whom was shot down by the brave boy. The grandmother is all admiration for Swami’s hero. Swami, however, doubts that she was praising Rajam only to please him otherwise she did not believe in the story; for the very next moment she started narrating the story of Harishchandra who suffered so much only because he always remained true to his words. In the midst of the story, Swami went to sleep and adds the novelist humorously;

“her narration was punctuated with his rhythmic snoring.”19

(Narayan, R.K. Swami and Friends)

Time passed and it was Saturday afternoon. As Sundays and Saturdays came, Swami did not like to waste them at home. He was eager to go off to his friends and impatiently waited for the departure of his father for his office. He pretended to read but in reality watched closely every detail of his preparation to go to his office. He went out but was called in by the mother to the great annoyance of Swami, who had almost stood up to go out. As soon as he was gone, Swami also began to move out. To her mother, who wished that he should obey his father and stay at home, he replied that he was going to his drawing teacher. He had called him, so he must go, otherwise he would fail in the subject.

First Swami went to Mani and then the two together went to Rajam. They were much amazed to see the large room of Rajam with his books arranged neatly on a big table, with a time piece. Rajam showed them his almirah full of toys and gave them permission to handle anything they pleased. In a short while Swaminathan was
running an engine all over the room, Mani was shooting arrow after arrow from a bow, at the opposite wall. When he was tired of it, he took up the air gun devastated the furniture around with lead balls. Next, coffee with some snacks was brought for them by the cook. Rajam tried to snub him in order to impress his friends with the power and authority he had but the cook was more than a match for him. First he tried to argue with Rajam, and then walked off with the snacks telling him to come to the kitchen if he wanted the eatables. He had to go to the kitchen and bring in the snacks and the coffee himself. In order to hide his humiliation, he told his friends that he kicked the cook for his impertinence and at the time he was lying unconscious in the kitchen.

The entire forth chapter, *What Is a Tail* is a perfect narration of child psychology. In this chapter we can see the typical school boys. Swami is teased by his three friends by calling him a tail of Rajam. Swami is much more impressed by a new comer, Rajam and Swami praises him a lot. He is full of admiration for Rajam, he is his hero and he himself is his devoted follower. The result is that his former friends Somu, Shanker and the Pea begin to cut him off and nicknamed him 'the tail', or to be more precise “Rajam's tail”. This becomes clear on one particular Friday, when the geography period was vacant and Swami searched for his friends through the school. Swami wanted to participate in the game that was going on but he was neither welcomed nor allowed to participate in the game. It was a rude shock for Swami, the worst of his life. Rather they talked about the tail and what it meant;

“There are people who can be very efficient as tails”, said the Pea. The rest laughed at this.

'You said tail, didn't you?’ asked Shankar.

'What makes you talk of tail now?' 'It is just my pleasure. What do you care? It doesn't apply to you anyway', said the Pea.

'I am glad to hear it, but does it apply to anyone here?' asked Shankar. 'It may.' 'What is a tail?' “A long thing that attaches itself to an ass or a dog.”'20

(Narayan, R.K. *Swami and Friends*)
Swami got the situation and was in position that he could neither stop nor move. Anyhow he reached at his home. As soon as he reached at home he forgot the problems of school and about his friends. His reaction and his thoughts have been given by the novelist in a humorous vein. For example, he makes a paper boat, puts an ant in it as its passenger and closely watches its movements with boyish curiosity and pleasure;

“He watched in rapture its quick motion. He held his breath when the boat with its cargo neared a danger zone formed by stuck-up bits of straw and other odds and ends. The boat made a beautiful swerve to the right and avoided destruction. It went on and on. It neared a fatal spot where the waters were swirling round and round in eddies. Swaminathan was certain that his boat was nearing its last moment. He had no doubt that it was going to be drawn right to the bottom of the circling eddies. The boat whirled madly round, shaking and swaying and quivering. Providentially a fresh supply of water from the kitchen in the neighbour's house pushed it from behind out of danger. But it rushed on at a fearful speed, and Swaminathan felt that it was going to turn turtle. Presently it calmed, and resumed a normal speed. But when it passed under a tree, a thick dry leaf fell down and upset it. Swaminathan ran frantically to the spot to see if he could save at least the ant. He peered long into the water, but there was no sign of the ant. The boat and its cargo were wrecked beyond recovery. He took a pinch of earth, uttered a prayer for the soul of the ant, and dropped it into the gutter.”21

(Narayan, R.K. Swami and Friends)

The entire episode is humorous in the extreme.

Swami felt most unhappy and wretched at school and wanted to talk to his former friends and put jokes with them as usual but it was no longer possible. One day, he was loitering about in the compound and soon he had the uncomfortable
feeling that he was being followed by his three former friends. It was very awkward for him to have eyes behind his ears. Narayan writes;

“He believed that every minute movement of his body was being watched and commented on by the three followers. He felt that his gait was showing unfavourably in their eyes. He felt they were laughing at the way in which he carried his books. There was a slight itching on his nape; his hand almost rose, but he checked it, feeling that the scratching would be studiously watched by the six keen eyes.”

(Narayan, R.K. Swami and Friends)

He wanted to escape but also did not want to do anything that would be regarded as an act of cowardice. So

“he tried a trick. He stopped, turned this way and that, as if looking for something, and then cried aloud: 'Oh, I have left my notebook somewhere', raised his hand and was off from the spot like a stag.”

(Narayan, R.K. Swami and Friends)

The fifth chapter, Father’s Room is conveniently divided into three parts. The first part deals with Swami's preparations for the visit of Rajam, the second part gives an account of the visit itself and the third part deals with the fight between Somu and Mani. It was on the Saturday afternoon Rajam was to visit Swami. Swami wanted to create a good impression on his friend who was a V.I.P, the son of a Superintendent of Police. Narayan has perfectly drawn the character of Swami. Swami instructs each and every members of his family. He first cleaned his table and arranged his books properly. Then he talked to his Granny. She was too old, and so he wanted that she should not come in when Rajam was with him. Next, he went to his mother and suggested that she should prepare something nice and sweet for the afternoon tea. The cook also should change his dirty dhoti and put on a clean shirt and dhoti. Then he went to his father of whom he was a little afraid and requested him to allow him the use of his room for Rajam's visit in the afternoon. To his great surprise and pleasure,
his father agreed. Everything was going on smoothly and he looked forward to the pleasure of entertaining his friend at his home.

During Rajam's visit everything went on smoothly. They were together for three hours and talked on a number of subjects. Only the cook did not change his dhoti and appeared before Swami’s hero in the same old dhoti. Rajam, too, put some awkward questions. Swami was somewhat confused to answer them but somehow he arranged them and Rajam swallowed them hardly. Swaminathan made desperate attempts to change the topic. His grandmother was not sleeping as Swami had hoped. She was sitting in her bed, and she told Rajam that she was old and blind and could not see his face well. She talked to Rajam. Swami was angry for he thought she should not have talked such nonsense. But she stroked Rajam’s hair asked him a number of questions about his mother and his brothers and sisters. Rajam also delighted her much by telling her about Madras and its cinemas, trains and buses. Thus, the visit ended on a happy note.

On the next day of the visit somebody had written ‘Rajam’s Tail’ on the black board and Swami suspected that it might be written by Pea and Shankar and he slapped them and there was a fierce fighting among them first of all in the school and then outside of the school. Mani stood aside by Swami and Shankar with the Pea. The fierce fighting between Mani and Somu took place. The fighting was so violent and deadly that the three youngsters thought that the two would murder each other. In great panic, they rushed to the headmaster and told him that two murders were being committed in the school field. The headmaster came to the spot and easily parted the two boys and thus put an end to the fight. Swami was much surprised at this, for he had thought that the strength possessed by Somu and Mani was not possessed by anyone else.

In the following chapter, A Friend in Need, the story goes ahead with the friends. Three weeks passed. Then one afternoon Swami and Mani went on a visit to Rajam’s house. Rajam had told them that he would have some surprise for them. They knocked at the door of Rajam's room and as soon as he opened the door, they pretended to be a blind kitten and a blind puppy and crawled into the room as such. As they had closed their eyes, they did not see that Somu, Shanker, and Pea were there. Indeed, they touched and fondled their feet and when they did open their eyes
they saw that they had touched the feet of Somu, Shanker and the Pea. Their surprise and discomfiture can better be imagined than described. The whole incident is highly entertaining. They were angry with Rajam, for they thought he had played a dirty trick on them but Rajam soon pacified them by praising their performance as the kitten and the puppy. He then proceeded to give them a long lecture on the value of friendship and the infinite torture to which those who harbour enmity are subjected in Hell. So vivid and eloquent, was he, that the boys were terrified. In the end, he offered them handsome gifts, if they would become friends and give up their hostility. The gifts were attractive, they were already terrified and so the upshot was that they soon shook hands and left as very good friends.

In the seventh chapter, A New Arrival of novel a new character of an infant child, a younger brother of Swami is introduced. Mother was in bed for the last two days, she could not come to the kitchen and Swami felt most uncomfortable without her. At night, he was allowed to sleep with Granny. He felt quite cosy but before he eventually fell asleep, he was conscious of the strange things that were going on. Next morning at school, Swami told the Pea of the arrival of his new baby brother. He did not like him, for he looked so very funny. He says;

‘Oh like him. He is hardly anything. Such a funny-looking creature', said Swaminathan and gave what he thought was an imitation of his little brother: he shut his eyes, compressed his lips, folded his hands on his chest, protruded his tongue, and tilted his head from side to side.”

(Narayan, R.K. Swami and Friends)

The following chapter, Before the Examinations is full of child psychology. Days passed, April arrived and exams were very near to the students. Really T.S.Eliot perfectly wrote in ‘The Waste Land’ that; “April is the cruelest month” All the students clang to their study and Swami’s father, quite naturally, now wanted that his son should devote more time to his studies and often rebuked him when he saw the boy wasting his time. Swami thought he was changing and growing more fussy and difficult every day. However, his words had some effect on his son when he warned him that, if he failed, his juniors would become his classmates and his friends would
become his seniors and would no longer like to mix up with him. At school also everybody seemed;

“to be overwhelmed by the thought of the examinations.”

(Narayan, R.K. Swami and Friends)

His friends hardly exchanged even a few words with him; they were so busy with their preparations. Somehow or the other, the boys were under the impression that the school clerk knew all about the question papers and he could help them a lot. Therefore, one day, Mani visited him with a gift of brinjals and Mani asked him bluntly to tell him a few important questions. The clerk did not refuse but told him vaguely that it is good to prepare maps, to solve five problems every day for Maths, and as regards English, there is nothing to worry about if he has read all the lessons. Mani comes away fully satisfied and readers enjoy the fun of it. He wanted to share his knowledge with Swami. So one day as they were going home, Mani took him into confidence and told him that last evening he prepared a number of maps and they may be in the question paper. He warned Swami not to reveal the information to anyone else and Swami was much impressed by his seriousness. Reaching home, Swami felt dull and bored so he wanted to go out to his friends but his father had strictly ordered him not to go out in the evening till the exams were over. Of course, after that he would be free to pass his time in the way he liked. So, he sat at the table and drew a map of Europe as best as he could. When his father returned home, he was much pleased to find his son at work.

Only two days were left for the commencement of the exams. Swami prepared a list of his needs for the exams. He thought that the list was not comprehensive enough but his father who was not in the right mood that evening was furious, at the sight of it. He thought all that was not needed and it was sheer wastage. However, he told Swami to take from him the most essential items; the other items in his view were not needed at all. He should be more economical, for rupees, annas and paisas did not drop from the sky. It was a great disappointment to Swami.

The ninth chapter, School Breaks Up opens on the last day of the examination. It was the last day Swami came twenty minutes earlier than other students and his friends. He felt it was a mistake to have come out so early. The bell rang at exact five.
Time was over, and the boys poured out into the school compound. There was much laughing and talking too and much witticism, with the teacher Ebenezar. There were great fun among the students and teachers.

Then the Headmaster came out and addressed the students. He told them that the school would remain closed till the 19th of June and would reopen on the 20th. They should read story books in the vacation and also glance through the prescribed text books for the next class, to which he hoped, most of them would be promoted. It was followed by a short prayer, and then the boys were told to disperse.

At the gate, Mani began snatching ink bottles and pens from all and sundry and breaking them. Swami, too, joined him. It was great fun. They poured ink on each other’s faces, and laughed loudly as they did so. The fun went on till Saligram, the school peon, came out with a stick and dispersed the revellers.

The tenth chapter of the novel is The Coachman’s Son. As vacation was going on all the students were enjoying their days. Swami desired to get a hoop. Narayan writes;

“He dreamt one night that he crossed the Sarayu near Nallappa's Grove 'on' his wheel. It was a vivid dream: the steel wheel crunched on the sandy bed of the river as it struggled and heaved across. It became a sort of horse when it reached the other bank. It went back home in one leap, took him to the kitchen, and then to his bed, and lay down beside him. This was fantastic; but the early part of the dream was real enough. It nearly maddened him to wake to a hopeless morning.”

(Narayan, R.K. Swami and Friends)

Swami made frantic efforts to get a hoop. He took a coachman into his confidence. The coachman told him that he had some magic herbs and with their help he could transform six paise into six rupees, which would suffice to get a hoop. So Swami was taken in by his eloquence and persuasion and made hectic efforts to get six paise. His granny and mother had no money at all; father rejected the request in a second. Then he put two pebbles in a cardboard box, covered them with some grass, placed the box
on the shrine before the gods and performed pooja: He closed his eyes and muttered. All his efforts were in vain. At last he decided to meet his close friend Mani but Mani informed him that he had no money of his own. At Swami’s suggestion they looked for the money in the uncle’s box and it was probably in this way that the money was arranged for and duly paid to the coachman. Considered time had passed but nothing came out of the efforts of the coachman. Swami realised that he had been cheated. So he approached Rajam and requested him to arrange for a policeman. He complained to his friend Mani too. After a long discussion Mani made a plan to teach a lesson to a coachman and his son. Mani planed to kidnap coachman’s son. Everything was going on according to the pre plan and Swami’s role was to point out the son of coachman. Mani befriended coachman’s son and then Mani tried to tempt him by showing him a top and telling him that he had a much larger top at home and he would give it to him, if only he would come with him. The boy said he had no objection but first he wanted to see the top which Mani had with him. As soon as he had the top in his hands, he ran away with it and in the twinkling of an eye disappeared in his hovel. They knocked at the door but to no avail. Next, some dogs were let loose on them and then they ran in fear of their lives.

The eleventh chapter, *In Father’s Presence* deals with the description of summer vacation and children’s play. During summers it was very hot in Malgudi. But the summer sun which kept people inside their homes, made Swami, Mani and Rajam loath to remain under a roof. Noons and afternoons were the most pleasant time for them and hence on the afternoon in question we find them seated on a small culvert half a mile outside the municipal limits. Just then a bullock cart, driven by a boy, came along the deserted road. The three friends decided to have some fun. They stopped the cart, ordered the boy to get down and said that they were the police and that the culvert was weak, they will not permit him to move on, unless he showed them his pass. The boy had no pass; he was frightened and begged and prayed to them to let him move on. They asked him a number of questions, Swami noted down his name, address, etc., in the notebook which he always carried with him, the three friends signed the page, tore it and gave it to the driver. He was then allowed to move on. The episode is relevant, for teenagers, like Swami and his friends, do indulge in such pranks, but it is not so very humorous as it very well could have been.
The father’s promise was forgotten and one fine afternoon he was not allowed to go out to his friends. His father taught him arithmetic. He was asked to solve a simple sum. But he could not strong enough to solve even a simple sum. After much toil of his father’s he gave an answer whatever came in his mind. Then his father turned his ear and explained the sum. On the next day his father felt sorry for his anger on Swami and put an offer to him to come with him to the club in a car. He was so happy and dreamt of his friends and wished that his friends must see him, sited in the car. With proud he passed his journey to the club and in the club he saw his great enemy - coachman’s son. He was afraid to see him here. With heavy heart he returned to his car with his father.

The twelfth chapter, Broken Panes opens on 15th of August 1930. The struggle for Indian freedom was on, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. A prominent worker, Gauri Shanker, had been arrested in Bombay and protest meetings were organised in Malgudi also. An eloquent speaker moved the audience by his fiery speech. Mani and Swami joined in the audience and were much impressed by the speech. The speaker tried to awake the Indians and said that England is a very small country even though they ruled over our country and we were all enslaves of them. In order to put an end to their slavery, they must not wear cloth manufactured in the mills of England, but wear only Khadi. The upshot was a bonfire and imported cloth was burnt in large quantities. Swami’s cap was also burnt, though later on Swami’s father told him that it was made of Khaddar and not of any imported cloth. Swami joined to a boy who was collecting stones to break the panes of the Headmaster’s room. The next day was crucial for Swami. The headmaster asked the students about their absent of yesterday. All the students gave their answers. Swami’s turn came at the same time peon disclosed that he was indulge in the yesterday’s activity of smashing doors and windows. Poor Swami could not deny the charge. He could not bear the strokes of the Headmaster’s cane and cried out, “Don't beat me, sir, it pains”. But the beating continued. Swami became desperate and with the courage born of desperation, burst out, “I don't care for your dirty school” and ran out with his books. Thus came to a sudden end his educational career at the Albert Mission School, Malgudi.
The title of the thirteenth chapter is *The M.C.C*. The second chapter opens with the character of Swami. Swami becomes so stubborn that his father had him admitted to the Second (C) of the Board High School. It was considered to be inferior to the Albert Mission School. All the friends were scattered but only Mani and Rajam were with him. Once Rajam came to Swami and advised him to forget about the political issues and to resume their friendship once again. Rajam had an idea to form a cricket team. Various names were considered for the team but at last they decided to call their team by M.C.C. (Malgudi Cricket Club).

A catalogue of sports goods of a reputed firm of Madras, Messrs Binns, was arranged for and an order for their requirements was placed with it by Captain Rajam. A few days later, when they received a post card, they thought it was from Messrs Binns but in reality it was from Shanker. He told them he was doing well and that he was there with his parents. The three friends decided to separately reply to him and his letter was copied out with necessary modifications. It was after this that they discovered to their great discomfiture that Shanker had not given his address and that they did not know even the name of the town from where the letter was posted. The readers are much amused; boys are boys after all.

To their great delight, after the much waiting a letter from Messrs Binns arrived along with a large catalogue. However, it was not clear if Messrs Binns would send them the desired goods or not. The firm had asked for 25% as advance, but the three friends failed to understand its meaning. They then decided that the letter had been sent to Rajam by mistake. In reality it was meant for somebody else. Hence the letter was returned with the following funny covering letter;

“We are very sorry that you sent me somebody's letter. We are returning this somebody's letter. Please send our things immediately.”

(Narayan, R.K. *Swami and Friends*)

The whole episode is highly amusing and another tribute to R.K. Narayan's knowledge and understanding of the psychology of boys. Boys are very optimistic, and so were Swami and his friends. They were hopeful that the goods ordered for by them would soon arrive but there was no response. There were no bats, balls and
stumps. Then Rajam made three bats out of the bottom of a dealwood case and also obtained three old tennis balls from the club of his father. A patch of ground adjacent to Rajam's house was to be used as the field and the Pea promised to get the stumps which he knew were there somewhere in his house. So, an early date was fixed for the inauguration of their club. On the appointed day and time, they waited and waited for the Pea to come with the stumps. When at last he did come, he was without the stumps, which he said, he could not find even after a long search, though he was still sure, they were in the house. At last they found out a way to overcome the difficulty. A part of the wall of Rajam's house was marked out as the stumps and so they began to play. It was in this way that the M.C.C. was inaugurated. Swami bowled and Rajam was declared out with the very first ball. They shouted with joy and gave him the title, “Tate”.

The fourteenth chapter, Granny Shows her Ignorance poses the conversation and conduct of Swami with his loving grandmother. In this chapter Swami was once again happy with his company of friends but as the same time he was unhappy also because his new school was somewhat strict for Swami. He had to attain all the lectures and having completed the classes they had to go for the drill and sport class. It was much complicated for poor Swami to reach at the cricket ground at decided time for practice.

He told about the cricket to his Granny but his Granny could not understand about it but she was suffering from the stomach pain so she called Swami to take lemon for her from the market. Swami was so excited about the match that he forgot to bring the lemon. All of sudden he remembered the lemon and Granny on the playground and ran to the house. Having reached home, he saw that his Granny was all right and asked about the pain. He talked with her about the cricket and Tate but she was totally unaware of it. He shocked to learn it.

The match was to be played a few days later, but still Swami was unable to reach the playground in time. He could not practice bowling, as he ought to have done. Captain Rajam disapproved of his coming to the playground so late every evening. It was the school time table which made him late, despite his best efforts to the contrary. He was afraid to approach the Headmaster for exemption from the drill class, for he may detain him in the Second Form for ages. But it was essential that
Swami should be free to devote more time to bowling. So, Rajam decided to see the Headmaster himself and request him to exempt Swami from the drill class and Mani said that he, too, would go with his clubs which had not been used for a long time. Swami was afraid for he knew that the Headmaster “would kill” him, if not in their presence, certainly when they were gone. But Rajam insisted on seeing him the very next day, but he ordered Mani not to come. He should mind his own business. Swami was afraid of consequences and so next morning he decided not to go to school. He made his eyes red by rubbing them, complained of severe headache and also that he was feeling feverish. His father was not taken in by his pretensions which he knew were made because he did not want to go to school, but his mother stood up for him and was made to remain lying in bed.

By the afternoon, Swami was tired of bed. He also supposed that by then, Rajam must have already met the Headmaster and then gone to his own school. So, he announced that he was well and that he was going to school. On the way he met Rajam and also Mani with his club. Rajam had waited for him and he did not see the Headmaster because there was no point in meeting him alone. Now he went into his room with Swami, while Mani waited outside. They found the terrible Headmaster asleep with his head between his hands and his elbow resting on the table. The readers are much amused at this little comedy, this deflation of the teacher. The boys waited for ten minutes and then made noises with their feet in order to awaken him. He woke up, searched for his spectacles and then talked to the boys.

He was firm and sarcastic. He refused to listen to what they did in the Pariah School (The Albert Mission School), nor did he agree to grant exemption from the drill class. Rajam was irritated and Mani who had been waiting outside, grew impatient and came in with his club. The interview and the chapter ended with the following dialogue;

“‘Who is this?’ asked the Headmaster, looking at Mani sourly. ‘What do you want’?

'Nothing', Mani replied and quietly stood in a corner.

'I can't understand why every fellow who finds nothing to do comes and stands in my room.'
'I am the Police Superintendent's son', Rajam said abruptly.

'Is this so? Find out from your father what he was doing on the day a gang of little rascals came in and smashed these windows. What is the thing that fellow has in his hand?'

'My wooden club', Mani answered.

Rajam added, 'He breaks skulls with it. Come out, Mani, come on, Swami. There is nothing doing with this—this madcap.’”

(Narayan, R.K. Swami and Friends)

In the fifteenth chapter, Before the Match, the M.C.C. challenged the Young Men's Union to a friendly match and the challenge was accepted and the match fixed for a Sunday two weeks later. The challenge, of course, was not so very friendly. Days passed and all clung to the practice. Swami could not come at the proper time on the ground due to his drill and scout class. Only seven days were left for the match Swami was much in tension about the cricket practice. In the school, he had a mind wave and he did not perform the drill. He tried to make his teacher that doctor advised him to take the rest, so he wanted to go home. In this way, Swami could reach on the practice ground. On the next day he had a new mind wave, he visited his family doctor for his fake medical certificate but doctor denied of it and he ensured Swami that he would talk to his Headmaster about. Now Swami was free about the bunking the drill and scout classes. Once Headmaster came in the period of geography and asked about his constant absence in the classes. On account of this charge Swami gave clarification to the Headmaster about his family doctor but Headmaster was not ready to swallow it and he remembered his friends, Mani and Rajam. Headmaster canned him in the class among the students and he snatched away the cane and ran from there and decided not to attain it again. In this way he also left his second school.

Swami would not like to go home back because of his activity. He knew very well that there was no any school in Malgudi. He thought about his job. Before leaving there he decided to meet Rajam in his old school. He was thinking about his
past days when he reached near his former school. With the help of a boy, he managed to meet Rajam but Swami didn’t say about his plans. Then, he walked on the road and thought about where to go.

The sixteenth chapter, *Swami Disappears* narrates Swami’s adventures. He did not go home at that day and all were worried about him in the home. It was nine o’clock and his father also worried about Swami. All the family members thought negatively.

In the beginning, his father was not so very nervous but as time passed his own fears increased and he began to have visions of various horrible possibilities. He dared not enter the Civil Hospital, for there he might find his son bandaged all over and reduced to pulp. He went to the river and was terrified with the vision of his son, dead and bloated with the water of the river. At the railway track seeing some moisture, he touched it which his hands and was much relieved to find that it was water and not blood.

In this chapter Narayan has perfectly draws the human psychology with the help of mature characters like Swami’s father, mother and grandmother.

*The Day of the Match* is the seventeenth chapter of the novel. Swami did not go to the home and walked ahead towards the Truck Road for some time. He walked on and on and then he felt tired and hungry. He felt pain in his hips and thighs and called himself a fool for having run away from home for a mere trifle. He thought about his mother, father and other members. His father would have set matters right. He, therefore, decided to return home. He would, no doubt, be quite late, but then he could invent some story to account for the delay.

By mistake he had taken a wrong turn. He had entered a narrow path and was now walking into the Mempi Forests at some distance from Malgudi. He was tired, he was hungry and the enveloping darkness terrified him. He became delirious and imagined that all sorts of monsters and devils were in the pursuit of him. As he continued his journey, his terrors increased. He was caught in a dilemma and he could walk through it with great difficulty. His thoughts became incoherent. The devils and monsters which had terrified him so far, now gave way to the hallucination that he was playing the match against the Y.M.U. They were victorious and then they chased
away the Y.M.U. He laughed at the very thought of it and then collapsed with exhaustion.

Early the next morning, he was discovered lying unconscious on the path by a cart driver. The cart man placed him in his cart and carried him to the government officer (he was the Forest Officer, who was staying in the Traveller's Bungalow close by). There, after some rest, Swami regained consciousness. First, he wondered as to where he was, then he mistook the Forest Officer to be his father and then gradually his mind cleared. By the morning he was up and doing. The Forest Officer found him aiming stones at a tree and was told that he was the Tate for his team, and that he was practicing bowling. He must return home, for the match was to be played on Sunday, and he would never let down his team. He was much relieved to learn that it was only Saturday, and that he could be at home by the evening. We may add here that the Forest Officer, kindly and sympathetic, intentionally hid the truth from Swami. We would know later on that it was Sunday and not Saturday. But the Forest Officer did not tell this to Swami for he had seen his enthusiasm and his anxiety, for the match, and avoided hurting his feelings in the weak state of his health at the time. It was really “the day of the match”, but Swami came to know of this truth much later.

The eighteenth chapter, The Return opens with a brief account of the match. By three-thirty on Sunday afternoon, it was clear that the M.C.C. has collapsed and the glory of victory was to go to the Y.M.U. The match was to end at five-thirty, they needed at least seventy-eight runs even to make it a draw and they knew they would never score so many runs. Rajam and Mani were helpless and in despair.

Rajam’s father informed about Swami but Rajam was so angry on him that he didn’t want to see his face. Swami was brought home rather late that Sunday afternoon and was given a hero’s welcome. His Granny and mother kept hovering round him and a number of his father's friends and their neighbours came to see Swami. He was the centre of attraction, all were concerned about him, he was given delicious snacks and even the baby was neglected for the moment. His father had made everything right at the school and he need not fear the Headmaster any more. However, his happiness was short lived; for he was much pained to learn that it was Sunday and not Saturday, as the Forest Officer had told him and so he had missed the match. It was Mani who told him this truth, for he came to see him as soon as the
match was over. Rajam was angry and so he had not come. He was displeased with him for he kept him in the dark and did not tell him that he intended to run away, when he came to see him in the school. Mani advised him to avoid meeting Rajam, for so angry he was that he might even shoot him. However, he promised to do his best to pacify him.

This concluding chapter, Parting Present tells us of the transfer of Rajam's father from Malgudi and the consequent exit of Rajam from Malgudi forever. The “Parting Present” is the present which Swami gives to his “dearest friend” at the moment of his departure.

Rajam and his parents were to leave Malgudi by the five O'clock train on Tuesday morning. Mani had known this for quite some time but he gave Swami the sad news only on Monday night. He had not told him of the transfer earlier, for Rajam had strictly forbidden him to tell anything about it to Swami. Swami was much pained and hurt but he reached the station in time to bid farewell to his friend. He carried with him Anderson's Fairy Tales to give to his friend as a “Parting Present” but he could not talk to Rajam, for he and his parents were surrounded throughout by the police and the district officers of Malgudi. He could not even approach him and when the train started, he appealed to Mani to at least try to give to him the present which he had brought for him. The present was duly given and Swami was glad that it was accepted. He was further delighted to learn that Mani had given to Rajam his address and he would surely write to him.

Thus, Swami parts for ever from his “Nearest friend”. The pathos of the parting brings a lump to the throat.

(3) The Vendor of Sweets (1967)

The entire novel, The Vendor of Sweets is divided into thirteen chapters. The novel opens with the entry of Jagan and ends with the philosophy of Jagan. With the passage of the story we have some characters like his wife Ambika, their son Mali, Mali’s foreign girl - wife Grace and Jagan’s cousin, by the way his name is not indicated in the novel.

In the first chapter of the book Jagan is shown as a vendor of sweets. He has a staff of four. The kitchen is at the back of his gaddi (the place where he sits) from
where he supervises the transactions. Some members of his staff work there and prepare the sweets. In front of his gaddi is the shop where the sweets are sold. Jagan has a cousin who is a man 'about the town', who has no work to do, who daily takes a round of the town and also visits Jagan and has philosophical discussions with him. At the time when the novel opens, Jagan is a widower of about sixty. His wife died long ago and he did not marry again. All his affection is showered on his son Mali who is the apple of his eye. The novelist describes his personal appearance thus;

“At fifty-five his appearance was slight and elfish, his brown skin was translucent, his brow receded gently into a walnut shade of baldness, and beyond the fringe his hair fell in a couple of speckled waves on his nape. His chin was covered with whitening bristles as he shaved only at certain intervals, feeling that to view oneself daily in a mirror was an intolerable European habit.”

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

He wore a loose jibba over his dhoti, both made of material spun with his own hand; every day he spun for an hour, retained enough yarn for his sartorial requirements (he never possessed more than two sets of clothes at a time) and delivered all the excess in neat bundles to the local handloom committee in exchange for cash. Although the cash he thus earned was less than five rupees a month, he felt a sentimental thrill in receiving it, as he had begun the habit when Gandhi visited the town over twenty years ago and he had been commended for it. He wore a narrow almond shaped pair of glasses set in a yellowish frame and peeped at the world over their pale rims. He draped his shoulders in a khaddar shawl with gaudy yellow patterns on it and shod his feet with thick sandals made out of the leather of an animal which had died of old age.

Jagan is not only a vendor of sweets; he is also a follower of Gandhi. He follows the Gandhian principles though in his own eccentric manner. He does not like that a living creature should have its throat cut for the comfort of his feet and this occasionally involved him in excursions to remote villages where a cow or calf was reported to be dying. When he secured the hide he soaked it in some solution and then turned it over to an old cobbler he knew, who had his little repair shop under a tree.
near the Albert Mission compound. In this way he got his shoes made; also making sure at the same time that no animal would be killed for the purpose. Jagan’s tanning activities filled the house with stench and as they lasted several days, they were the cause of frequent discords. Then his wife died and her last wish was that Jagan should give up his tanning activities. Thereafter Jagan trusted the cobbler at the Albert Mission to supply him with shoes whenever he was in need of them. From his seal Jagan supervised the work both in the kitchen and the shop counter in the front. As he sat in his seat he paused over a copy of *Bhagvad Gita* and gave instructions from time to time. Exactly at six, the boy at the counter would bring to him the cash received during the day from the sale of the sweets. It was brought in two installments. The first installment was brought in a large jar; it was counted and was elaborately entered in his ledger which everyone was free to inspect. The second installment was brought in a smaller jar and it was entered, after counting, in a small notebook. It was not meant for inspection by the income tax officers. The other advantage was that the boy at the counter could not know how much cash in all had been earned during the day and handed over to Jagan. The 'black money' was soon converted into crisp bank notes and hidden in the loft in which was also kept the portrait of Mr. Noble, a former District Magistrate.

Next the cooks arrived one after another and gave him an account of the leftovers. At seven the shop was closed and Jagan left for home (constructed by his father) with instructions to the chowkidar (humorously called 'Captain') to be careful and keep a strict watch.

In the second chapter we remark how Jagan proceeds in the course of the novel. At seven thirty his shop was closed and started to go home through Market Road, passed Krishna Dispensary and reached the *Truth Printing Press*. He had a strong temptation to enter the press and find out if his book *Nature Cure and Natural Diet* had been printed but he overcame the temptation and walked on for he loved his son Mali. He thinks;

“Must be home; the boy will be lonely. Not today.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)
He wanted to reach home at the earliest. At the junction of Kabir Lane and Lawley Extension there was a culvert and a short parapet over it. Here a vagrant used to sit waiting for leaves thrown by people after they had eaten from them. He would collect these leaves and satisfy his hunger by eating the left over. This set Jagan thinking over national problems of hunger. Jagan is thus seen to be a sort of philosopher who thought over national problems and tried to find solutions.

Jagan moved on and reached the statue of Sir Frederick Lawley. Beyond it there were Lawley Extension, South Extension, New Extension and a number of other colonies. Round the Lawley Statue, college boys used to assemble with their cycles and chat in groups. Mali was also among them. He was very proud of his son's height, weight and growth. He thinks;

“There are others, but he stands out from among them. Wonder what God has in store for him”\textsuperscript{31}

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

He reflected,

“must give him more time.”\textsuperscript{32}

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

He reached home, his thoughts still hovering about his son. The home he lived in had been built by his father, after a lot of litigation, details of which he had forgotten. It was a spacious house and quite comfortable. Jagan believed in Nature cure and a simple life on Gandhian principles. As such he shunned tooth pastes and used twigs of neem tree instead, as a tooth brush every morning. Jagan had immense faith in the properties of neem and in spite of its bitterness he called it “Arnrita”, the ambrosia which kept the gods alive and sometimes he called it, “Sanjeevini”, the rare herb mentioned in the epic which, held at the nostrils, could bring the dead to life. His wife refused to associate herself with any of his health giving activities. She hated his theories and lived her own life. Their first clash occurred when he forbade her to swallow aspirin and suggested that she should fry some neem flowers in ghee and swallow it for relief from headache. She did not agree to this and only wanted to be left alone. She died soon after of a tumour of the brain. Mali was only six year old at
the time. Jagan looked after him and took great care of him. As Mali grew up he was given a separate room to serve both as his bedroom and his study. It was a long hall;

“without a ventilator or window, known as the “cool room” in those days, which had a stone-topped round table at the centre and a stool, and Mali seemed delighted to be assigned the room, as it was near the kitchen and the main hall and he could enjoy privacy, without losing sight of all the goings on in the house.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

It was some years earlier and now Mali had grown up into a fine young man.

The third chapter opens with the conversation between father and son. Mali firmly and flatly told his father that he would study no more. Jagan was very much pained to learn this from his only child. Jagan was little worried about his behaviour and perplexed with the situation but he could not dare to ask further about to class and college to Mali. Jagan expressed his feelings to his cousin and asked him to further inquire about Mali’s future plan. Cousin told Jagan to do so but Jagan denied him by telling that Mali called him an uncle. Then cousin humourously told that, “The only person to whom I’m not a cousin”.

As per decided discussion cousin went to meet Mali and asked about his future plan and Mali disclosed his thoughts to his uncle. Mali told his uncle that he wanted to be a scribe, writer. Cousin met Jagan to the next day and narrated the entire from beginning to end. He told Jagan that he had ordered Dosas and waited for it. In between Mali tore his books savagely, beckoned an attention, and said, ‘Put these in the fire in the kitchen.’ Then Jagan had a talk with Mali to find out things for himself. He proceeded cautiously, so that there might be no conflict and there might be no tension between them. He offered to purchase white paper, a pen, a desk, a new table, and such other things as a writer is likely to need. Then like a junior press reporter, he questioned him about the novel he planned to write and Mali told him;
“I saw in Ananda Vikatan an advertisement for a competition for novels”, Mali explained. “They will pay twenty five thousand rupees for the best.”

“On what conditions?”

“It must be sent before September thirtieth, that's all, and a coupon in the magazine must be filled in.”

Jagan leaned over to study the dates on a calendar on the wall. “This is just May”

“Have you begun to write?” Jagan asked timidly.

“I am not the sort to show my story to anyone before I finish it.”

“What's the story?” asked Jagan persisting.

The boy shrank away from him and repeated, “Are you examining me?” in an ominous manner.

“Oh, no, it's not that.”

“You don't believe me, I know,” said the boy half despairingly.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Jagan was for a moment confused. He re-affirmed his faith in his son in the loudest terms possible. Secretly his mind was bothered as to why there was always an invisible barrier between them. He had never been harsh to the boy; so long as he could remember, he had always got him whatever he wanted these twenty odd years; during the last ten particularly he had become excessively considerate, after the boy lost his mother. Jagan was proud of his son. Next day he told everybody he knew that his son was going to be a great writer and that he would get twenty five thousand rupees for his first novel.

In the forth chapter Jagan felt proud of his son and he was thrilled at the idea that instead of his reading the books penned by others;
“others will henceforth read the books written by him. Instead of reading other people's books, “he is providing reading for others”, he often reflected with a lot of pride. “He is doing a service in his own way.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

The word “service” intoxicated him, sent a thrill through his whole being and explained everything. The first time he heard the word was in 1937 when Mahatma Gandhi had visited Malgudi and addressed a vast gathering on the sands of the river. He spoke of “service” explaining how every human action acquired a meaning when it was performed as a service. Inspired by this definition, Jagan joined the movement for freeing India from foreign rule, gave up his studies, home and normal life and violated the British laws of the time. Neither the beatings from the police nor the successive periods of prison terms ever touched him when he remembered that he was performing a “service”.

“Everyone should be free to serve humanity in his own way”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

He fold himself and “Mali is really helping mankind with his writing. What does he really write?”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

He often wondered;

“Stories? What sort of stories? Poems? or did he write philosophy?”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

He had a passing misgiving about his son's experience of life, his equipment to be a writer. He wanted to know which language he used, whether Tamil or English. If he wrote in Tamil he would be recognised at home, if in English, he would be known in other countries too. But did he know enough English, Tamil, or any language? He felt worried; his mind was racked with questions. The simplest solution of questioning
Mali directly seemed impracticable. What could they discuss? Mali seemed to have become detached, more separate than ever. The only link between them was the five rupee currency note that he left on the hall table every morning and checked later to find out if it had been accepted.

Jagan and Mali now seldom talked with each other. Their timings were so well adjusted that they seldom came across each other and seldom talked. The 30th of September came and was gone. Time passed and yet there was no sign of the book which Mali was supposed to be writing. Jagan did not have the courage to knock at the door or peep through the key hole lest it should annoy Mali. He had grown too sensitive and absented himself from home for long hours, Jagan became careworn and looked miserable, so much so that his cousin noticed his misery and remarked one day;

“every gift of life you are blessed with, what ninety out of a hundred people crave for—money, and what a hundred out of a hundred crave for—contentment. Yet you have not mastered one thing, that's the art of looking happy. You are always looking careworn.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Then Jagan took the cousin into confidence and asked him about Mali’s future plans. At the end of the conversation cousin was asked to get information about Mali.

The cousin came back a few days later and told Jagan all about the antics of his son. No book had been written and so the prize had been lost. He spent most of the time in Town Hall library and used the typewriter there to write letters. He proposed to go to America, where there was a college for teaching novel writing. He had visited Madras without informing him or seeking his approval. There his clothes were being tailored and his passport had already been arranged for. He would go to America by aeroplane. As regards money, he had no difficulty as there was, he said, enough cash in the house. The information increased the misery and anguish of Jagan, though he was still proud of his son for being so practical, so businesslike and so independent.
On return home, he went up to the loft where he kept money in bundles of notes. He found that ten thousand rupees had been stolen, five for the air ticket and five to cover up other expenses. Says the novelist ironically:

“At dead of night, he put up the ladder and climbed the loft. About ten thousand rupees had been extracted from the bundled currency”. He calculated, “About four or five thousand rupees for passage, and the balance for clothes and other things. He should ask for more if he wants it and, of course, a monthly remittance later. Why should he not?”

“He heard the front door open, he put out the torch and sat still until he felt sure that Mali had safely locked himself in, feeling like a burglar himself, instead of one whose cash had been extracted.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

In the fifth chapter, the novel gets its motion and incidents go ahead. Mali left for America and his father Jagan proudly told about Mali to each and every one. He told this to the chemist, the printer, the adjournment lawyer and even to the vagrant at the culvert. He was proud of his son and always talked of his being in America, even though this made him late for his work.

After hopeless waiting for so many days, when a colourful airmail letter arrived by post, he almost felt the same joy as if Mali had come back. The message simply was:

“At dead of night, he put up the ladder and climbed the loft. About ten thousand rupees had been extracted from the bundled currency”. He calculated, “About four or five thousand rupees for passage, and the balance for clothes and other things. He should ask for more if he wants it and, of course, a monthly remittance later. Why should he not?”

“He heard the front door open, he put out the torch and sat still until he felt sure that Mali had safely locked himself in, feeling like a burglar himself, instead of one whose cash had been extracted.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Jagan read it with pleasure, although he was somewhat disturbed at the boy’s mention of “school” rather than “college”. He could not keep the good news to himself. The first entrance open to him was the Truth Printing Works. Nataraj was at his desk, ever affable and welcoming visitors. The news was spreaded to the cousin
and soon it was all over the town. Mali frequently wrote letters to Jagan and he piled them in a treasure. After readings so many letters he formed a picture of America and was able to speak with authority on the subject of American landscape, culture and civilization. Instead of reading Gita he engaged in reading letters. Mali remained in America for three years and then he wrote to his father;

“I've taken to eating beef, and I don't think I'm any the worse for it. Steak is something quite tasty and juicy. Now I want to suggest why not you people start eating beef? It'll solve the problem of useless cattle in our country and we won't have to beg food from America. I sometimes feel ashamed when India asks for American aid. Instead of that, why not slaughter useless cows which wander in the streets and block the traffic?”

(Narayan, R.K.  *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Jagan felt outraged. The *shastras* defined the five deadly sins and the killing of a cow headed the list. He suppressed this letter and did not tell of it to anyone else. And then after a few days he received a cable from his son, in which he told his father;

“Arriving home, another person with me.”

(Narayan, R.K.  *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Jagan was puzzled. What sort of a person? He had terrible misgivings and the added trouble of not being able to talk about it to the cousin, as he might spread the news of “another person” all over the town. His worst misgivings were confirmed on an afternoon when the train dumped Mali, “another person” and an enormous variety of baggage onto the railway platform and puffed away. Jagan slipped into the background pushing his cousin to the fore to do all the talking and receiving. He was overwhelmed by the spectacle of his son who seemed to have grown taller, broader and fairer and carried himself in long strides. He wore a dark suit, with an overcoat, an air bag, a camera and an umbrella on his person. Jagan felt that he was following a stranger. When Mali approached him extending his hand, he tried to shrink away and shield himself behind the cousin. When he had to speak to his son, with difficulty he restrained himself from calling him “sir” and employing the honorific plural. The
readers enjoy the humour of it all. Jagan's discomfiture is highly comic. All the same
he is proud of his son who has grown up into a fair young man who knows how to
manage things and take care of himself. The “other person” referred to in the cable is
'Grace', whom he probably married in America. She is a Korean girl and when Mali
addresses her as, “Honey”, Jagan is confused and thinks that it is her name. The house
was suitably modified and furnished to suit the newlyweds from America. Grace
liked it and was all praises for it. Both Jagan and Mali led their own lives without
interfering with each other. They seldom talked to each other.

Jagan did not know much about Grace, nor about their habits and about their
way of life. He avoided talking about them even to his cousin. One morning Grace
herself came to his part of the house and tidied it up. She even offered to cook for
him. Then she made him bring Mali’s letters to her and showed him that they were
signed by both of them. Jagan had not noticed it before. Then she told him about her,
that her mother was a Korean who married an American soldier and came to America
with him. She herself was educated in a school in America. She was afraid to come to
India because of the caste system, but Jagan assured her that the caste system was
breaking down because of the teachings of Gandhi. At this the girl felt much relieved.

A day later Mali suddenly came to Jagan and asked him why they could not
have a telephone in the house. Jagan simply replied that he had never thought of it.
But Mali complained that he felt embarrassed when he could not give even his phone
number to his associates. Naturally, Jagan asked as to who were his associates. At this
Mali called Grace and said that she should be with them as they were discussing
business. They went to the hall where they could sit comfortably. Mali talked to him
at length but Jagan, lost in thought, hardly listened to him. Then Mali went away
asking him to think well over what he had said to him. Narayan poses the psych of
Jagan;

“Jagan sat still, quietly enjoying the thought that his son had spoken
to him at such length. When he rose to go, Grace held the door open
for him and asked, Do you have any questions for Mali? Is everything
clear?” Jagan replied, “I can always go back to the subject, can't I?”
With a significant smile, Grace said, “of course.””

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)
In chapter six Jagan’s troubles, cares and worriers are increasing. The father son conflict, the generation gap is developed in the course of the novel. Jagan’s talk of Gandhian principles and his study of the *Gita* make him appear a hypocrite. Suspense is here skillfully created and the readers are eager to know what is going to happen next. Jagan was much agitated by the doings of his son and he avoided talking of him even to the cousin. This surprised the cousin and he decided to bring in the topic himself so that Jagan might open out and he might know more about him and Mali. First they exchanged small talk to pass the time and then Jagan said that he was late for the shop that morning because Mali wanted to discuss his plans with him. He said so to impress the cousin with his own importance but the cousin thus got the opportunity he had waited for. They had good conversation on Mali and the new generation. All of sudden the cousin felt that they were drifting away from the main topic. Finally the cousin told Jagan that Mali wanted to manufacture story writing machines. Jagan felt so baffled by this statement that he couldn't phrase his surprise properly. He blurted out a couple of questions incoherently and lapsed into silence. Cousin asked about the story writing machine and informed Jagan about it.

Next morning Jagan sought an interview with his son and he had to wait for it for full fifteen minutes. When at last he met him, he straightway asked him what a story writing machine was and how it worked. Mali retorted that he had told him all that on their previous meeting and he could not repeat the same things day in and day out. But Jagan was bewildered and confused in that meeting and did not remember what he had replied. He was much agitated at the way his son was talking to him. Mali showed him the machine and explained its working to him. Jagan left his seat and went over to examine the machine as if it were something descended from another planet. Mali made enough conversation with his father and indirectly asked him for investment. However, he consulted the cousin when he came to him that afternoon. He told Jagan that fifty thousand dollars amounted to over two lakh rupees. It was a staggering amount and Jagan could not make such a huge contribution. It would mean ruin for him. He wanted his cousin to tell his son that he did not have that much of money. The cousin retorted that since he was on speaking terms with Mali, he should himself tell him so, since Mali knew that he had the amount in his bank and he would not be able to convince him to the contrary.
Mali’s demands went on increasing day by day. He put Grace on him and she constantly followed him with inquiring eyes. Jagan tried his best to avoid the two. One morning Mali came even to the puja room and disturbed him in his prayer. Both of them pestered him in his own home and he had to sneak about to avoid them. He was amazed at the intensity of her interest in Mali’s fortunes. As ever, he had two opposite feelings; appreciation of her interest in Mali and resentment at her effort to involve him in their business. Mali never thrust himself forward more than was a minimum; he seemed to have left the task to Grace; even his visitation at the threshold of the puja room in the morning seemed to have been dictated by Grace. An occasional misgiving tainted Jagan’s thoughts;

“might not Grace's interest, friendliness and attentiveness be a calculated effort to win his dollars?”

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

On the way to his shop, he passed by the Truth Printing Press and entered in to inquire about his book. Nataraj told him that he was publishing at the time the prospectus regarding Mali’s new enterprise and that his name was in it. The prospectus was out within three days and Jagan was surprised at the speed with which it had been printed. Both Mali and Grace constantly hunted him and Jagan decided to follow the Gandhian principles in dealing with them;

“Gandhi has taught me peaceful methods, and that's how I'm going to meet their demand. These two are bent upon involving me in all sorts of things,”

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

Jagan was bewildered by his son’s scheme and distrusted it totally. He was aware that pressure was being subtly exercised on him to make him part with cash. He was going to meet the situation by ignoring the whole business, a sort of non-violent, non-cooperation. However, these principles could not be followed forever. He was aware of silent tensions growing between them. His life became unbearable. It was clear that a firm decision would have to be taken at the earliest. So when Mali talked to him a day later, he firmly told them to do what they liked but he did not have such a huge amount. If they thought that he was making a lot of money, they
were free to run the sweets shop themselves. They were much amazed at his reply. He went to the shop lost in thought, was rude even to the vagrant and when the cousin came to him in the afternoon he told him that he was going to reduce the price of sweets. The cousin was much amazed at this. His amazement knew no bounds when he ordered his staff to give some sweets free of cost to children who had gathered near the counter. In this chapter we remark the changed nature of Jagan.

The seventh chapter opens with the character of Jagan. He reduced the price of the sweet at 25 paisa. Due to this strategy all the sweets were sold by the noon and all the staff were free after the closing of the shop. All were surprised to note the change in the nature of Jagan.

One day as the staff prepared to go home so early, he gave them a dose of *Bhagavad Gita*. He recited to them a few verses from it. He explained Gita to his staff and also told them that Gandhiji used to read Gita daily. Some sweet vendors became restive and came to see him one afternoon as he was reciting the *Bhagavad Gita* to his staff. They were three of them: one was the Sait from *Ananda Bhavan Restaurant*, the second was the person who ran a canteen at the law courts and the third one was a man with a white beard whom Jagan did not know. They had come to protest against his sudden reduction of prices which had resulted in considerable loss to them. But Jagan was a shrewd man and he did not allow them to come to die point and put them off in one tactful way or another. They went away with the impression that Jagan was a shrewd businessman and he had some new trick up his sleeves. They could not understand upto what he was and they left him but the bearded man returned soon after. He told Jagan that he lived in the nearby Kabir Lane and that his name was Chinna Dorai, meaning small master and the name of his guru was Peria Dorai, meaning big master and it was he who carved the idols which had been installed in all the temples of the South. It was from the Guru that he himself had learnt the art. Then he began to give a list of the idols his guru had carved. His description of the gods made Jagan regret that he had not gone near a temple for months, being wrapped up in this monotonous job of frying and cash counting. He declared fervently;

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“Of course, I have visited every temple in this part of the universe, times out of count, and I know all the one hundred and eight gods and saints enshrined along both banks of the Kaveri. I know the songs that Sambhandar composed in honour of those gods….”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

The bearded man paid compliments to Jagan which Jagan returned and so the two were on good terms very soon. Then Jagan asked him where his master lived. The bearded man replied that he lived across the river in a garden, trees of which were to be seen even from there. It was a quiet, lonely place and none could go near him except he, the bearded man. This put Jagan in a reminiscent mood and he thought of the past when he was a free man and could visit such lonely places. He thought of Gandhi and his visits to Malgudi. After a little more of small talk, the bearded man came to the point. He was not a maker of idols at all though he knew the art. He was a maker of hair dyes and such was his art that he could make old men look young. The Sait was one of his customers; he dyed his milk white hair and made him look young. Jagan, too, needed his services. He would dye his hair too and make him look much younger. But Jagan put him off for the time being by simply telling him;

“Diet has a lot to do with the colour of one’s hair. My book on this subject will be out one day and then you will see for yourself. If your diet is controlled according to nature's specifications, you will never see a grey hair anywhere.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

In this chapter Jagan is totally out of his family concern and anxiety and wants to visit temples and craves for the tranquility of the mind.

In eighth chapter we can compare R.K. Narayan with W. Wordsworth for Narayan narration of nature. Jagan was taken by the bearded man, across the river to the garden with a pond in it where his master lived and worked. It was a quiet lonely spot and Jagan was fascinated by it.
The bearded man remained brooding, watching some birds dive into the water. Jagan had not enjoyed such peace and quiet for a long time. However, the bearded man had a complaint. The spot was not so quiet as it used to be, the motorcars that went up the hills disturbed its seclusion and people of all kinds could be seen moving about. Even wild beasts invaded the garden sometimes but his master was not afraid of them. There he died suddenly one night and the bearded man showed him the exact spot where he was cremated. Then the bearded man looked at the mountains and pointed out to him the various places from where the different kinds of stones were extracted. The account of the bearded man is punctuated with a description of the beauty of nature which Jagan enjoyed much. He lived with his master in that lonely spot and his master never bothered about such petty things as food. As regards wife and children he had none and so he had not to worry on that account. Only he, the bearded man, lived with his guru and worked with him. His guru had lived all his life there. Narayan writes:

“All that he possessed could be contained within the palm of one's hand. I cooked a little rice for him in that corner where you see the walls blackened. All day he sat there working on the image or we went to the quarry to hew slabs. He never saw anyone except when some temple men came to order for an image. People were afraid to come here because of the snakes, but my master loved them and never approved of clearing the wild growth around. This tree was full of monkeys; you can see them now. I'll share the fruits of those trees with them, he used to say. He enjoyed the company of snakes and monkeys and everything. Once there was even a cheetah in the undergrowth. ‘We must not monopolize this earth. They won't harm us', he used to say, and true to his word nothing ever did.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

When he died, he was working in the pedestal for an idol of the five faced Gayatri. The bearded man searched for the pedestal and they went round and round
the garden in search of it. At last, he remembered that he had immersed it in the pond for water treatment. Then he entered the pond and also made Jagan enter it. At last the pedestal was found and it was taken out. The bearded man intended to work on it, till the idol was completed. He suddenly told Jagan that it is only a man like him that can help the bearded man. He could purchase the garden and install the goddess there. Moreover, the place would be a suitable retreat for him from the cares and worries of the world. Jagan said;

“Yes, yes, God knows I need a retreat. You know, my friend, at some stage in one's life one must uproot oneself from the accustomed surroundings and disappear so that others may continue in peace.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

He further added;

“It would be the most accredited procedure according to our scriptures - husband and wife must vanish into the forest at some stage in their lives, leaving the affairs of the world to younger people.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Jagan agreed with him but did not tell him as to why he needed a retreat from the world. He did not utter even a single word about the queer ways of Mali and Grace. He did not want to show his sores to him. Thus, this chapter shows the intimacy between Jagan and the bearded man.

In the ninth chapter we can remark that Jagan’s behaviour is changed. He was always on his routine work. Jagan had a separate key so that he could enter his part of the house without making any noise and attracting the attention of Grace and Mali. He felt that he was undergoing a strange inner transformation. He seemed to be a changed man. As his dinner was cooking, he sat spinning his *charkha* and his mind was as active as his hands but his mind was in turmoil.

He wondered if the bearded man might not be a visitation from another planet otherwise why did he come to his shop exactly when he needed him? Who really
needed help and from whom? The man had said that he needed help for installing the image the goddess, while he himself thought that he was being helped. As he was lost in his thoughts he suddenly heard a knock at the door. It was Mali who had arrived. He knew of Jagan's doings, of his drastic reduction in the prices of his sweets. The Sait and others had talked to him about the matter and they hoped that Jagan would soon come back to his original prices. After some small talk he came to the point. His 'associates' had sent a cable to him and they wanted to know the exact 'status' of their enterprise. In other words, he wanted to know immediately if Jagan was going to give him the money or the enterprise should be closed. Jagan enquired for Grace but she was nowhere visible. Jagan at once told him that he was poor, that he had no money to give him and if he so liked he could take over the shop and run it. Mali refused to become a vendor of sweets like him and if he was not willing to invest the enterprise would be closed. Grace would then have to go back to America, for she had nothing more to do in India. She had come there only for the enterprise. She was not in the home at the time. While Jagan protested and said she should not go out at that time of night, there was a quarrel between the two. Jagan left his father in anger. Jagan asked for Grace but Mali didn’t reply his questions and said who we are to stop her? Jagan said;

“I just want to know why she is thinking of going, that's all. She is, of course, free. Who says she is not? Has anything made her unhappy?”

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

He further inquired;

“What is there to keep her happy?” cried Mali, “This is a miserable place with no life in it. She was used to a good life. She came here to work and she is going back because she has no work to do. She came here for the project, to work with me, didn't you see her name in the notice?”

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

Jagan had learnt the art of ignoring questions. Mali got up by saying;
“If she has nothing to do here, she goes back, that’s all. Her air ticket must be bought immediately.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Jagan advised;

“‘But a wife must be with her husband, whatever happens.’ Mali replied; ‘That was in your day.’”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Mali left his father by saying the above words. In this chapter we remark the generation gap between Mali and Jagan.

The tenth chapter shows that Day by day the relation between father and son becomes weaker. Ten days passed and Jagan could not talk to her nor did she come to his part of the house to sweep and clean. All seemed that pressure was being exerted on him to extract money from him. He could hear the sound of Grace dusting in her part of the house and he wailed to have a word with her alone. Now that he had made his position clear, the barrier between him and the other two was growing more unbreakable than ever and there was absolutely no way of his approaching her and asking for an explanation. He wondered if he could go in and talk to her but what would be the use? With Mali there, how could he ask her for verification? It would be at best a formal greeting and nothing more. Though he was ready to leave for his shop, he sat on his cot vaguely hoping either that Grace would come his way or that Mali would go out on one of his errands and he could have a word with her but there was no sign of either happening. Mali went on typing in his room; after a while the sound of sweeping ceased, and he could hear some exchange of words between the two; then even that ceased and a tremendous stillness reigned over the house. There seemed to be no hope.

Jagan quietly left for his shop. On reaching there he found that a large crowd had collected clamouring for sweets. They now wanted sweets as a matter of right, without caring whether there was a stock or not. Jagan felt uneasy and thought that he had committed a mistake in reducing the prices. He thought of raising the prices again. Just then his cousin who had gone out for several days came to him. He had
enjoyed his trip abroad. He had also heard of Jagan's reduction of the prices of his sweets, which however, had not affected the quality. However, he told him that the Sait and others expected him to raise the prices as their business was being affected. He presented the problem in a new light;

“At least that is what they think. It will do them good to stand in the line and see how you do things. I wouldn't be at all surprised if their men are in the crowd and buy the sweets cheap here and sell them at their own price in their shops.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

It hadn't occurred to Jagan that this was a possibility. He looked desperate when he heard it and the cousin had to say;

“I was only joking; don't let it worry you.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

But this made Jagan see things in a new light. It now seemed certain that he would soon resume the higher prices. Jagan then came to the point and directly asked him why Grace was going back to America of which he, too, must have heard. The cousin replied;

“She is going on business. That's what he told me. Something to do with his machine. You see how plucky these girls are. She goes thousands of miles to settle business matters, while we do not even understand what they are doing.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

With the help of cousin, Jagan went to home and to meet Grace and had a good conversation but at the end of the conversation Jagan was unhappy to know that they were not married. Jagan went to the shop with heavy heart.
Then Jagan returned to the shop a much tormented man. The cousin arrived soon after and Jagan had a talk with him and sought his advice. Jagan told him that Mali was not married. They had lived in sin and his home was tainted. The cousin was a practical man. He advised him to remember that young people are different from them, that if he so desired he could get them married in the Hindu way and the marriage could be arranged in no time in a temple. If he thought that his house had been polluted, he should not turn out the young people but never visit them, have his house barricaded so that they might not come to him. That, in his opinion, was the only practical solution to his problems. He added;

“What is all your study of the Gita worth if you cannot keep your mind untouched by all this? You yourself have explained to me that one should not identify oneself with objects or circumstances.”

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

Jagan accepted this compliment with great pleasure, although if he had questioned it. He might not have been able to explain exactly what he had said or why or when. Obliged to admit his devotion to the Gita and the wisdom derived from it, he mumbled;

“We are blinded by our attachments. Every attachment creates its delusion and we are carried away by it”

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

Jagan was confused and didn’t understand what to do and what not to do. Ultimately cousin helped him and he was relaxed with the ideas of cousin.

Thus, in this chapter Jagan comes to know that his son has not got married and with the help of his cousin he becomes somewhat practical man.

In the eleventh chapter Jagan separated his part of the house completely from the part in which Grace and Mali lived. He even closed the ventilator between the two parts of the house. Thus he completely insulated himself from the sinful life which was being lived in the other part of the house. He even gave up the use of the front gate and went out and came in through a back door. This back door had not been used
for years, and the path which went from it to the main door was all overgrown with weeds. As Jagan went by this path, he was reminded of the past since his boyish days. His soul was full of anguish and he liked to think of what had been, how happy he was when he used to play there with his elder brother and catch grasshoppers. He dwelt on those days as he walked in silence along the path;

“Nearly fifty years had elapsed since he had traversed this lane. In those days, when his father's family had lived in a hut in the back yard and the front portion was growing up little by little, he and his brother used to hunt for grasshoppers amidst the weeds. All the blazing afternoons they would be active in this pursuit while the Malgudi summer scorched everything, and even the grasshoppers were reluctant to leave the paltry shade of the wood plants. His elder brother carried a small tin box; he capped his palm over the grasshopper and trapped it and, if it was a large one, transferred it to his tin as befitting an elder brother, if it was a little one, it was passed on to Jagan, but on no account would Jagan be permitted to catch one himself. He could only stand behind his brother and wait for his luck, with his own little tin box in hand. This would go on all afternoon, until the grasshoppers learnt to anticipate their foot-falls and hop off to safety.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Sometimes their sister would track them down here and follow them doggedly, uttering sinister remarks;

“You are killing the animals here. I'll tell father, they are found dead every day in the tins. You will both go to hell.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Jagan, afraid of this blackmailer, would plead with her to leave them alone but his elder brother would say;
“Let her talk. No one wants her here. If she speaks to father, I'll wring her neck,...”\textsuperscript{63}

(Narayan, R.K. \textit{The Vendor of Sweets})

He reared himself up menacingly and she would run away screaming in terror. Jagan had also heard that his brother, who lived in Vinayak Street, often spoke of him in anger and shame and he never invited him to join him in performing the anniversary ceremonies for their father. He was an orthodox man who managed the headquarters of a religious order established ten centuries ago, with a million followers and he had begun to disapprove of lagan's outlook long ago. His remarks were brought to Jagan from time to time by common friends and relatives and occasionally by the cousin, whose standing was secure everywhere. The elder brother had once remarked;

\textit{“How can you expect a good type of son when you have a father like Jagan?”}\textsuperscript{64}

(Narayan, R.K. \textit{The Vendor of Sweets})

What would they say if they knew the latest development? They would doubtless remove themselves further. Jagan felt grateful for being an outcast for it absolved him from obligation as a member of the family. Otherwise they would be making constant demands on his time and energy, compelling him to spend all his time in family conclaves, sitting on carpets with a lot of kinsmen exchanging banalities while awaiting the call for the ceremonial feast. Thus he had escaped the marriages of his nieces, the birthdays of his brother's successive children and several funerals. It had all been a blessing in disguise.

As time passed Jagan had so much isolated himself from the other part of the house that he did not even notice that Grace had not been there for the last fortnight or so. He lost all patience and at last one day, he peeped through the key hole of Mali's room. He saw that Mali was there and then he came to the front window. Now Mali saw him and came out to meet him. Jagan, Mali and Grace had good conversation among them. He thought it was a very funny situation. He did not know whether Grace was really his daughter-in-law or not. Nor did he know as to which of the two was lying.
The chapter twelfth unfolds all the incidents and events of the novel. In this chapter we find the technique of flash back. Jagan thought about his wife. Jagan is now an anguished soul, the conduct of his only son is unbearable to him and so his thoughts turn naturally to the past. The entire chapter is in the form of retrospective narration and we get an account of Jagan’s past through the sensations floating through his mind. The entire narration will do credit to a “stream of consciousness” novelist. The only difference is that Narayan's narration is by and large chronological. We are told of the choice of a bride for Jagan, his marriage and married life, the various irritations from time to time which seemed so important to the boyish and inexperienced Jagan, of Ambika's supposed infertility and her high temper, of Jagan's attempts at passing his examinations, his cowardly nature, of their visit to the temple of Santana Krishna and of the birth of Mali as a result of the blessing of the God. We thus get a peep into Jagan's past and early life and the narration is frequently enlivened by the inimitable humour of Narayan. And all this retrospective narration has been done in a chronological manner so that there is no incoherence or confusion. It might be Jagan's stream of consciousness but it is remarkable for its clarity and straight forward progression. It is only in this chapter that we get a pen portrait of Jagan's wife, of her relatives and of the love of Jagan for her. The character of his parents also has been developed in this chapter.

Jagan's mind was obsessed with the thought of Mali and his real relations with Grace, with the result that he worked mechanically all day. He talked in an offhand manner even to the cousin so that he went away rather displeased. Each meeting displayed a new facet of Mali’s personality so that he did not know what to think of him. Unconsciously, he compared him to Lord Krishna who had so many facets and who could even assume the role of a charioteer to encourage Arjuna to fight his enemies, even though they happened to be his close relatives. Jagan continued to be in a reminiscent mood. He constantly thought of the past. On his way back home from the shop he sat on the pedestal of the Lawley Statue till all others had gone and the street was deserted. He suddenly recollected the exact point in time when he had shed his bachelorhood. He remembered the day when he had gone to see his would be wife. Jagan's father had sent his elder son to accompany him and commanded Jagan;
“Don’t stare at the girl. I have seen her and I know she is good-looking. Don’t imagine you are a big judge of persons.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

At the end of the journey, he was received with a lot of fuss and seated on a carpet spread on the pyol of an ancient house. His future father-in-law and a number of his relations had assembled to have a look at the proposed bridegroom and measure him up from different angles. They all engaged him in conversation and tried to form an idea of his intelligence and outlook. Jagan had already been warned by his elder brother not to be too communicative as certain mysteriousness was invaluable in a son-in-law. Everyone kept asking as if in a chorus;

“How was your journey?”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Jagan stroked his tuft with one hand, fumbled with his cap and threw furtive glances at his brother for a signal and when his brother nodded slightly Jagan answered;

“Oh, yes, it was good.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Then the bride named Ambika was called in. Jagan had already seen four girls and none of them was found to be suitable. Jagan had a good look at her, despite the advice of his brother not to stare at the girl. But Jagan did not heed the advice. The girl fascinated him. Thus did Jagan choose his bride and they were married in due course.

On the train journey he remained brooding. He was troubled by the feeling that he had missed the chance somehow, to say farewell to his beloved, the thought of her was extremely comforting, soothing and also, in a quiet way, thrilling. His brother now having no policing to do, was asleep in his seat, leaving Jagan free to go back to the village in his thoughts and roam unfettered. Thinking it over, Jagan felt charmed by every bit of the expedition, their house was nice and cosy, their hall smelt beautifully of incense which somehow blended successfully with the cow dung smell
from their cattle shed, the harmonium was out of tune, but it would not be proper to judge of her music from it. Her voice was gruff because she had to adjust in that horrid instrument. He was sure that she really had a sweet voice to suit her face.

Very soon it became known all over the town that Jagan was to be married soon. Finally, September was fixed for the marriage and financial matters too were disposed of to the entire satisfaction of both the parties. They demanded a dowry of rupees five thousand and the other party agreed to the terms. “There were hurried consultations”, says the novelist. Jagan's father carried on several consultations with his wife in whispers in a far off corner of the second courtyard. Jagan being a junior was careful not to show too much personal interest in his marriage but he was anxious to know what was going on. He would have been snubbed if he had inquired. He had to depend upon his younger sister who stood about casually while the elders talked; eaves dropped and brought him news. She would seek him out as he sat at his desk apparently studying, and then whisper to him;

“Grand uncle has approved.” “Father is writing to the bride's people tomorrow, they are waiting for an auspicious time.” “Father wants a dowry of five thousand rupees, which really worried Jagan.”

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

Suppose the others refused? Then what?

“They want to have the marriage celebrated in September. Only three months.”

(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

Jagan felt scared at the thought of becoming a married man in three months. It was all right as long as one dreamed of a girl and theoretically speculated about marriage, but to become a positive and concrete husband it was a terrifying reality. In due course;

“One evening the bride's party arrived with huge brass trays covered with betel leaves, saffron, new clothes, a silver bowl of fragrant sandal paste, a huge heap of sugar crystals on a silver plate and a pair of silver lamps. A dozen
priests were assembled in the hall. The senior priest of the
house, a gaunt old man stood up and read the notice aloud,
his voice quivering with nervousness. It announced that
Jagannath, son of so and so, was to marry Ambika
daughter of so and so, on the tenth of September, etc..”

(Narayan, R.K.  The Vendor of Sweets)

The father of the bride handed this important document ceremoniously to
Jagan's father, together with an envelope in which he had put currency notes, half the
dowry in advance and gently suggested;

“Please ask your cousin to count the cash.”

(Narayan, R.K.  The Vendor of Sweets)

Jagan's father made some depreciating sounds but passed the envelope on to his elder
son for counting, who lost no time in performing the task and confirming;

“Two thousand five hundred”

(Narayan, R.K.  The Vendor of Sweets)

This was followed by a grand feast as was customary on the occasion. Many
preparations for marriage were done. Then came the wedding feast and it was grand.
However, there was a little cause of irritation which worried Jagan for he feared that
they might break up the marriage. Someone who held the highest precedence in the
family hierarchy was given a half torn banana leaf to dine on and was sealed in the
company of children instead of in the top row. This threatened to develop into a first
class crisis but the girl's father openly apologized for the slip and all these were
forgotten. Something that upset all the womenfolk of the bridegroom's party was that
the bride was not provided with the gold waist belt that had been promised when the
original list of jewellery was drawn up. When the piece was finally delivered, it was
found to be made not of one gold sheet but of a number of little gold bars intertwined
with silk cords. The women felt that this was downright cheating and they
commented angrily;
“They are saving the gold.”
(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

They would have even gone to the extent of stopping the marriage but for the fact that Jagan did not approve of this entire hullabaloo over a gold belt, explaining to his mother;

“They are saving the gold.”
(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

“**This is the latest fashion, nowadays the girls do not want to be weighed down with all that massive gold.**”
(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

At which they became very critical of him, saying that he had already become henpecked and was already an unpaid advocate for his wife's family. Even his brother managed to take him aside during this crisis and said;

“**Don't make a fool of yourself so soon. Why don't you leave these problems for womenfolk to discuss in the way they want?**”
(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

Jagan had the temerity to reply;

“It is because they are criticizing my wife, poor girl.”
(Narayan, R.K. The Vendor of Sweets)

Thus, Jagan is again presented in a comic light. Then did Jagan commence his married life. Most of his time was now passed in the bedroom, so that he became almost a stranger to other members of the family. His sister frequently teased him about it. He failed in his examination one year after another. If Ambika remained busy in the household work and did not come when he returned home, he was angry with her and there was a quarrel, of course a lovers' quarrel. Jagan's stock was pretty low at home but he did not care as he lived in a perfect intoxication of husband hood. Later, when his wife failed to have a baby and there were whispers and rumours, Jagan told his wife;
“I wish people could see us now on this side of the door, and then they would stop talking...”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Despite all his bragging there was no outside proof of his manhood. They had been married almost ten years now: he had failed repeatedly in the Intermediate and was now failing in the B.A., and still there was no sight of a child in the house. Narayan's humour here carries a sexual flavour.

Jagan's brother had by now a large family and he moved to a big house in *Vinayak Street* with his family. The house was empty. Then his sister married, went to live with her husband and gave birth to a number of children but Ambika had no child at all, despite the fact that theirs was a fertile family and there were at least one hundred and three sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters. Fertility was not lacking in the family of Jagan and so it was presumed that Ambika must be barren. But she also had a photo which established the fertility of her family and she used this photo to silence those who taunted her. They often quarrelled for instead of sleeping in bed with her, Jagan had taken to sleeping in the verandah. He would give her passionate attention for sometime only when she returned from her father's house. He never cared to know whether he was adequate and also he never cared to ask his wife about it. Commenting on his moods and attitudes at the time the novelist writes;

“He felt fatigued by all the apparatus of sex, its promises and its futility, the sadness and the sweat at the end of it all and he assumed that his wife shared his outlook. Moreover, he had read in a book that nature had never meant sex to be anything more than a means of propagation of the species, that one drop of white blood was equal to forty drops of red blood and that semen waste and nervous exhaustion reduced one's longevity, the essence of all achievement being celibacy and conservation.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

It had become imperative for him to produce a child and he didn't know what more he could do about it. Ambika herself was beginning to crave for one. He had to do
something about it. She sulked and blamed him with her looks. When she saw him rolling up his carpet, she said rather bitterly;

“Why don't you go and sleep at the foot of Lawley Statue?
It must be much cooler there.”

(Narayan, R.K.  *The Vendor of Sweets*)

When she taunted him thus, he felt extremely confused and attempted to joke it off with;

“That statue was not built for us to sleep on.”

(Narayan, R.K.  *The Vendor of Sweets*)

When she taunted him further he would put out the light and pull her to the bed and roll about, imagining himself to be the Sheik in the Hollywood film in which Rudolph Valentino demonstrated the art of ravishing women. Jagan's mother often taunted Ambika as she was irritated by her lack of fertility. Ambika, too, was a proud girl who did not like things lying down. Often, she gave fitting replies. This is clear from a minor incident that took place one day. Ambika added more salt to the sauce and Jagan's mother said;

“One doesn't ask for extraordinary things, they are not for us, we are not destined to enjoy the spectacle of a gold waist band, like hundreds of others, but one wants at least a sensible—”

(Narayan, R.K.  *The Vendor of Sweets*)

She did not finish her sentence. Ambika was heard to cry and replied she didn't care and dropping the dish in her hand, she retired from the scene. She shut herself in her room and refused all food, throwing the whole house into turmoil. She complained that she was not feeling like eating, that was all. Later in the week, when the situation had calmed down, she explained to Jagan;
“Do you know what I said to your mother? Why are you so obsessed with the gold belt? What has it to do with salt or sugar? I have you never seen a gold belt in all your life?”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Since that day, his mother was very sparing in her remarks, particularly with reference to the gold belt. They had all along underestimated Ambika’s temper and nature. Jagan’s mother had confessed that Ambika was a model of goodness, courtesy and cheerfulness generally but she could lash with her tongue when her temper was roused. One day she asked Jagan to show his intelligence and pass his examination so that she might not be taunted with dragging him down to her own level (Ambika was illiterate). The result was that Jagan began to study hard. He never arrived late for his class, never missed a lesson and drew up a general chart of subjects and a working time table. He sat at his desk and studied far into the night. Into this nicely readjusted life, his father came crashing with his plan for visiting the temple. Jagan pleaded,

“Can't we go after the examinations?”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

His father glared at him and replied;

“We have waited long enough,”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

He further commanded;

“This is the only month when we can go up the hill, if the rains start we shan't be able to get there. Full of leeches and such things. Ten months in the year it is raining up there.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

So they went to the temple on Badri Hill known as the temple of Santana Krishna and the blessing of the God was supposed invariably to confer fertility. It was supposed that Ambika would certainly give birth to a male child as a result of the blessing of the God. The base of the hill was to be reached by bus. The party
consisted of Jagan and his wife, his father and mother. He felt touched by his father's solicitude in offering to climb the hill at his age. His mother looked extraordinarily pleased at reaching a solution at last for the barrenness of her daughter-in-law. She went on saying:

“All good things only come with time. Otherwise, why would I not have thought of all this earlier, last year for instance?”\(^{86}\)

(Narayan, R.K.  *The Vendor of Sweets*)

In the bus they had talk with a woman and a man and they also gave the positive reply about the temple. All were happy to learn about the temple and the grace of the God. They reached the temple and there was some haggling with a woman coconut seller over the price of coconuts which were to be offered to the God. Jagan's father was irritated;

“Yes, yes, it was written in the Vedas ten thousand years ago that you must be exploited on this spot of earth by this particular coconut woman, True,”\(^{87}\)

(Narayan, R.K.  *The Vendor of Sweets*)

He said cynically, glaring at his son and daughter-in-law sitting on another boulder hinting that if only people displayed normal fecundity, one would not have to buy coconuts at an exorbitant price. Jagan squirmed at the look his father gave him and felt more important than ever, and Ambika at whom he glanced, looked more defiant than ever, ready to bring out the group photo to prove her fertility but for the fact that he was a coward, Jagan would have asked his parents;

“Haven't you enough grand children? Why do you want more? Why don't you leave me alone?”\(^{88}\)

(Narayan, R.K.  *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Meanwhile the woman was saying;

“Don't grudge a little extra expense, the grandson will bring you a lot of good fortune when he arrives.”\(^{89}\)
At which the old gentleman softened and asked;

“How are you sure it'll be a son, not a daughter?” “No one who prays at that temple is ever disappointed with a daughter.”

The woman's prophecy was fulfilled and Mali was born. The birth was duly celebrated, a grand feast was given and Ambika's father came with a lot of presentations. Everything was done strictly in the traditional manner, with due rejoicing as was proper for the family.

Thirteenth is the last and concluding chapter of the novel. Brooding on the past, Jagan fell asleep at the foot of the Statue of Lawley. When he woke up it was already morning. He hurried to his house, tied his charkha and a few other things he was likely to need in a bundle and came out of the house. He had decided to renounce the world. He was already sixty and he decided to pass the remaining part of his days in the retreat shown to him by the white bearded man. Mali had a long time to live and he could live comfortably in the house. The entire house would henceforth belong to him. But he still carried the key of the back door with him. He thought of leaving it with his elder brother in Vinayak Street but then he thought that perhaps he would not like him to enter the house lest it should get polluted. So he decided to carry the key with him. As he went towards the bus stand, he met the cousin on the way. He was riding wildly on his bicycle. He was searching for him and seeing him at once came to him. He was in a hurry. Mali had been arrested and had passed the night in a jail, for half a bottle of alcohol had been found in his car. Jagan must come to the lawyer at once so that a bail could be arranged for Mali that very day. But Jagan refused to do so. He was of the view that some time in jail would be good for him. But he was still worried about the comforts of Mali till the cousin assured him;
“They'll treat him specially. I know the District Collector, and so we can get things done. I got the news at six o'clock. I was returning from the house of the Superintending Engineer, where I had gone to fix up a home tutor for their son. At the turning near the General Post Office, an orderly from the Superintendent's house gave me the news. The green car was halted at the Mempi outpost where they generally check for prohibition offences, as they find a lot of illicit distilling and traffic in the jungles high up. A policeman seems to have stopped Mali's car and found hidden in it half a bottle of some alcoholic drink and you know how it is. The police immediately seized the car, sealed the bottle before witnesses and have charged the inmates of the car under the Prohibition Act.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Jagan asked and cousin replied that his two friends. Jagan replied these were the reason of Mali’s ruin. Jagan sat up, shut his eyes and remained silent, his lips moving in a prayer. He murmured;

“I...I didn't know the boy drank,”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Vendor of Sweets*)

Jagan said;

“One doesn't have to drink to be caught by the Prohibition. It is enough if one's breath smells of alcohol. There are some fever mixtures which have an alcoholic flavour. A doctor has to certify that he had administered two doses of a fever mixture earlier in the day, that is all.”

“Who would that doctor be?”
“Oh, you are wasting time. Come on, let us go,” the cousin cried impatiently, “The lawyer will manage all that. Trust him and leave it in his hands...”\textsuperscript{93}

(Narayan, R.K. \textit{The Vendor of Sweets})

Jagan still stuck to his decision of renouncing the world and going to the retreat. He said;

“I am going to watch a goddess come out of a stone. If I don't like the place, I will go away somewhere else. I am a free man. I've never felt more determined in my life. I'm happy to have met you now, but I'd have gone away in any case. Everything can go on with or without me. The world doesn't collapse even when a great figure is assassinated or dies of heart failure. Think that my heart has failed, that's all.”\textsuperscript{94}

(Narayan, R.K. \textit{The Vendor of Sweets})

He gave the cousin a bunch of keys and said,

“Open the shop at the usual hour and run it. Mali will take charge of it eventually. Keep Sivaraman and the rest happy, don't throw them out. You can always come over to the retreat if there is anything urgent, or to render an account. I'll tell you what to do. At the market gate buses leave for Mempi every four hours starting from eight thirty in the morning. You are a busy man, but please help me now.”\textsuperscript{95}

(Narayan, R.K. \textit{The Vendor of Sweets})

He gave the cousin a cheque for two thousand rupees and promised him to give more if it was needed. He then asked for Grace and was told that she had got a job in a women's hostel. His last words to the cousin were;
“If you meet her tell her that if she ever wants to go back to her country, I will buy her the ticket. It's a duty we owe her. She was a good girl.”\textsuperscript{96}

(Narayan, R.K. \textit{The Vendor of Sweets})

Thus, ends the story of Jagan, The Vendor of Sweets. At the end he is a tortured soul, because his son is leading a sinful life and his house is polluted. All his money is of no good to him. He can find some comfort only through a withdrawal from the world. He will go and pass the rest of his days in the retreat which had been shown to him by the white bearded man. While the cousin considers him to be a sorcerer, he has been Jagan's \textit{messiah}, for spiritual calm is possible only in a 'retreat' and not in worldly, materialistic life. Gandhian philosophy holds true even in this respect. It is as if Jagan is going to a Gandhi Ashram. Both the teaching of the Hindu scriptures and Gandhi are at one in this respect.

\textbf{(4) The Bachelor of Arts (1937)}

\textit{The Bachelor of Arts} (1937) is a novel which is the second book of a trilogy that began with \textit{Swami and Friends} and ended with \textit{The English Teacher}. It is again set in \textit{Malgudi}, the fictional town Narayan invented for his novels.

The entire novel is divided in three parts with eighteen chapters. The present novel portrays the ups and downs of Chandran’s life. Chandran goes through the experience of love, disappointment, realisation and then love again. There are no acts of heroism that the writer describes. It is a very simple story about a simple man and yet it is quite captivating. It is all about illusions, disillusionment and realisation.

The first chapter opens with the protagonist Chandran who is a student of B.A. final year class at Albert College. He is a very good orator Natesan, the secretary of the college union, insists on Chandran’s becoming the Mover of the resolution, “Historians should be slaughtered first”, in a college debate. Chandran is afraid of his professor of History and so he refuses to accept this proposal. But on Natesan’s insistence, Chandran agrees to initiate the debate. Professor Brown, the principal of the college, presides over the college debate. Chandran is adjudged to be the best speaker. Chandran comes home late. In spite of being afraid of his father for coming home late, Chandran tells him that he was adjudged the best orator. He with his
companion Ramu goes to enjoy a cinema where he finds Principal Brown with a girl in the first class and so he remarks,

“The white fellows are born to enjoy life.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Bachelor of Arts*)

Both Chandran and Ramu return after watching the movie.

In the second chapter Chandran makes a plan to get up early in the morning and engrosses himself heart and soul to his studies. He decides to return home before eight o’clock in the evening and study till 11:30 p.m. He is determined to give up cigarettes. He makes a time table for his regular study which he would strictly follow from November to March. Chandran’s plan gets approved by his father. Without any disturbance on the first day Chandran follows his time table. Seenu is Chandran’s eight year old brother who studies in 3rd class at Albert Mission School. At his college, Chandran is taught ‘Othello’ by Asst. Prof. Gajapathi. Narayan depicts him as;

“He earned the hatred of students by his teaching and of his colleagues by his conceit.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Bachelor of Arts*)

He is a very strict teacher who does not give more than 40% marks to his students to keep heads down and pencils busy. Chandran, instead of taking notes in his class remains himself busy drawing Gajapathi’s sketches. He is taught History by Prof. Ragavachar who, one day, asks Chandran to see him in his room. Chandran sees Ragavachar who appoints him the secretary of the college’s Historical association. Chandran accepts it and comes out of the room and tries to find his friend Ramu whom he does not find in the college. So he goes to his house in Lawly Extension where he finds him. He returns from there at late night. Chandran’s mind is haunted by the inaugural Meeting of the historical association for which he seeks the guidance of Natesan, the secretary of the college union. Natesan suggests to him the name of the Principal to deliver the inaugural address. Chandran requests the Principal to address the inaugural meeting of the historical association which the latter accepts and
notes down in his diary. The second chapter ends with the Chandran’s activities in the college.

The third chapter opens on the fifteenth of November which was a busy day for Chandran. He spent a great part of the morning in making arrangements for the meeting in the evening. On this day, the Historical Association of the college is inaugurated by Principal Brown whose address is very interesting. Chandran is helped by Aziz out of obligation.

In the fourth chapter Chandran’s studies suffer a great deal from November 1 to 15 on account of his occupation with the inauguration of the Historical Association. So he decides to wake up at 4:30 in the morning to make up for his studies. Chandran’s father along with Chandran decides to get up early so that he may catch the thief of the jasmine flowers in their garden. The jasmine flower thief regularly steals flower every morning. Next morning along with Chandran, Chandran’s father and Seenu also get up and are prepared to catch the thief. Chandran helps his father to catch the thief but the thief is not caught. Next morning, they all get up at 4 a.m. and succeed in catching the thief. His father gets violent and the thief is dragged into the house where he is recognized as a ‘Sanyasi’. Chandran’s mother is a god fearing woman, so he lets the thief go without any punishment.

In the fifth chapter Chandran remains busy with his studies as well as with some meetings of the Historical Association. He comes in contact with 22 year old Veeraswami, a revolutionary and with Mohan, a poet. Chandran is found to be in an uncomfortable situation when Veeraswami reads an anti British paper at the meeting of the Historical Association and Principal Brown orders that all the papers to be read in future should be got censored by him. Mohan is a poet and recites his poems to Chandran who appreciates his poems very much. In the month of March, the academic session comes to an end. Chandran takes the examination and becomes a B.A. i.e, the Bachelor of Arts.

The second part begins with sixth chapter in which Chandran finally becomes a graduate. He is counseled by different persons to study law, to compete for I.A.S. or to start a business or to try for government service. He wishes to get a lectureship on return from England. Chandran feels lonely because his friend Ramu joins a law
course in Poona. He spends his time in the Town Public Library and goes for a walk by the river side in the evenings.

In the seventh chapter Chandran is taking a stroll by the side of the river bank. He sees a charming fifteen year old girl playing with her sister on the sands. He is fascinated by the innocent beauty of the girl at first sight. Chandran’s mind is now haunted by the thought of the girl Malathhi. He guesses about her age, her parentage and the possibility of his marriage with her. Next day, he goes to the river bank in his best suit, waits there for the girl for two hours, but does not find her there. He remains uneasy for the whole night. Next day, he sinks into sadness. He thinks of leaving Malgudi for a change and decides not to go to the riverbank but he reaches the bank of the river and sees the girl in a green Sari, playing with her sister. He is excited to find the girl. His attention is absorbed in the thought of the girl. In the meantime Veeraswami and Mohan reach there. He goes with them to a restaurant but his heart is away with the girl. They go to the Welcome Restaurant where they take coffee and talk for a long time. Mohan has become a correspondent to the Daily Messenger of Madras while Veeraswami has organized the Resurrection Brigade to start a movement. When they leave, Mohan gives Chandran his address, i.e., Room No 14, Modern Indian Lodge, Mill Street, so that they may meet in future whenever needed.

In the eighth Chandran takes Mohan’s help to know that Malathhi is the name of his sweet heart. She is unmarried and she is the daughter of Krishna Iyre, a head clerk. Chandran’s mother does not like his proposal. She suggests that there are other girls, richer and more beautiful but he rejects the suggestion and insists on this marriage. Chandran continues to visit Mohan and discusses with him many things including the proposal of his marriage with Malathhi. His mother becomes a serious hindrance in the way of his marriage with Malathhi. She retorts;

“I shall drown myself in Sarayu before I allow any proposal to go from here.”99

(Narayan, R.K. The Bachelor of Arts)

Thus, the present chapter shows the longings and impatience of Chandran for Malathhi.
In the ninth chapter Ganapathi Sastrigal, a match maker is entrusted with the task of finding the possibilities of Chandran’s marriage with Malathi. Next day, Sastrigal arrives with the news full of praise for the girl and her beauty. He praises her as;

“She is a smart girl; stands very tall and has a good figure. Her skin is fair; may be called fair, though not as fair as that of our lady here; but she is by no means to be classed as a dark girl.”

(Narayan, R.K. The Bachelor of Arts)

Malathi’s father agrees to let his daughter marry Chandran. To hear this news, Chandran becomes overjoyed. He is so much impatient that he himself wants to go to Malathi’s House to take her horoscope. In the evening Malathi’s horoscope is sent to Chandran’s house. Chandran entreats his mother not to create difficulty over the dowry.

In the chapter tenth Chandran’s father is informed that his son’s horoscope does not match with Malathi’s. Chandran becomes very sad to learn this. On Chandran’s insistence one more attempt is made to match the horoscopes but all in vain and Chandran’s dream of marriage with Malathi is shattered. Chandran writes a letter to Malathi asking her if she can wait for two years for her marriage with Chandran because after two years their horoscopes would match. He sends this letter through Mohan who never delivers it to her because he comes to know that Malathi has been engaged. When Chandran comes to know that Malathi’s marriage is fixed, he is disheartened and he leaves Malgudi and goes to Madras.

Part Three of the novel begins with the chapter eleven. Chandran stays in a hotel in Madras. In the hotel Chandran comes in contact with Kailas who acts as his guardian and guide. Kailas, a profligate, takes Chandran to different places and pays himself for everything. He had two wives and still comes to Madras to visit prostitutes, Chandran feels disgusted in the company of Kailas. Next morning, he visits Mylapore where, with the help of a barber, he becomes a Sanyasi and writes a post card to his father informing him that he has reached there safely.
The twelfth chapter narrates the adventures of Chandran. Chandran travels to various districts on foot and lives on alms. He grows weaker and weaker. After eight months, he reaches Koopal where he has to answer many questions put by the villagers. He pretends to be dumb. Villagers insist that he stay there and he accepts the request of the villagers. He lives on the gifts and alms of the villagers. Chandran is not happy with the situation in which he is in and feels that it is all due to Malathi and her love. He decides to leave the life of Sanyasi and takes a bus early in the morning. He reaches Madurai and finds the telegraph office. He tells his previous story to the Post Master and requests him to send a telegram to his father, which he does. Chandran changes his clothes and gets an old shirt and a dhoti from the Postmaster, which he puts on in place of saffron clothes of a Sanyasi. He leaves for Malgudi after receiving a money order of Rs. 50 from his father. This chapter ends with the transformation of Chandran’s thinking and he becomes a common man and throws away the attire of Sanyasi.

In the thirteenth chapter Chandran finally returns home in a very weak condition. He looks like a corpse. Seenu tells him that father and mother were very much worried about him. Chandran comes to know that Ramu has been employed in Bombay at Rs.75 a month. In the evening, he calls on Mohan. They go to the river bank and return from there after eleven at night.

The fourteenth chapter narrates that Chandran now becomes calm and cool person. He spends two hours in his garden in the morning and in the evening he calls on Mohan. He keeps himself busy all the day and avoids the thought of Malathi. Chandran’s mind is now preoccupied with the thoughts of an occupation. He has not yet given up the plan of going to England. Mohan advises Chandran to get the chief agency of his paper the Daily Messenger. Chandran welcomes the idea and conveys his desire to his father who approves of this idea after much thought and consultation. Chandran goes to Madras where he is helped by his 40 year old uncle in getting the agency. After several interviews and other formalities, Chandran succeeds in obtaining the agency of the paper.

In fifteenth chapter Chandran rents a room for Rs 7 when he returns to Malgudi and sets up in it the local office of the Daily Messenger. He throws himself in work and succeeds in increasing the number of subscribers to this paper. Three
boys are employed by him to distribute the paper in the town. He gives wide publicity to the paper by arranging a procession. Also he seeks Mohan’s co-operation in the matter. Chandran visits Prof. Ragavachar who assures him that the college union will continue to subscribe to his paper.

In the sixteenth chapter Chandran’s father comes to his office one fine day. It was a great surprise for him and with much hesitation he tells Chandran that his horoscope matches with the horoscope of Susila, the daughter of Jayaram Iyer, an advocate of Talapur. He tells Chandran that the girl is fifteen years old and is very beautiful but Chandran tells him that he will not marry.

In the evening Mohan comes to meet Chandran in his office. Both of them visits a hotel and spend hours talking about each other’s miseries and problems. Chandran tells Mohan about his father’s proposal of his marriage with Sushila. Mohan asks him about Malathi Chandran replies;

“I don’t believe in love. It doesn’t exist in my in my philosophy. There is no such thing as love. If I am not unkind to my parents it is because of gratitude and nothing else. If I get a wife I shall not wrench her hand or swear at her, because it would be indecent. That is all the motive for a lot of habitual decent behaviour we see, which we call love. There is no such thing as love.”

(Narayan, R.K. The Bachelor of Arts)

Mohan advises him to marry, telling him the comforts and charms of marriage. Finally Chandran decides to sit in the marriage and he assures Mohan that he will marry if the girl is good looking.

In the seventeenth chapter Chandran with his parents goes to Talapur to see the girl after five days. At Talapur railway station they are received by Jayaram Iyer’s son who is 18 years old. When they reach the house Chandran sees the mother of the girl and consoles himself that the girl will be beautiful because her mother is beautiful. After sometime the girl comes and Narayan portrays her as;
“With her eyes fixed on the ground she stepped from an inner room, a few inches into the hall, trembling and uncertain, ready to vanish in a moment.”

(Narayan, R.K. *The Bachelor of Arts*)

She is in blue Sari and Chandran is fascinated by her beauty. She also steals a glance at Chandran. Chandran and his parents return home and he accepts the proposal. Chandran shows his impatience to marry the girl as soon as it is possible. Thus, in this chapter Chandran attracts towards his would be wife and tries to forget Malathi.

The eighteenth is a concluding chapter of the novel which opens with the scene of engagement ceremony. Jayaram Iyer and the party come to Malgudi for the engagement ceremony. There is a feast and reception at Chandran’s house. Chandran now finds the *Daily Messenger* a great nuisance during the presentation for his marriage. Invitation cards are issued to his relatives and friends. On this occasion he remembers his friends Ramu, Natesan and Veeraswami. Ultimately Chandran marries to Sushila and he compares Malathi with Sushila and finds the latter more beautiful and far better than the former. Chandran is now a changed man. He is in full praise for his wife and tells Mohan that;

“On the first day she was too shy to talk to me. It was only on the third day that she uttered a few syllables. Before I came away, she spoke quite a lot. Shy at first, you know. She is a very sensible girl; talks very intelligently. I asked her what she thought of me, she merely threw at me a mischievous side glance. She has a very mischievous look. She has promised to write to me on alternate days; she writes beautiful English….”

Chandran wants to visit his wife as he has not received her letter. So he entrusts the work of his office to Mohan and plans to go and see his wife.

Thus, at the end of the novel Chandran is changed man. He was disappointed with Malathi’s love because he could not marry her but he becomes happy when he looks at Susila and receives her love.

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3.4 The Selected Short Stories

[1] Iswaran

Iswaran is the protagonist of the present story. The title of the story is given after him. Iswaran, who continues to fail in the same class year after year, is the target of his fellow students’ taunts and parents’ skepticism. Though externally he puts on a facade of defiance, underneath he remains hopelessly scared by failure, desperately longing for success and seeks escape in the cinema, trying to lose his woes in the world of make believe. Torn between the desire to see his name among the successful students and the fear of failure, he ponders the idea of suicide first thankfully, saner counsel prevails and he discards the idea. Narayan perfectly observes human psychology and his observation and understanding are presented through the character of Iswaran.

[2] Dodu

The present story opens with the entry of little Dodu. Little Dodu's business venture of buying stamps and selling them by using the pocket money his uncle gives him comes to naught, when a stranger who offers to buy stamps discovers that Dodu is making a profit over the stamp sale. One day he discovers that people buy writings done on palm leaves. Dodu is happy when without knowing that the ones bought are heritage writings of the past. In all his innocence he scrawls on a palm leaf and takes it to the archeologist, who happens to be a kind human being and indulges Dodu by buying the leaf for a few coins.

[3] Hero

Though the timid Swami is reluctant, his father drags him to his office while the women in the family, including his grandmother who pampers him all the time look on helplessly. Swami sleeps in the office and dreams and wakes up the next morning as a hero with a special invitation to join the police force and abounds in the adulation. Though his father is pleased to know his son's photograph has appeared in the local newspapers, when he rushes home to break the good news he finds Swami back to his old ways, proving the adage that you cannot straighten a dog's tail.
[4] Naga

The present story is of a little boy. Narayan has perfectly draw child psychology through the character of Child. Snake charmer Venkatesh and his son Child perform various acts with snake for their living. The boy develops a special bond with the snake and cares for him. Venkatesh, who had lost his wife develops an relationship with another married woman, both Venkatesh and Child catch hold of a monkey and train it to perform in public along with the snake. When Venkatesh deserts his son and runs off with the other woman and also takes the newly trained monkey for his living. Child starts performing in public with the snake. Though the snake is old and does not raise its hood, Child tries to feed it even going hungry himself. However, when he gets rid of the snake by leaving it in a forest, he rushes and takes it hack when an Eagle is about to attack it.

[5] Leela’s Friends

The present story is about an innocent servant, Sidda. The Sivashankar family is envied by others because they hire Sidda, a simple servant to help about the house. He runs all errands and plays with the 8 year old Leela. He always tells a story to Leela at night. Once he goes to market with Leela to buy certain things. When he returns home, Leela’s mother comes to know that she has no chain with Leela. Mrs. Sivasankar puts blame on Sidda when she goes to kitchen for something Sidda runs away from the house. Mrs. Sivasankar also tells all the matter to her husband. Mr. Sivasankar lodges a complaint to the police station. After few days police catches Sidda and put before them and Sidda is forced to confess about the chain. Sidda does not confess and keeps mum. They all believe that Sidda is the thief and he has stolen the chain. The chain is ultimately found in a pickle jar by Mrs. Sivashankar but it is too late by them.


Narayan again touches the field of psychology especially child psychology. A little girl’s performance is watched by a film producer and director who have come in search of a girl. They like her act and ask her to be brought to the studio for a screen test. The girl panics and hides herself as the time nears for her to go to the studio. The parents who start searching for their daughter are worried about her disappearance.
Ultimately the mother realizes that the girl has hidden herself in a basket and fainted. When she comes to her senses and pleads with the mother not to send her to acting, she concedes to her demand.

[7] Nitya

In this story Narayan tries to point out the issue of generation gap. Narayan also adds the element of humour. Nitya's parents have vowed to place their baby's hair on the Lord's altar to save him from a mortal illness. It is 20 years since and it is now time to fulfill their vow. Nitya is against the ritual and hurts his parent but somehow his parents convince their son to set off on their journey. On reaching the site, a steep hill climb awaits them. Nitya curses to his heart's content but there is no way out. On reaching the village, to his parents' chagrin, the barber is missing from his house. Happily Nitya offers a mere four inches of his front locks to the village headman just as the local barber comes cycling desperately down the lane.

[8] A Willing Slave

For the family she is just 'Ayah', who is a willing slave to cook and care for the three children, keep a stern eye on the other servants and keep the house in running order all for a pittance of a sari and a few rupees a month. Two sturdy, sullen men in their early 40's would come to collect a part of her meager salary which she gives wittingly. The episode deals with the unique relationship of The Ayah and little Radha where each indulges the other's fantasy till one day when the Ayah leaves to become a slave for someone else. For the Western world, the central character would be quite an unbelievable tale about a mother figure, in an Indian household.

[9] Father's Help

The present story is full of humour. Swami is the protagonist of the story who doesn’t like Monday. He doesn’t want to go to school so he makes false story about his school teacher Samuel. His father gets angry with Swami’s teacher and drafts a complaint note to the principal and orders Swami to handover this letter to his principal. Now Swami is put in confusion whether a letter should be delivered or not. He thinks whether his complaints were right about his teacher or not. He slowly goes to school and wishes that his teacher punish him but on that day the entire situation goes wrong and his teacher Samuel behaves very politely with him and he is in
tension about his father’s letter. At last he is punished by his teacher and wants to hand over his father’s letter to the principal but unfortunately his principal was out of station for several days and instead of him a wise principal Samuel is there. So he cannot deliver a complaint letter to him which was against of Samuel.

[10] A Shadow

It is a story of a little boy Sambu whose father is died. He is much curious about his father’s film. He wants to see a Tamil film in which his father has acted as a leading character. He tells about this film to his friend but he doesn’t pay much attention on Sambu’s talk. Sambu asks money from his mother for a film. He is so happy when he sees his father on the cinema screen. He wants to see constant shows of the film. He always forces his mother to come with him but as a little boy he cannot understand the feelings of his mother as a wife. Ultimately his mother comes with him to a cinema to see a film. As film proceeds on she cannot bear the scene of her husband who has just died and faints all of sudden. All the lights are put on and Sambu worries about his mother. The people carry his mother outside the cinema and after some time she comes to the state of conscious and Sambu takes a breath of relief.

3.5 Conclusion

Thus, the present chapter gives the brief account of details of the major literary works and also presents all selected four novels and ten short stories in detailed. The chapter helps to understand the gist and summary of major works and selected works. It also helps to understand Narayan’s art of characterisation and narration. Narayan has perfectly depicted the human and child psychology through his major and minor characters. All major works set in the imaginary South Indian town Malgudi.
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