CHAPTER III

RAMA SARMA’S THE FAREWELL PARTY – A STUDY IN THEME AND FORM

Introduction: Rama Sarma’s The Farewell Party was published in the year 1971. Dr. Sarma, a scholar, humanist and educationist, was born on September 6, 1920 at Movva village, Krishna district. He was the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Professor of English in Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati. He was the Principal of the University College for six years and also became the Vice Chancellor of S.V.University for three and a half years.

He is mainly known as a Milton Scholar. He is a creative writer. His works include Milton’s Paradise Lost: A Study, Heywood (A Prose Shakespeare), The Heroic Argument: A study of Milton’s Heroic Poetry, three plays and three novels. The Farewell Party is his second novel. The Stream (1756) and Look Homeward (1976) are his first and third novels respectively. His novels are autobiographical as they are based on his own experiences.

The novel, The Farewell Party, throws sufficient light on various issues like the profession of teaching, the changing role of the teacher, the effects of caste system, the freedom movement, the condition of India after independence, etc. It also touches upon the themes of synthesis of the cultures of the East and the West, the ill-effects of war, etc. The plot of the novel is woven around Prof. Prakasam’s career from the beginning to the end. The remaining part of the chapter is divided into Part II – Plot of the novel, Part III – Study of the Theme of the Novel, Part IV - Study of the Form of the Novel and Part V - Conclusion.
The Plot: The novel *The Farewell Party* revolves round the varied experiences in Prakasam’s career as a lecturer. He started off as a lecturer at the age of 24. Sarala, one of the students of his first batches is enchanted by him and marries him. Considering the reputation of the institution, a notice of dismissal is served on him. He shifts on to Hyderabad along with Sarala and starts life afresh. After three years of their stay there, he gets a state scholarship to go to Oxford for higher studies. After studying for two years at Oxford he comes back to Hyderabad and joins New College. There he has to suffer because of his upright behavior. He does not get professorship until the principal retires. Later his colleague Gupta supersedes him. Prakasam gets disturbed by the teacher-politician of the changing world and the commercialization of teaching. His redeeming factor is that his only son Manohar was in the Indian Foreign service and his daughter Lalita was married to an IAS officer. Finally he resigns and joins a new rural university in Srikakulam. There he derives peace and contentment from the serene environment in the lap of nature and the fresh new campus. He works there for five years and though he has the provision to continue, decides to retire at the normal age of sixty and to involve himself in philosophic and spiritual attainment.

**Theme in *The Farewell Party* - A Study:** The novel discusses various themes, out of which the theme which concerns the campus novel has been taken for study. It is the theme of ethical deterioration among the faculty in educational institutions. Here, faculty includes even the principal. The novel elaborately presents the duties of a teacher, methods of teaching, the profession of teaching in addition to the attitudes and behavior of the professors.
Prakasam was an upright teacher and he had chosen the profession of teaching, out of passion for it. His views about the profession of teaching and the duties of a teacher are discussed. He “….strongly felt that at the undergraduate level a teacher’s foremost duty was to get the student interested in his subject”.¹

Many of his colleagues who differed from him on this point felt that it would not be serious teaching. For this, Prakasam says that “….a good teacher could well fulfill both the objectives. He could make his lectures interesting as well as scholarly”.² Once they got interested in the subject, at the postgraduate level, the students can be as learned and scholarly as possible.

It is hinted at the point that a good teacher must feel proud and satisfied looking at his students flourish. Such teachers consider students themselves as their wealth. Mrs. Prakasam echoes his views- “It’s a great opportunity given to a teacher to shape and mould the future generations”.³

But it is totally disappointing for him when he witnesses the teacher-politician entering the sphere of teaching. Power-politics had gained a high-hand not only over the administration of the college and universities but also over the lives of teachers. The dawn of commercialization of education is also hinted upon here. “The teacher-politician had entered the arena. Teaching was no longer a noble profession. It was getting commercialized”.⁴

The profession was losing its sanctity. Some youngsters were entering the profession with mercenary thoughts. They were dissatisfied very soon because they did not possess “the spirit of service demanded by this profession.” ⁵As the author writes that in the changing world,
Unfortunately the misfits got into it as a last resort. Some of them stepped in accidentally’ such teachers had neither love for learning, not love for students. They did not care whether the students listened to them attentively or just tolerated them for an hour. The pay was their main consideration but it was unfortunately not very lucrative.\textsuperscript{6}

It is said that there is not much possibility of going wrong in the profession of teaching. But in recent times, corruption has crept into the field of education and much ethical degradation is being witnessed. Even jealousy rules over most of the faculty. Many examples illustrating these have been given in the novel.

Sastry was one such teacher, for whom money was the only known God. For him the institution of private tuitions was a sacred one and he almost ran a school in his house. He always thought in terms of money and used to argue that a poor lecturer would have been nowhere if not for the tuitions. His strategy was well organized. He would first spot out the rich students and would endear himself to them by tolerating all the lapses on their part. He cajoled and flattered them and then hinted upon his tuitions. “It was often thought that he would get his private students pass. He approached the other examiners with a list of numbers and obliged them in return”.\textsuperscript{7}

One can observe how even in this noble profession, people can bring in corruption. It is ironical that the faculty themselves are instrumental in the mitigation of the sanctity of examinations. About tuitions Prakasam felt,

It encouraged idlers to be more idle and stupid boys to be stupider.

It killed initiative. There was a curious feeling in the minds of rich
students that they could afford to be idle in class, physically as well as mentally and then buy a teacher for a small sum of money. They expected such teachers to write notes for them and they would then gulp them. The man who gave tuitions sold his individuality for a cheap price, and the one who received, lost his originality. So there was deterioration on both sides.\(^8\)

This method encouraged the rich students to be inactive and irresponsible in the class. The author writes about the shortcomings of the examination system as follows,

There was need for giving credit to the steady work; it was cruel to expect the student to cram everything for two or three years and then reproduce it mechanically. The examination system encouraged bare repetition of partly understood and ill-digested stuff. Viewed from this angle the whole system would appear to be farcical and ridiculous.\(^9\)

At another point Prakasam himself says, “….There is an element of chance in our examination system. Sometimes even a deserving candidate may go down”.\(^{10}\) To quote another lecturer, Sekhar’s views,

He was thoroughly convinced that the examiners were quixotic, they often did not bother to read the answers. Some, he thought, would go by quantity and not by quality; some were so lazy that they might get the papers valued by their sons and daughters. There were others who were allergic to Arithmetic and who could never add up 2 and 2. It was always 3 or 5, never 4 by any chance.\(^{11}\)
The author gives a curious detail after presenting these points. This is the other reason for Sekhar’s disbelief in exams - that he had passed his Honors Exams because of his professor’s adding machine and “…..not because of his wonderful knowledge. He sat before his professor and threatened to commit suicide. The result was a third class. The very minute he swore he would never put his faith in the examinations”.\(^{12}\)

If a student resorts to malpractice like this, it is quite but natural that he would continue to be corrupt in whatever profession he takes up. This is well-exemplified in the novel. Though Sekhar is appointed lecturer of Philosophy, “he never committed the sin of teaching Philosophy”.\(^{13}\) He paid attention only to his comforts. Even in his lecture room he had placed an easy chair for himself to lean on and relax. “He promised his students ‘classes’ as he expected to be the Chairman someday. But very often the prophecy proved to be wrong, and the students were the losers thereby”.\(^{14}\)

Here, one can observe how some lecturers are unconcerned about the students’ learning and their own duty. There is another kind of teacher who considered that his scholarship was meant for the chosen few- the elite and not for the mediocrity. He never taught anyone as he did not find the geniuses and the author considers this the good fortune of the students to have missed his erudition. He never wrote anything and covered the laziness or this incapacity by the art of sophistry. He only wanted to write the best and not the second or third rate article or book. “The best never came out and so nothing came from his pen. He sneered at the efforts of others at writing because he himself could not do it”.\(^{15}\)

When Prakasam joins New College in Hyderabad, he is almost shocked to see the disparities among the staff members in the college. A bit of information about the
Principal is that he was noted for his pro-British sympathies. He liked British diplomacy and adopted it in his administration. “Divide and rule was his basic ideology. He created rifts among the members of the staff”\(^{16}\) and would even leave his own loyal supporters in the lurch. His ways were mysterious and inscrutable.

Suri, one of the faculty members was the right hand man of the principal. He put Suri on every committee and considered nothing could happen without Suri. On the other hand the Principal neglected some other members on the staff - chiefly Sundaram. Describing Suri the author writes, “Power was his creed and in its pursuit, he was ruthless and unscrupulous”.\(^{17}\) He was in fact ruining the institution.

Backbiting indicates viciousness and is such a practice which cannot be expected of any faculty. This also amounts to aberration of the ethics of a teacher. But this practice is found in vogue in the campus and among the faculty. On his very first meeting with Prakasham, Suri tries to impose a very negative image of Sundaram on Prakasham.

“You see, he (Sundaram) is a bad fellow. He is good for nothing as a teacher. Of course he got a Second class, but he is the poorest teacher we have. His knowledge is old fashioned. He doesn’t know anything about the recent trends……To tell you the truth he has forgotten his subject. Look at his face, it will tell you how deplorable his mind is. If I were the Principal I would sack him immediately”. “Then, why don’t you tell the Principal about him?” “I told him a hundred times, but the principal is a coward. Sundaram is highly connected. So he is afraid to touch him. …..Don’t become too friendly with him.”\(^{18}\)
The dishonesty and spitefulness in Suri is brought about clearly in this dialogue between Suri and Prakasam. But unlike the principal, Prakasam is not prejudiced. He speaks to Sundaram and gets to know the explicit picture of the politics in the college. Sundaram throws light on the current educational institutions, where flattery is given utmost importance. When Prakasam finds it difficult to believe the goings-on in the campus, Sundaram says, “You have not yet seen life. You are fresh from an English University. Truth has no place here. No one wants your teaching. It’s a disqualification to be a good teacher. Be a flatterer, then you’ll go up”.

One can figure out the undue importance attached to flattery in the academic set-up. Sundaram confides his predicament to Prakasam. The conversation is as follows-

“….I think you are doing your best. And one day you will get the reward”. “If meanwhile I don’t get sacked. Suri poisons the mind of the Principal and anything may happen to me any moment”…….“There is fair play. Wait patiently”. “Prakasam, I have waited long enough. Suri and his group leave us in no peace. We fear our own shadows……….am not the only one in this miserable state. There are others who are equally distressed. The Principal keeps us at a distance as though we are unwanted and dangerous.”

Considering the progress of the institution, Prakasam makes an attempt to bring in harmony by reconciling the two lecturers- Suri and Sundaram. He takes this issue for discussion with the Principal. Listening to Prakasam’s pleas, the principal, who was blindfolded by prejudices, gets upset and turns rigid to Prakasam. Due to this act on the
part of Prakasam, the professorship which would otherwise come to him the next year was delayed by fifteen years—till the principal gets retired. Even another episode adds up to this—in another instance the principal gets upset and feels offended when Prakasam refuses to stray from his principles and appoint Mohan— a candidate recommended by him, as against the deserving candidate.

Working of Politics at the college level is implicitly sketched in the novel. As soon as the previous Principal retires, Gupta gets busy to supersede Prakasam. At that time Prakasam was in U K and Gupta utilizes that time as an opportunity. By the time Prakasam returns, Gupta’s position is strengthened as the Principal. The Ph.D. degree he had earned recently comes in handy for him to claim the position which would otherwise have gone to Prakasam. He gets himself appointed as the Principal in the interim period. Prakasam is shocked to see everybody, even the members on the committee support Gupta in his action. He is amused when he recollects how these very members who had preferred Gupta on the basis of the Ph.D. degree had emphasized on a good basic degree at a different occasion. The hidden reason for their support to Gupta is also given by the author. “The Committee decided in favour of Gupta. They had to. He was highly connected. Luckily for him there was the Ph.D.”  

But even after assuming principalship, Gupta experienced the feeling of insecurity in the presence of Prakasam. The first thing he did after becoming the principal was to encourage Srinivasan to flout the authority of Prakasam. Gupta wanted to slight him and make his life miserable. “Power was his creed. It was dear to him all the more as it came to him in the evening of his life. He was waiting for that day when he would be in a position to oblige some and ruin others”.

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These instances serve as testimony of the cheap game play of some professors. Jealousy is the main reason for this kind of a mentality among the professors. Even Srinivasan, a good friend of Prakasam turned a supporter of Gupta, driven by selfish motives. He was promised many things. “The two joined hands. And both of them [Gupta and Srinivasan] were highly connected and belonged to the same community. That was enough for them to come together”.23 This indicates how community and connections with influential people outdo human relationships. It is totally disheartening that parochialism becomes extensively practised in the universities as a result of the importance given to provincialism in the country. “These seats of learning which ought to get the best scholars from any part of the country had become parochial. This was a new development that was extremely displeasing to the educated man”.24

Jealousy, disloyalty, disregard for duty, self-centeredness, greed for power are all some aspects of college politics which have been discussed in the novel. The narrow-mindedness among the faculty is such that they looked at every action of their colleagues suspiciously. Sastry’s helping his colleagues and neighbors out of goodwill, is viewed by his colleagues as “a craving for popularity”.25 For an ideal teacher like Prakasam, all this is quite disturbing. The only redeeming factor for him in his professional life is the support and love he receives from his former students. One such student, who had participated in the freedom struggle and had later become member of the Assembly in Madras, commends Prakasam saying, “You are doing a great service to the country in training the youth. I can never forget the stimulating lectures you used to give”.26

When Prakasam expresses his desire to join the freedom struggle, the student says, “No, no please do not leave this noble profession. We want inspiring teachers like
you to remain in the profession. Or else we won’t get the right type of persons to participate in the national struggle”.  

The author seems to indicate that this is the kind of service lecturers can offer to their motherland.

**Form in The Farewell Party- A Study:**

**Structure:** The novel is in third person omniscient narration. The novel begins in the present with Professor Prakasam recollecting the whole of his life on the eve of his retirement. The reminiscences are also presented to the readers and so the narration oscillates between the present and the past. The narrative is a combination of stream of conscious technique with the semi-autobiographical mode of narration which is “….admirably suited to the nature of the vision”. Critic Dr. G.S. Balarama Gupta puts it thus-

> The entire story is told in an extended flashback. On the eve of his retirement Professor Prakasam recalls the past events of his life – some heartening, some depressing, but all leading to this day of retirement, the day on which he can look back with supreme satisfaction, for he has always been an honest soul……

As V. Sachithanandnanda observes,

*The Farewell Party* is curiously reminiscent of The Ancient Mariner. Prof. Prakasam, who is about to leave home for a farewell party, indulges in episodic retrospection of his life as teacher, lover, husband, father and friend his ‘stream of consciousness’ (to use the phrase in its non-technical sense)
prompted by his alter ego of a wife. Every reader of the novel seems to become a wedding guest listening helplessly to the professor’s ritualistic narration of his past.\(^{30}\)

The episodic division in the novel is not made by chapterisation but by the use of a row of asterisks. It also confirms the introduction of a new character affecting on Prakasam’s memory. Dr. Gupta opines, “The Farewell Party starts off in a rather matter-of-fact manner, but gains momentum gradually, and proves to be an excellent specimen of hearth-side reading”.\(^{31}\) As G.Nageswara Rao writes,

Rama Sarma’s second novel The Farewell Party, may, at first sight, appears like a simple ‘Campus novel’; a ‘Kaleidoscopic’ reverie of reminiscences of a lovable professor on the day of his retirement …… But a close study of The Farewell Party will make it undeniably clear that its simplicity proceeds from the author’s profundity of vision and his mature craft and style.\(^{32}\)

The progression of the novel is non-linear. The novel begins in the present and ends in the present, at the place where it had begun, thereby completing the circle.

**Diction:** The kind of diction used in the novel is different from that kind which is in vogue in the recent times. The hybridity in language, that is a blend of several languages—both Indian and foreign words is not found dominant in this novel. Only very few Sanskrit words like ‘Karma’ and ‘Nishkama Karma’ have been found. Only one Hindi word ‘sari’ and an Italian word ‘dilettante’ are used. The author has used the so called ‘Queen’s English’ in the novel. English idioms have been effectively made use of in the narrative. Some of them are- Tall talk, tooth and nail, a godsend, leave in the lurch, call a
spade a spade, etc. Some allusions have been used like The Greek hero Hercules and Jonathan Swift’s satire *The Battle of the Books*.

The use of satire and irony is found explicitly in the novel. Some of them have been given below- While describing Sekhar, the lecturer in Philosophy, the author writes, “…he never committed the sin of teaching Philosophy.” It is both satirical and ironical that the teacher whose duty is teaching, considers teaching his own subject, a sin. There is an instance of Prakasam’s meeting Seshu’s father. Seshu, was Prakasam’s former student, who had become the victim of caste system. He had committed suicide along with his beloved when he was forced by his father to marry a girl of his choice. After that incident, Seshu’s father had been considering himself responsible for his son’s death until he is consoled by Prakasams. At this juncture, he makes an ironical statement on the mentality of the people about caste system. “Everyone blames me; society calls me a sinner. The same society would have called me a sinner if I had allowed my son to marry that girl of a different caste from ours”.

As the technique of stream of consciousness is used in the novel one can observe that the method of questioning oneself continuously has been sufficiently used. For example- When Seshu’s father refused to recognize Prakasam, he asks himself- “Why shouldn’t he recognize me? How have I offended him?” When he submits himself to introspection about the kind of life he had lead, he questions himself and the author puts them thus- “What else did he want? Was there anything more for him to aspire? Was it not on the whole a well spent life, a usefully lived life? What else was there? Nothing.”
The author has been remarkably successful in bringing about the Indian sensibility and attitude with the minimal use of indigenous languages. The kind of language used also contributes to its high readability.

**Characterisation:** Prakasam’s character serves as a contrast to the selfish, mercenary, egoistic and self-important teachers who have been increasing in number in the academic scenario. The author portrays an ethically upright and dedicated teacher – a role model for the fraternity of teachers in the character of Prakasam. Within a short period of five years of joining the rural university at the age of fifty five, “…he had established himself as a good teacher and a sympathetic guide. Students respected him for his scholarship and loved him for his unpretentious nature”. Prakasam is shown, as critics point out, “…in his full domestic life and eventful academic and social life, for he has always been an honest soul – a sound scholar, an affectionate father, a loving colleague, a friendly neighbour, and a good husband and a beloved professor”. But most of the students from affluent families understand neither the significance of education nor the importance of teachers at the beginning of his career. About such students the author writes, “Education for them was only a means to an end—to get dowries. They could afford expensive tuitions and even corrupt the examiners as a last resort”.

In dealing with such students too Prakasam exhibits considerable tact. The way he conducts classes and helps students is depicted in the instances given below- Instead of resorting to punishment and rebukes, he directly asks them the reason for their disinterest. This kind of a novel approach facilitates them in introspecting themselves and reasoning out their behavior. He tries to understand their problem and proposes solutions and thus
the problem comes to an end. “There was a general assent. A peculiar happiness, born out of understanding spread over the whole class”.40

Another instance of his involvement in transforming students is given. A student comes to him dejected and on the verge of a collapse, thinking about the possibility of his failure in the examination. Prakasam advises him appropriately, restores his confidence and helps him to retain his senses. This is possible as Prakasam is true to his duties as a teacher and guide. “He (Prakasam) loved his profession, the happiness and satisfaction he had in teaching made him forget the rebuffs of life”.41 His ambition was to become a good teacher and he lived up to his dreams.

He wanted to be a good teacher or nothing.…… It was not by accident that he had gone in for teaching. He wanted to be successful or else he was prepared to leave it. If the students did not respect him he did not like to hang on as some others did.42

For him teaching is a noble profession, but at the same time, he is not blind to the besetting sins creeping even into its fold. But he does not lose hope. “He was a great dreamer all through his life. His faith in man’s ultimate goodness was now and then shaken, but was never rooted out.” 43

Though being such a good teacher, he does not expect gratitude. But he is deeply hurt when his own students misunderstand him. An instance depicting this is presented in the novel. Bhushan is one of the several junior staff under him who had been his students. He had believed someone’s words that Prakasam had not supported him in getting his lecturership. Prakasam had even explained to Bhushan the whole situation though he was under no obligation to do so. But this goes futile as he does not believe his own teacher.
When Mrs. Prakasam tells him that he should not have done it as he was his own student, Prakasam spills out the agony in his heart—“That makes the matter worse. If an outsider misunderstands me it’s bearable. But it’s hard if my own student disbelieves me. I have never come across such a person before. So I feel hurt”.44

Prakasam was not very happy with some of the Indian practices like the caste system, Idolatry, parochialism, etc. Nevertheless he gives a desirable image of India to the Englishmen when he is in the UK. He neither believes in God nor in caste system, but gives a clear picture of these to the people there, clearing all their doubts. His disbelief in God is deciphered in his answer to Mrs. Prakasam’s question. Mrs. Prakasam asks him if he believed in a personal God, and he gives an interesting answer—“….I am more inclined to believe in an impersonal godhead and in the existence of an all-pervading spirit in the universe. We serve humanity and thereby fulfill our mission. It is immaterial whether there is a God or not”.45

Mrs. Prakasam rightly says, “It is the rationalism in you that makes you think in this manner”.46 His non-adherence to the caste system is proved when he chooses inter-caste marriage with Sarala. He also shows considerable fortitude after this marriage as he stands against the whole society. At one point, thinking about the narrow mindedness of the people who get carried away by considerations of caste and creed, Prakasam feels, “Even educated persons could not get rid of these prejudices. Education had not taught them anything”.47 This points out to the expectation from education – that it should help people to overcome prejudices related to certain practices like caste system. He is described as “a contemplative type of person often pondering on the predicament of
life.” Through his philosophic speculations he tries to arrive at a solution or synthesis of an issue.

His conversation with his wife Sarala which is spread over the novel shows that they are made for each other despite their individual differences. “He was a dreamer, she was a realist. He was a utopian, she was practical minded. This difference in nature did not produce any conflicting results; on the other hand the one supplemented the other.”

Even as a father, he has fulfilled his duties. His only son was selected in the Indian Foreign Service and he was in London in the diplomatic service; his daughter was married to an IAS officer and was well-settled.

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“His simplicity, his forthright speech, his lack of diplomacy, his scholarly pride – all these left him with too few friends.” But he was loyal to the few friends he has. He tries to help his colleague Sundaram, staking his own position in the college. It is because of this endeavour that his professorship is delayed by fifteen years. But curiously enough he does not regret his just action. Finally, to sum up, one can voice Dr. Gupta’s view that “His is a life of devotion to duty, love for his friends, and tolerance for his adversaries, and ultimately one feels he has had, despite certain disturbing incidents, a full and fruitful life.” Thus as quoted earlier, Prakasam is a rare and ideal teacher, colleague, father, husband and friend. With such a personality, he is worthy of the compliment given by Mrs. Prakasam - “Professors are lovable.”

**Conclusion**: The novel is about a sincere, upright, patient professor- Prakasam who is victimized by college politics. By virtue of his sincerity towards his duty and responsibility towards students, his incorruptible character, he commands respect from
the students. Though people in authority try to deprive him of his legitimate rights, he
gets them later in life.

Prakasam believes that teachers are responsible for shaping young minds. So they
themselves should have proper frame of mind to impart it to others. The author subtly
points out the important role played by the management of the institution here.

The novel mainly presents a contrast between the good and the unscrupulous
teachers. Good teachers are represented by Prakasam, the protagonist and Sundaram.
They are ethically upright, modest, true to their duties but are ironically the victimized
lot. The unscrupulous teachers who disregard their duty, indulge in back-biting, power-
politics and are money-minded form the other group. This group includes campus-
politicians like Principal Gupta, Suri, Srinivasan, Ramesham, Sekhar, etc. It is ironical
that the good teachers have become the oppressed minority by the deplorable majority.
Even the author refers to the conflict between these two groups as the ‘Battle of the
Books’. It is shown in the novel that both professional and moral ethics are disregarded
by the faculty. Teachers are the guides who show the righteous path to the students and
help them build a strong nation. If they fail in this duty, students are bound to go astray
and forget all scruples and responsibilities. Teachers are expected to serve as role models
to students and to protect the sacredness of the profession - a profession which has the
potential of producing nation builders.

The novel has many aspects related to campus life. A note on the importance of
Ph.D. is also given stating that research is invaluable both for teaching and for improving
one’s own understanding. It gives originality and maturity. It is a process of
systematizing everything learnt before. The author also hints upon the general
expectations from education. It can be observed how Prakasam tactfully distinguishes between religion and caste, Idolatry and faith, etc. It is advanced education that makes one capable of such distinctions.

When Prakasam gets the chance of studying at Oxford, many discourage him saying that he might get into bad ways and that he was not born in a watery sign. But Prakasam’s determination was stronger than these superstitions and he successfully returns after his stay there for two years. A similar situation occurs in M.K. Naik’s *Corridors of Knowledge* where the protagonist Madhav was leaving for Bombay to write his M.A. Final Exam. That day happened to be a new moon day which is considered to be inauspicious. But when he gets a first class, the elderly gentleman who had objected Madhav, takes a stand that though Madhav had started his journey on an inauspicious day; he had reached on a very auspicious day that was New Year Day, and that is why he was bound to gain spectacular success in his task. The novel can be compared to *Corridors of Knowledge* in other aspects also like- The protagonists in both the novels are professors of English and the favorite teachers of their students. Their wives are quite co-operative. And also both indulge in contemplation of the human nature.

The author provides a contrast to the college discussed in the novel while writing how unique the rural university was. It was a residential university. In its teaching the modern sciences, it did not neglect the cultural aspects of education. The student could commune with nature in all its glory. The student was not oppressed by the nightmarish exams and the unpredictable moods of the examiners.

Living in the University campus for three years was an education by itself. It prepared the student for a vocation in life and equipped him with a general cultural
background required. So by the time he left the university he was a full man in the real sense—useful to himself and to others in the society. This description offers a contrast to the modern college/university life of students.

At the end of the novel Prakasam opines that he feels the pride and satisfaction of a successful teacher at the time of retirement. He also says that he was proud because of his students. And after retirement he would try to understand life in its totality. Mrs. Prakasam says that he had a great opportunity of shaping and moulding the future generations; and that his students were his greatest wealth.

The author has been remarkably successful in his endeavor of portraying the academic scene and has made a rich contribution to Indian English Fiction.
Notes

2 Sharma, 55-56.
3 Sharma, 85.
4 Sharma, 82.
5 Sharma, 5.
6 Sharma, 24.
7 Sharma, 24.
8 Sharma, 25.
9 Sharma, 28.
10 Sharma, 48.
11 Sharma, 27.
12 Sharma, 27.
13 Sharma, 26.
14 Sharma, 27.
15 Sharma, 29-30.
16 Sharma, 36.
17 Sharma, 37.
18 Sharma, 38.
19 Sharma, 39-40.
20 Sharma, 29-30.
21 Sharma, 80.
22 Sharma, 80.
23 Sharma, 78-79.
24 Sharma, 70.
25 Sharma, 25.
26 Sharma, 51.
27 Sharma, 52.
34 Sharma, 65.
35 Sharma, 60.
36 Sharma, 31.
Sharma, 1.

G.Nageswara Rao, “Evolution of Being: a Study of the Novels of Rama Sarma”. 


Sharma, 10.

Sharma, 5.

Sharma, 7-8.

Sharma, 70.

Sharma, 54.

Sharma, 83.

Sharma, 83.

Sharma, 3.

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