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**Impact of Indian Independence Movement on
the Select Novels of R.K. Narayan**

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R.K. Narayan – Biography

R.K. Narayan is one of the famous novelists of India. His novels were established in an empathetic humanism and commended the verve and hilarity out of customary life. On October 10, 1906, R.K. Narayan, a great novelist was born in Madras. His father was a regional headmaster. R.K. Narayan expended his initial childhood days with his maternal grandma, Parvathi in Madras and used to visit his family for a few weeks each summer. R.K. Narayan pursued his initial eight years schooling at Lutheran Mission School and also for a short period at the CRC High School neighboring to his grandma's house in Madras. When his father was designated as headmaster of the Maharaja's High School in Mysore, R.K. Narayan shifted back to Mysore to live with his parents. There he earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Mysore [1].

R.K. Narayan initiated his writing vocation with Swami and companions in 1935. A large portion of his work including Swami and companions is set in the fictional town of Malgudi which is the model of India, conquers everything Indians' heart while having an exclusive identity of its own. R.K. Narayan's scripting work style was highly marked for its plainness and subtle hilarity. He recounted stories of ordinary peoples who are endeavoring to experience their modest lives in an evolving world [2].

R.K. Narayan's renowned novels include The Grandmother's Tale (1993), Malgudi Days (1982), The Vendor of Sweets (1967), The Man-Eater of Malgudi (1961), The Guide (1958), The Financial Expert (1952), The English Teacher (1945), The Dark Room (1938), and The Bachelor of Arts (1937), Waiting for Mahatma (1955).

R.K. Narayan won many honors and awards for his writings. These comprise of: Award of Sahitya Akademi for The Guide in 1958; Padma Bhushan award in 1964; and received AC Benson Medal by the Royal Society of Literature in 1980. R.K. Narayan was nominated as an honorary associate of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and



Letters in 1982. He was assigned to the Rajya Sabha in 1989. Furthermore, he was also additionally presented with the honorary doctorates from the University of Mysore, the University of Leeds from England, and Delhi University [1].

The vast majority of his works were semi-autobiography which cites from his personal life experience. His fictional village Malgudi communicates the anti-colonial rule and post-Independent India. These Indian novels in English have won worldwide distinction and acclaim. The development of English novels in India is described by the adoption, increasing naturalization and ultimate expropriation of the language use.

A standout amongst the most famously examined but many-a-period disputable figure of Indian legislative issues is Mahatma Gandhi. There is barely any zone in the post or pre Independence era that was left untrammled for the sake of Indian Independence and development. Gandhiji a socio-political figure who is scarcely unthinkable for somebody to overlook or disregard. He has affected each part of human cognizance, and there is not any teaching that he has left uncommented.

He is a tremendous wellspring of writing and has inclined diverse disciplines and writers from different fields such as history politics, philosophy, sociology, literature. While pondering on various books on Gandhiji, particularly the then Gandhian Indian English Literature, one can effortlessly sense that the then time was completely spread by a 'Gandhian cognizance's socially, politically, and culturally that prevailed during the period amid 1918 to 1922 in the anti-colonial against the British.

Whatever Gandhiji's impact may have been on economic and political scopes of the country, there is not any uncertainty that he has left a profound impact on our literature. He is a wealth of knowledge for writers and journalist. However, he never dealt with any literary theme or genre.

Dramatic reconstructions of "Bachelor of Arts" and "Waiting for Mahatma" by R.K Narayan gave a new dimension of the protocol of India. Gandhiji demanded on high



reasoning and basic living which was featured and reflected by the literary English writers of that time, who in their books and short stories, depicted the genuine picture of the-then society from multi- sides, subsequently showing the impact of Gandhi on Indian towns and villages, letting us a room to investigate how Gandhiji's approach of developmental correspondence created on human lives bringing a sea change in their thoughts, views and living.

All of their novels speak events, which conspicuously relate to the instances of actual occurrences, and lessons that Gandhiji in factual life encoded amid his visits to many places. The writers working in various languages during those periods either were mostly individuals who had come staunchly under Gandhiji's influence, many had even participated in the freedom movements, or his goals highly impacted them. Their literature was massively loaded with Gandhian vision, a way of life, his lessons, and anti-colonial stands [1].

Language

Chandran-restless young adventurer

The greatest property of Narayan as a descriptive artist is his graceful and simple style. There are very few Indian writers who are able to handle English with so much purity and elegance as he does. The theme of the vainness of English education in India continues in the novel in The Bachelor of Arts published in 1935. The very distinct quality of Narayan's prose style is its transparency and simplicity. It is straight forward and free from obscurity and affectation. It is neither dull nor showy, rather marked with accuracy. Simplicity and clarity of his style is due to the result of his use of the very language of everyday life and his adherence to the accepted patterns of sentence structure and the diction. His is not an experimental one but a traditional and conservative style. He rarely uses Hindustani words and phrases in his narrative and so he does not need any glossary and his English is not jerky. Narayan expression aims at grace and ease rather than artificial picturesque and glow. He avoids cheap ornaments and rhetoric. He does not crave for effect. Narayan's expression shows very graceful, simple depicting the scenery of a village counterpart. In most of his novels, the



narration moves forward chronologically. There is no looking backward or forward, no probing of the sub-conscious or the unconscious, as is the case with the twentieth-century novelists like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. According to Paul Varghese, “Narayan’s is the simplest form of prose fiction- the story which records a succession of events. There is no hiatus between character and plot; both are inseparably knit together. The qualities the novelist attributes to these characters determine the action, and the action in turn progressively changes the characters and thus the story is carried forward to the end.

In other words, as a good story-teller, Narayan sees to it that his story has a beginning, a middle and an end. The end of his novel is a solution to the problem which sets the events moving; the end achieves that completeness towards which the action has been moving and beyond which the action cannot progress. This end very often consists either in a balance of forces and counter-forces or in death or both.”

The Guide: An Exception: The Guide, however, is an exception in this respect. The narrative technique Narayan has followed in this novel is different from that of the other novels.

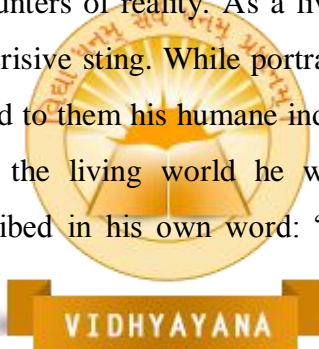
Narayan undoubtedly writes English with a distinct Indian colouring, which makes its presence felt in a number of ways. One can make an extensive analysis of Narayan’s use of Indianisms, which include words from Tamil, Sanskrit and Hindi, as for example, “Dhoti”, “Pyol”, “Jutka”, “Salt” etc. Translations of Tamil expressions like “worshipping room”, “dinning leaf” and “sitting plank” as well as certain coinages like “led about by a nose-rope like a bullock” and “half-arm shirt” can also be found in his works, apart from compound words like “semi-interest”, “bull-calf”, “dung-cake”, “betel nut-spittle”, “nose-screw”, “stitching master”, “foreign-returned people”, slow-witted, “red-tapists” and collocations like “even if I have seven births, I won’t be able to repay my debt to you” and “what sin have I committed to observe these harsh words”.

Narayan makes use of direct translations from Indian idioms and expressions such as “My professor will eat me up”, “to the dust pot with your silly customs” and “The unbeaten brat will remain unlettered”.



Narayan's style and his use of the English language and idiom have been world-wide acknowledged as the greatest achievement of his technique. He sincerely conveys different shades of speech of a middle class South Indian or a lay man spending time across the bazaar streets of Malgudi in simple and plain style. He wrote in English and had served his purpose admirably conveying in a crystal clear manner the thoughts and actions of personalities who grew in a small town in a corner of South India.

Talking about the novel 'The Bachelor of Arts', he is the narrative of a bachelor, Chandran who accomplishes what he aims throughout his life. Be that as it may, he thinks that it's hard to deal with the diverse layers of consciousness which are socially conditioned. This is a story of sentimental figments of the young bachelor and their industriousness notwithstanding exercises gained from hard encounters of reality. As a lively storyteller, he tells his stories humorously and withholds the derisive sting. While portraying the failing and foibles of the town folk, he never fails to extend to them his humane indulgence. His bond with the reader strengthens as he writes about the living world he witnesses. The subject matters of Narayan's writings can be described in his own word: "The material available to a story writer in India is limitless."



Chandran, the protagonist who is a young fellow in his last year of college that is his first year of enjoying the freedom. The story, as in Swami and Friends, is told for the most part from the protagonist's perspective. Undergrads like Chandran and Veeraswami have a more extensive vision than the little urchins of Swami and Friends, and they show an expanding opposition against the conventional powers spoken to by the principal and professor in college, and by Chandran's parents and their confidence in horoscope outside it. Chandran, the protagonist, is permanently restricted to the commercial interests of the lion's share of individuals around him. His principal problem is that he doesn't know how to apply his insight and energies to the satisfaction of his profound aspiration for learning, love, and marriage.



The initial segment of the book deals with ‘The Hero in the college,’ the second with ‘The Hero in adoration’ the third with ‘The Hero in the World’ and the fourth with ‘The Hero in the residential life.’ Chandran experiences an expansive number of changed encounters in his adventure from college to residential life. Be that as it may, each time he experiences new sentiments and experience. He gets extremely baffled, feeling powerless in understanding the different conventions in a culture of society.

Raymond Williams delineates in Culture and Materialism that:

“... in any society in a specific period, there is a focal arrangement of practices, implications, and qualities which we can legitimately call prevailing and effective”[7].

These overwhelming and successful frameworks of practices, implications, and qualities at times move toward becoming a reason for disarray and struggle for the young generation, as viewed in Chandran’s life.

Chandran being educated and modern in the customary setup of the society. He is presented as a deeply sensitive young – man of twenty-one graduating from Albert Mission College for procuring the degree of The Bachelor of Arts. His hectic activities in college demonstrate how young fellows like him were conveyed by a wave of Indian renaissance and how troublesome it was for them to keep themselves to the curricular exercises amid the long periods of the British manage in India.

From the beginning of the novel, we discover Chandran being trapped to become the Prime Mover of the association debate regarding the matter, “In the view of this house historians being slain first” (Bachelor of Arts). Chandran’s dynamic contribution in a discussion on this eccentric and progressive point procures a more prominent magnitude in others perspective, and this essentially infers, “picking up a hatchet and assaulting his history teacher Ragavachar” (Bachelor of Arts). Keeping in mind the end goal to make his assault on the traditional historians more impactful and powerful Chandran develops an anecdote,

“... There was before a historian who delved in the garden and uncovered two antiquated coins, which provided the missing connection of some period or other; however, they were only old buttons . . .” (Bachelor of Arts).

Like such mocking remarks, he endeavors to demonstrate to prove his task. The House votes, by the overpowering majority, was a sign to defeat the traditional historians. Chandran feels triumphant and is unconceited with pride, so common in youthful, he “significantly extended his arms over the table and shook hands with the Prime opposer” (Bachelor of Arts). Rushing through another certainty, he fixes a late night show with his close friend Ramu. Despite the reason of his father being disappointed to know about his late night shows, Chandran gains some confidence. But this confidence vanishes when he nears his house as he remembers being a father’s child. He opens the door, slips in quietly wanting to sneak past his dad so as not to cause his disappointment. Be that as it may, all of a sudden something emotional occurs inside him. Insight him he dwelled with huge self-respect and adult in him rebukes him for still being a child. He understood that what he normally did was a bit of equivocal cowardice worthier of a young guy. He was twenty-one and not eighteen to be afraid of his parents and to choose a subtle way! He would be graduate soon, and he was at that point a wonderful speaker! This drive to sneak in was exceptionally boyish. He felt frustrated about it and reminded it by superfluously lifting the entryway chain and letting it loudly down.

His dad’s consideration is, as wanted turned towards him, and he (Father) stands to look towards the door. Chandran “swaggered along the drive with free air, however inside he inclined that he ought to have picked some other day for exhibiting his autonomy” (Bachelor of Arts). Rendering to the credible record of calculated defiance hued by natural dithering and fear that typically goes with such first demonstrations of disobedience denotes the beginning stage of Chandran’s break from the parental clutch and gives an expressing towards craving to develop. The novel uncovers the secondary impact of unconventionality and tradition on the life of Chandran, a naive youth. Chandran grows into a complex character, remaining on the verge of unusualness with periodic pulls of the tradition. As indicated by Raymond Willians in *Marxism and Literature*, the custom is “an energetically shaping power.” An individual in culture takes after numerous traditions and conventions. In culture, there is some “focal and prevailing arrangement of implications and qualities, which are not only abstract but rather, which are systemized out and lived” [8].



Raymond Williams [8] in Culture and Materialism expresses that numerous powers are associated with a constant making and changing of a compelling and overwhelming society, and on them, as experienced, as incorporated with our living, its world depends. He expresses that if what we realize there was only a forced belief system, or on the off chance that it was just the isolable implications and practices of the decision class, or of an area of the decision class, which gets forced on others, involving only the highest point of our psyches, it would be and one would be happy and an exceptionally simpler thing to overthrow. Chandran experiences such powers which are worked into his living difficult to oust. If there should arise an occurrence of Chandran, we see him experiencing different encounters of life.

He now and again attempts to restrict the tradition of his way of life, yet not finding any satisfactory arrangement in dissent or protest, he sticks to the predominant culture of the society. It is obvious that however, Chandran is exceedingly incredulous of British hypocrisy and their free morals, yet he assimilates a profound want to taste the sensual joy of the westward civilization. Joined by his companion Ramu, he goes to see a photo at the Select Picture House where Mr. Brown is found to be sitting with some young lady.

The boys reveled into prolonged discourse about British ethics and behavior, and along these lines share the enticing impact of its influence. They are influenced by the attractions and joys of an offbeat life. The Westward culture awes them, and they hold the customary existence of India in disdain. Chandran comments, “The whites are destined to enjoy life. Our kin truly doesn’t know how to live. On the off chance that a man is seen with a young lady close by a hundred eyes gaze at him and a hundred tongues remark, though no European goes out without taking a young lady with him” (Bachelor of Arts).

Raymond Williams’ [8] announcement in his work Culture and Materialism is again useful in understanding youthful Chandran’s new thoughts, assessments, awareness about social scene as, “... new implications and qualities, new practices, new significances, and encounters; are ceaselessly being made. There is then a considerably prior endeavor to incorporate them since they are part, but not a characterized some portion of effective contemporary practice” (Bachelor of Arts). In case of Chandran, the decoy of leading a free life from restrictions and rigidities urges youths like Chandran and Ramu to presume that



India is “a wretched country” where “to stand and gaze” is deliberated as an offense and “awful behavior” (Bachelor of Arts).

The sight of cars honking at once charms Chandran who determines to “buy a car first of all” (Bachelor of Arts). His life has been so secured and even on several nights of debate, though his father does not restrict him from going to the shows (maybe he wouldn't like to ruin the festive mood), he doesn't cease from remarking, “Hmm... But I wouldn't encourage you to make it a habit. Late shows are awful for the wellbeing” (Bachelor of Arts). Also, Chandran's mom who is a pious woman chanting in the prayer room is intimidated by the cook that her son has not taken food properly chides Chandran as a mark of love and a protective Indian mom, “I had prepared potato sauce especially for you, but you had binged on just curd and rice!” (Narayan 13). In return, Chandran borrows a rupee from her (turn to a symbol of mother-son relationship in India) and strolls down to the theatre with Ramu. Watching the movie for Chandran was no common issue. It was an appealing affair from which the most extreme pleasure must be drawn and subsequently it was important to go with it with cigarette smoking and betel chewing.

During such occasions, Chandran felt Ramu's companionship was very important to him. It was his presence which gave Chandran a sense of self-completion. He too chewed betel, smoked, drank coffee, admired Chandran and laughed with him...quarreled along and this made Ramu's companionship invaluable to him. Likewise, all individuals like Chandran saw emotional support apart from their family circle around their age. Each time the very presence of his friend was reassuring to Chandran. The other typical factors that attract is they share a similar interest that boosts Chandran's confidence. His other peer group friends like Natesan, Mohan and Veerswami, missed this similar line of interest. This new desire asserted himself and established an Adult-to-Adult bond with individuals that upsurge life within him.

Then again it rehashes itself and gets strengthened in episodes including Chandran with his college teachers, Mr. Gajapathy and Prof. Raghavachar. The first of these occurrences include Mr. Gajapathy, in whose class one day, Chandran felt so exhausted that he “screwed the cap of his pen and sat back” (Bachelor of Arts). Gajapathy sees what he has done and instructs him to continue to write on. Chandran hears him yet as a general rule he



continues drawing and scribbling. But the teacher suspects him for not taking notes and decides to inquire him after the class. He asks Chandran to open his notebook. Chandran's pulse rate drops down and sweats profusely since he has not been taking up the notes. For a moment he argues expecting the off chance that he can tell a lie and escape with it. He tries to overrule against it and abruptly tells Gajapathy to leave him unbothered, and "Genuinely," he stated, "I have not written down anything, sir. If you can excuse me, I may go now, and I need to see Professor Raghavachar"(Bachelor of Arts). Even though he stood in awe of fear, in the act of his, he successfully breaks the imaginary barriers of the fear where each child has against the adult [6].

A similar incident encompasses with Prof. Raghavachar, his very stern history teacher. "Suddenly, his history professor sends for Chandran who does not have a clue for which he has been called. On his way, he imagines all possible reasons behind the call, as the incident with Mr.Gajapathy followed this incident. On this thought process, he undergoes a momentary setback allowing himself to the imaginary world of the child and worries and tries to trace the background of his call. During this stroll, he becomes very scared and nervous. Once he reached the professor room; he suddenly lifts himself. Asks to himself, why are you, coward? Why are you afraid of your professor or anybody? Why should a human be afraid of another human? Just remove his outward accessories, his specks, turban, and his long coat... and Raghavachar will appear like a normal human being. Is it not?" (Bachelor of Arts). This timely self-realization helped Chandran to regain his confidence and was ready to establish the adult-to-adult association with professor Raghavachar whom he feared till then. It is just established as he was able to cut the fear factors and the outward appearance of his professor and added to that he called only to discuss with him regarding the startup of a Historical Association and to request him to be the secretary.

As he leaves his teacher's room, he reflects over this happening and feels contempt for himself as Secretary. He felt that "he was on the verge of losing his personality. But, now he would have to be Natesan, the Union Secretary" (Bachelor of Arts). The wish to be unique and distinct from the rest is strong now though it gets modified in due course when he realizes that every job in the world is important, no matter how small. Chandran realized that "there was more in these association meetings than to be viewed in the eyes.



Each meeting was a supreme example of human endeavor, of selfless service” (Bachelor of Arts). Perhaps it is this realization that comes to him in his days as Secretary of the Historical Association that helps him break the unwritten code of the middle classes and settle for a newspaper agency as an occupation.

The coordinator in Chandran surfaces now, and he makes an accomplishment of the Association meeting, and this continues until college dispenses holidays for preparatory exam leave for the final examination. The initial segment of his life thus ends with earning of his B.A degree. Not long after his graduation, a noteworthy change comes into Chandran’s life. Having got his degree, he is yet unclear as to what he is to do next and when well-wishers, kith, and kin start to pester him on asking about his next move and advice about his prospect until “Chandran had felt persecution within” (Bachelor of Arts). Then he decides that he would say that he like move to England and earn a doctorate and tells his father and relatives. This persuades everyone because among the middle-class Indian traveling to another country for higher education appreciates a specific eminence which makes it an acknowledged justification for not taking up a random job or other responsibilities.

In the in the meantime, he makes the most of his freshly discovered opportunity for freedom. He invests his time in the library catching up to speed with reading the books where he realized that he had not possessed the capacity to do in the college. In the evenings, he takes a long walk mostly alone because all his companion including Ramu has moved to Malgudi. What’s more, there is the occasional company of his parents keeps him cheerful and engaged. However, this time of his life depicts the stillness before the storm.

One fine day, while walking rambled besides the banks of the Sarayu, Chandran who had the habit of staring at every girl who sat on the banks, (but he) had never felt before the acute interest he felt the girl who sat now. He admired the fashion she sat; he liked the way she played with her sister, he liked the way she dug her hands into the sand and threw it in the air. He would have willingly settled there and spent the rest of his life watching her dig her hands into the sand. The author’s explanation, if any for this change in Chandran is a philosophic prefatory remark, “No one can explain the attraction between two human beings. It happens” (Bachelor of Arts).



This prepares us for the ‘irrational way (as it may seem to the reader) in which Chandran falls in love with the girl and manner in which he begins to imagine that she too returns his feelings so that there is a stronghold for him to marry her. Erikson [5] states in *Childhood and Society* that the love relationship in an adolescent just a way of trying to understand himself, it is but a projection of his ego. And probably it is reasonable to accept this analysis here in order to understand Chandran’s behavior and feelings because though he never has the courage to go to the girl and speak to her (of course this is mainly so because of the cultural constraints of the Indian social situation) he believes himself to be in love with her.

His affair and fascination towards Malathi, the young girl on the sands, remains as a friendship at the eyesight level. However, Chandran is not sure whether she is fair or dark colored or her shape of the nose, but his affections for her grew extremely high each day. He dreams and fantasizes about her (this isn’t exceptional in most adolescents) and starts to confuse with reality so as the intention to marry her was strong. This alone would go up to the limited nature of Chandran’s experience. This faithful equation of love only highlights his innocence and immaturity, finally, denied contact with the girl (because of social constraints) he can only express his feelings mere imitation of the heroes in the fiction novels.

“The thought of her melted him. While on his bed, he hugged the pillow and deeply cried in agony: Darling, do you hear me? What are you doing?” (Bachelor of Arts). He hopes for a similar happy ending that of the movie, where they “would sit in their creeper-covered villa on the hill scope, just those two, and watch the sunset” (Bachelor of Arts). Built on such flimsy grounds, his hopes were bound to get dashed, and while we may have got an inkling of the crisis that sets in later, Chandran lives in another world; on another level until it gives way.

At the offset of an Adult function, Harris adds that if “the adult is alert to the possibility of trouble, through probability estimating it, it can devise solutions to meet the distress if and when it comes” [6]. This capacity obviously has not come to Chandran, and that is the reason why he imbibes the broken relationship very seriously whenever he feels disappointed. Though the experience of love in Chandran’s life is significant because it helps him to redefine life. His being in love brings forth many solid

qualities in Chandran, and these aid him more and more to position himself in the adult world. Indeed, the crisis in love which takes after him acts as a catalyst on his identity and encourage him on the marriage subject but his courage fails when he tries to address to his father on the same subject.

The following day too he can't raise the subject. However, as he returns to his room, he laments his weakness. He "would be so unworthy to marry Malathi if he remains like a spineless worm scared his father! He was not a child requesting a toy, but rather a fully grown adult on a serious business" (Bachelor of Arts) and this realization is valuable (and in consonance with the desires brought up in us by Chandran's prior adult behavior) for it encourages him to reach his father with much courage and disclose to him that he would like to marry Malathi who is the daughter of D.W. Krishna Iyer. His father was taken aback initially, then, later realized his son is so earnest on this, he says, "I don't have a clue on these things; let me speak with your mother" (Bachelor of Arts). When heard, Chandran's mother is very much disappointed as she hoped for a daughter-in-law who is rich and beautiful, not of some mere head clerk.

She tries to reason with him, "Chandran, why don't you reconsider any of the dozens of girls that have been proposed to you"? Chandran rejected this suggestion indigently: "I suppose those girls are richer and more beautiful?" "but, I don't care. I shall marry this girl and no one else." "But how are you sure they are prepared to give their daughter to you?" "They will have to." "Extraordinary, do you think that marriage is a child's game?" (Bachelor of Arts). There are many things to be reckoned still! The stars sign and girl's parents to count on.

Here we can understand the mentality of Chandran's parents in the light of Marxian proposition about dominant values and meanings in society. Marx in Culture and Materialism expresses that: ...in any society, in a specific period, there is a focal arrangement of practices, meanings, and values which we can legitimately consider prevailing and effective...In any case ... the focal, viable and predominant arrangement of meanings and values, which are not just organized and lived.

Chandran's parents are traditional in their views about the marriage of their son. Such views were effective and dominant in Indian society. Such values and meanings related to



marriage, dowry system have been practiced in the name of culture for a very long time. But Chandran is adamant and inconsolable until his parents relent. Here, Chandran differs from the dominant orthodox culture and tradition in respect to love and marriage.

Along these lines, according to Raymond Williams [7] in Culture and Materialism: A practice or meaning might be endured as a deviation, yet still be seen just as another specific method to live. In any case, as the vital predominance broadens, similar meanings and practices can be seen by the overwhelming society, not only neglecting or disdaining it but rather as trying it. Chandran attempts to challenge the conventional social set up through his love affair.

But for Chandran's parents, tradition is "an active catalyst of shaping force" (Bachelor of Arts). They are not ready to accept Chandran's love affair and his will to marry Malathi. For them, "tradition in practice is the most evident expression of the social dominance and hegemonic pressures and limits" (Bachelor of Arts).

But for their son's sake, they were prepared to this extent; they were prepared to consider the proposal if it comes from the other side. They hoped that the bridegroom's parents would certainly not accept the proposal as it will ridicule them. But, Chandan raves with anger avoiding eye contact with his parents, says "put your customs to the dust-pot" (Bachelor of Arts) like this brings an open conflict between the generations of which it is written in nature's law that it must exist. The rigidity of the caste system prevalent in the society troubles his mind.

The fear within him multiplies thinking that his parents shall not be willing to marry his lady love. He completely gets lost in his thoughts and sits back in dark room: Suppose...he said to himself; even if she belonged to some other caste...a marriage shall not be accepted between sub-caste within the same caste. If India was to reach redemption from these water-tight divisions must let go-Community, Caste, Sub-caste, and further divisions. (Bachelor of Arts). Chandran felt very piqued, and he determined to mark as an example himself by marrying his love (Malathi) whichever her caste shall be: a noticeable stand in whole contrast with the orthodox social values system upheld by his parents. We can notice Chandran's reaction towards the social evil like dowry system.

Dowry is another social evil Narayan touches upon in this novel. It is the elders who are bent upon perpetuating this evil despite the cry being made from time to time by rationalists. Chandran's parents are seen to have been least interested in dowry, but they have been inwardly craving for that. Their greed is exposed through the character of Chandran's mother who says:

My father gave seven thousand in cash to your father, and over two thousand in a silver vessel, and spent nearly five thousand on wedding celebrations. What was wrong with it? How are we any the worse for it? Every father must set some money apart for finding a son-in-law. We can't disregard custom (Bachelor of Arts).

Chandran's father seems not to appear not to be the obstacle in Chandran's way. Whatsoever, Chandran liked to live a free life as he pleased. But when found that his parents had upper hand in almost every matter, he felt frustrated. Chandran's only comfort is his friend Mohan from who stayed on Mill Street where he can have an opportunity to take a glance at Malathi every day. It is in his companionship Chandran shows most of his adulthoods: "Why are we clasp the ed and nose-led by our elders?" "Why can't they allow us to arrange our own life as we wish? Why can't they free us to live or die on our ideas?" (Bachelor of Arts). As Narayan states, these are pain point questions and one can be astonished at Chandran's guts to face the cost independently.

How far will Chandran be able to break away from tradition, one asks oneself? Or will ultimately make a compromise with tradition? These are questions that can be answered only later on? Here we observe that Chandran is trying to be treated as an adult by his family. However, it was Chandran's fathers who took the initiative in sending a high priest, a Sastrigal –keeping aside the time-based custom—to the girl's house to bring about some settlement. The horoscopes were exchanged. But the girl's father D.W.Krishnan Iyer was so orthodox in his attitude, and he rejected the wedding proposal outright, saying that the boy's horoscope was ill-matched: I know a little of astrology myself. I am primed to oversee many things in a horoscope. I usually don't press myself towards the factors that indicate wealth, prosperity, progeny and that's all. But, I do feel that we should not ignore the question of the horoscope. I have heard thousands of cases who didn't abide by it had faced numerous problems in life...It even had killed the wife soon after the marriage. He



said when pressed by Chandran's father. Love marriages in this course are a rare possibility under such circumstances (Bachelor of Arts).

In this scenario, his efforts to marry Malathi fails, and he sends her a letter asking her to wait upon until the stars in his horoscope are dispelled. But, the sudden news of Malathi's marriages breaks down Chandran's heart, and he decides to leave Malgudi until he forgets and renews his mind. Meanwhile, his father recommends him to visit his uncle who lives in Madras. Now, Chandran decides to leave to Madras, but as the train nears the station, he slips back to see his cousin. Later, Chandran asserts himself once again; his wish to visit his uncle vanishes. He decides on his own and moves to Madras, in the company of Kailas, but later leaves him because he gets petrified by his lifestyle.

Kailas is an aggressive bigamist, who occasionally descends to Madras to have a good time. He is an alcoholic and also visits the prostitute's house. This horrifies Chandran and made him flee away from as he is a teetotaler. This was the first time he had been so close to a man who is habituated in taking alcohol; this was the first time he had stood at the portals of a prostitute's house. He was thoroughly terrified" (Bachelor of Arts). At this point, Chandran may seem to be wandering without any central focus. In this shift to Madras involves a temporary denial of any attempt to progress into his life. The episode with Kailas shocks him into the recognition of his delinquency, while Madras functions as a crisis heterotopia. However, wherever he goes, thoughts of Malathi and the Kalyani Raga, played at her wedding, haunted him.

He says to himself, there is no meaning to live a life like this and decides to become a sanyasi. "To avoid the suicidal thoughts, he had to gamble with his mind" (Bachelor of Arts). This decision of his is not an unusual one considering the influence of religion in the average Indian home and the veneration with which sanyasis are regarded here. But though Chandran is honest enough to realize that his renunciation is without the spiritual motive and that his renunciation "was revenge on society, circumstances and perhaps too, on destiny" (Bachelor of Arts), his attitude, on the whole, is a negative one. Displaced from Malgudi and his romantic dream of entering into marriage through a love match, which represents a modest challenge to his orthodox mother's belief in customs, Chandran's sensibilities are nevertheless revolted by the side of Madras to which Kailas introduces him.

In the state of turmoil, he briefly contemplates going home to Malgudi. But at this point in the novel, it has become an ambivalent situation, a place to which he feels he is unable to return. In this state of mental exile, his thoughts again revolve around to become a sanyasi because he realized that, “he had left his home. Now, what did it matter where he lived? I am like a sanyasi. Why like? He was a sanyasi; the simplest solution to all these problems. Shave the head, wear clothes in ochre, and you were dead or not who cared” (Bachelor of Arts). Chandran’s remorse for what he has committed is best known through his own words: Sitting in the dark, he subjected his soul to a remorseless life.

From the moment he had donned the ochre cloth to the present, he had been living on charity, charity given in mistake, given on the face value of a counterfeit. He had been humbugging through life. He told himself that if he were such an ascetic he ought to do without food or perish of starvation. He ought not to feed his miserable stomach with food which is neither earned nor, by spiritual worth deserved. (Bachelor of Arts) But there is the difference between his behavior and that of a real sanyasi. He was, “different from the usual sanyasi. Others may renounce with a spiritual motive and purpose. Abandonment may be to them as a means to attain peace itself. But Chandran’s rejection was not of that kind” (Bachelor of Arts).

Instead of trying to come to clutches of reality, he is merely trying to escape from it, seeking good reasons rather than real reasons for his state of mind. That is why he tells himself that it is all Malathi’s mistake that he is where he is today. She had played with him and led him on to this condition. He completely forgets his role in the whole episode and takes an emotional, non-rational, childish view of the matter.

He thinks that “women are like that; they enjoyed torturing people. And for the sake of her memory, he had come to this. He railed against that memory, against love. There was no such thing; a foolish literary notion” (Bachelor of Arts). One realizes even then that Chandran’s travails cannot end soon. That would happen only when he would learn to take a mature, adult view of the crisis.

Later, Chandran decides to return home which is marked by relief among the family who has not known where Chandran has been for the past eight months. Though in the beginning he more like the youths of pre-Independent India he imbibed more of the British’s



lifestyle and criticized the orthodox Indian lifestyle which does be not born to enjoy life as he expels as sannyasi to detach from the real world, the truth reckoned that he is not a real sannyasi, and his destiny doesn't end here. After his return to Malgudi, Chandran finds he can lead a quiet life, but he also realizes that despite his efforts to keep himself busy in the garden, he cannot forget Malathi. At the same time, he also begins to feel strongly about the fact that he is without an occupation and this thought disturbs him. He realizes that he must become independent as early as possible and should no more pester his father.

He also begins to ask himself, perhaps for the first time, whether going to England instead of taking up a job is not another way of shirking responsibility. His consultations with Mohan only reinforce his decision, and he decides to take the Chief Agency of Daily Messenger if he can secure it. His father, a retired magistrate, is not happy with his son's decision but he does not object too strongly either.

Ever since his return, his parents have begun to treat him very carefully, as if they were afraid he would go off again if they foisted their wishes on him. They have realized that he has an independent streak in him and they should learn to respect it.

Once again Chandran can lead the good old life, happy and cheerful as he kept himself busy with the expansion of his agency and establishing his business with real earnest. One day, almost a year after his return home, when his father visits him in his office asks him very hesitatingly if he would be interested in a new marriage proposal. Chandran is disturbed and says he can't accept the proposal.

His parents have to accept the defeat in life, firstly because their minds have been trained to accept and obey the family and the society, secondly, if at all they like to bring about some changes in the accepted social norms, their half-hearted efforts fail miserably short; and they simply could not withstand the collective force of the traditional society. But what we observe is that different layers of his consciousness are socially conditioned not without the necessary pain and suffering. In other words, he grows up, matures into the adult world.

At the same time, he doesn't want to hurt his father and is almost apologetic when he tells him that he cannot marry yet. His father is more understanding in this regard and leaves him. But later Chandran accepts the proposal. With his marriage with Susila, love becomes a

reality for him, not just a foolish literary notion. Chandran has a good job which he likes, a beautiful wife whom he adores; a friend whom he trusts and though occasionally he remembers Ramu, being of the sentimental, sensitive kind. His earlier negative attitudes get replaced by more positive once.

The initial phase of Chandran who praised the British now begins to vanish when he started to realize life. The various facets of life taught him the reality and life are not a practice ground as he traveled along ignoring the society. Even though he enjoyed the real freedom, his journey in life was not peaceful. He started to respect each's perspective, and all the relationships are intertwined, and that is where real freedom is. It is not only important to get freedom from British rule...it is to release freedom from within along with the society to live a harmonious life. The Bachelor of Arts depicts the old social values questioned now and then by people with a modern and rational approach towards life. Persons like Chandran, have failed to achieve the desired goal.

Theme

Sriram – love at first sight

In this part, *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) is taken up for a detailed examination to find out the theme of Freedom Struggle has been treated. R. K. Narayan is identical with Raja Rao not only about the cultural and religious aspects but also about the attitude towards Freedom Movement. In a way *Waiting for the Mahatma* is a sequel to *Kanthapura* as *Waiting for the Mahatma* also dwells upon the theme of the transformation of Freedom Movement into a mass movement and the narrative is expanded up to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhiji.

Sriram is in a way, an orphan because he has lost his parents while he is a child, “His mother, who died to deliver him, and his father, who was killed in Mesopotamia, might have been figures in a legend as far as Sriram was concerned” (*Waiting for the Mahatma*). He is left to the care of his grandmother who brings him up with pension amount of Sriram's father in Malgudi. Sriram is brought up without being exposed to the outside world. His world begins from his house and ends at the window-sill:

“...comfortably reclining on the cold cement window-sill, and watching the street. He had sat there, morning to night, ever since he could remember” (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Things do not improve when he grows to adolescence. He is exposed only to the shop in front of the house. He becomes a good customer to Kanni who runs the shop. He is impressed by the beautiful picture which is hung in the without knowing-whose portrait it. Even the shopper does not know it. All the customers are attracted by the picture about which the description goes humorously as:

‘Whose is that picture?’ He asked once, pausing between sips of a colored drink. ‘How should I know?’ Kanni said. ‘It’s probably some queen, probably Queen Victoria’ although he might with equal justification have claimed her to be Maria Theresa or Ann Boleyn (Waiting for the Mahatma).

The portrait represents the foreign goods. This has got a symbolic relevance why people being fond of this picture. There is a strong view that Indians are under the influence of the Western culture. It is a subtle introduction of the theme of colonialism in the narrative against which the plot is strewn. The author introduces the theme of freedom struggle in an unusual manner.

Once, Gandhiji’s public meeting is scheduled in Malgudi. On the day, Sriram also goes to hear Gandhiji’s speech without being aware of who Gandhiji is and what Freedom Struggle means without being aware of who Gandhiji is and what freedom struggle means.

At this juncture, the romantic element is incorporated. He witnesses not only Gandhiji but also a woman disciple by Bharati. He is impressed by both which is noted by Geoffrey Kain:

When Gandhiji speaks to a gathering in Malgudi the orphaned young man Sriram is in attendance and, while he is moved by Gandhi’s message, he is much



more entranced by Bharati, one of the young women followers of the Mahatma who line the dias (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Sriram does not miss even a single meeting of Gandhiji after this. The masterstroke of irony in this regard is that Sriram attends all the meetings of Gandhiji not because of his interest in Gandhiji's speech, nor his love for the nation but because of his passion for Bharati. Subsequently, the seed of patriotic is sown in him about which Kain aptly observes:

“Sriram becomes drawn into Gandhian activism only through his passion for the Bharati; to be closer to her, becomes one of the Satyagrahi. Ironically, his physical passion (which he scarcely keeps in check) and his love-obsession (which hardly qualifies as Swaraj) lead him, ultimately, to become serious in his commitment to self-denial, self-control, and a deep sense of service” (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Mahatma Gandhi is a central character in the narrative which obviously foregrounds the fact Waiting for the Mahatma is a narrative of Freedom Struggle. The content of his speech in Malgudi endorse this assumption:

“Now a mighty choral chant began; Raghupathi Raghava Raja Ram, Pathitha Pavan a Seetha Ram, to a simple tune, led by a girl at the microphone. It went on and on and ceased when Mahatmaji began his speech... At the outset, Mahatma Gandhi explained that he'd speak only in Hindi as a matter of principle. ‘I will not address you in English. It's the language of our rulers. It enslaved us. I very much wish I could speak to you in your sweet language, Tamil; but alas, I am too hard-pressed for time to master it now, although I hope if God in his infinite mercy grants me the longevity due to me, I shall be able next time to speak to you in Tamil without troubling our friend Natesh?’ (Waiting for the Mahatma).

After having opposed English as the language of the colonial rule, Gandhiji's favorite principles such as spinning on the charka, the practice of absolute Truth



and Non-Violence – are subsumed in the narrative. In a way, it echoes Kanthapura, which also dwells upon them. The definition of non-violence is skillfully inducted into the narrative:

“Presently Mahatmaji ascended the platform and Sriram hastily took his eyes off the ladies and joined in the hand clapping with well-timed devotion and then in the singing of Raghupathi Raghava Raja Ram. After that Gandhi spoke of non-violence and explained how it could be practiced in daily life. ‘It is a perfectly simple procedure provided you have faith in it. If you watch yourself you will avoid all actions, big or small, and all thoughts, however obscure, which may cause pain to another...’When someone has wronged you or has done something which appears to you to be evil, pray for the destruction of that evil. Cultivate an extra affection for the person, and you will find that you can bring about a change in him. Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ meant the same thing when he said, “Turn the other cheek” (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Gandhiji’s philosophy of disregard for the practice of untouchability follows the doctrine of non-violence. Sriram is influenced by Gandhiji’s ideology, which is presented as:

When Gandhiji spoke of untouchability and caste, Sriram reflected, ‘There must be a great deal in what he says. We always think we are superior people. How Granny bullies that ragged scavenger, who comes to our house every day to sweep the backyard!’ Granny was so orthodox...Sriram also took a devilish pleasure in finding fault with the scavenger’s work, although he never paid the slightest attention to their comments. He simply went about his business driving his broom vigorously and interrupting himself only to ask, ‘When will master give me an old shirt he promised so long ago?’ (Waiting for the Mahatma).

One can notice not only the doctrine of Gandhiji being incorporated in the freedom movement but also the freedom movement itself being transformed into a mass movement. It is evident in the change that takes place in Sriram who was earlier, “not having any definite aim.” Sriram priority undergoes a significant change after he has heard Gandhiji’s sermon on



men's conduct towards women. He has been burning with passion for Bharati, but he can overcome it gradually. He achieves self-control and begins to concentrate not on Bharati but Bharata. He is inspired by the suggestion of his teacher who says that "I am proud to see you here, my boy. Join the Congress, work for the country; you will go far, God bless you..." Sriram obeys his teacher's advice and associates himself with the Congress as he is already under the spell of Gandhiji.

The narrative dwells upon Gandhiji's stay with the untouchables in their huts, which enhances the theme of the transformation of the freedom movement into a mass movement. Gandhiji declines the invitation of Mr. Natesh to stay in his palatial house on which he has already spent two lakh rupees. On the contrary, he prefers the huts of the untouchables, though they lack the basic amenities. Gandhiji prefers the love of a small boy belonging to the caste of untouchables to the extravagant gesture of Natesh. Subsequently, Gandhiji accompanies the boy to the latter's hut. This explains how Gandhiji transformed the freedom movement into a mass movement. To the effect of this factor, the following is provided:

"Gandhi occupied a hut which had a low entrance. He didn't like to oust anyone from his hut but chose one facing the river sand, after making certain that it had been vacant, the occupant of the hut having gone elsewhere" (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Sriram is a character who represents the multitude of the youth that responded to the call of Gandhiji to fight against the British. Through him, the novel gives the vivid picture of the mass movement at the advent of Mahatma Gandhiji. Sriram's initial movement to associate himself with Gandhian movement is depicted dramatically. He visits the hut in which Gandhi is sheltered during his visit to Malgudi to seek admission to the campaign. He fails to draw the attention of Gandhi and has been asked to leave the hut by Bharati. The dialogue between them dramatizes Sriram's eagerness to join the Congress:

She said rather grimly: 'Don't you know that when Bapuji sleeps, we have to leave him? He felt like asking, 'Who is Bapuji?' But using his judgment for a second,

he understood it must refer to the Mahatma, and not wanting to risk being chased out by the resolute girl said, 'Of course, I knew it. I was only waiting for you to come out' 'Who are you? I don't think I have seen you before?' (Waiting for the Mahatma).

This was the question he had been waiting to be asked all along, but now when it came, he found himself tongue-tied.

He felt so confused and muddled that she took pity on him and said, 'What is your name? He answered 'Sriram.' 'What are you doing here?' She asked. 'Don't you remember me?' he said irrelevantly. 'I saw you when you come with a money-box in the market, the other day. . . 'Oh, I see,' she said out of politeness. 'But I might not remember you since quite a lot of people put money into my box that day. Anyway, I asked you what you are doing here now?' 'Perhaps I' am one of the volunteers he said. 'Why "Perhaps"?' he asked. 'Because I'm not yet one,' he replied (Waiting for the Mahatma).

The conversation between explains the horns and disciplines, which are to be imbibed in those who wish to be volunteers in the Gandhian movement. There are also clues for the mutual liking between Sriram and Bharati. Sriram touches the heart of Bharati by explaining that he is an orphan.

At this juncture, the narrative projects Bharati not just a character but also symbol of a child of Mother India. Her biographical details occur and show that Bharati too is an orphan. Her father was a freedom fighter and died in 1920 movement for the nation's cause. Her mother also passed away due to which the local Sevak Sangh has adopted her. Since then, Bharati has been associated with Sevak Sangh which is one of wings fighting for freedom:

I do whatever I am asked to do by the Sevak Sangh. Sometimes they ask me to go and teach people spinning and tell them about Mahatmaji's ideas. Sometimes they

send me to villages and poor quarters. I meet them and talk to them and do a few things. I attend to Mahatmaji's needs (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Thus, the narrative highlights one more of dimensions of Gandhiji's struggle for freedom. Taking advantage of Bharati's tenderness, Sriram expresses his love for her. Bharati dismisses his proposal by reminding him that he would be thrown away if he had persisted in that direction. In the ensuing conversation, he makes her see in him the urge to work for the campaign of Mahatma Gandhi. On Bharati's invitation to meet Gandhi, Sriram becomes panic strikes for he knows that he is unworthy of being in the company of such a person as Gandhi. When he is reluctant to agree, Bharati's response plays a turning point not only in the plot of the novel but also in the life of Sriram. It is worthwhile to cite this scene:

...'If you wish to meet me come to Bapuji, the only place where you may see me. Of course, if you don't want to see me anymore, go away'. This placed him in a dilemma. 'Where? How?' he asked. 'Come to the door of Bapu's hut and wait for me.' 'When? Where?' 'At three a.m. tomorrow morning. I'll take you to him'. Saying this, she jumped to her feet and ran off towards her hut (Waiting for the Mahatma).

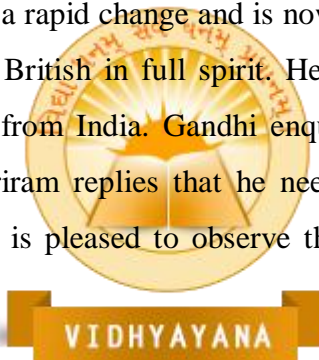
Sriram is present at the door of Gandhi hut at the time fixed by Bharati the next day. While awaiting Bharati, Sriram's mind is subjected to conflict as to whether he should make goodwill of his grandmother or that of Gandhi and Bharati. Then the unusual thing happens. He is called by Gandhi to go and sit close to him. Gandhi asks him to take a vow that he would wear only cloth made out of his own hands each day to which Sriram agrees instantly as if he is under a spell. Subsequently, he becomes so intimate to Gandhi that:

When the going in the Taluk Office struck four, the Mahatma invited Sriram to go out with him for a walk. He seized his staff in one hand and with the other supported himself on the shoulder of Bharati, and strode out of the hut- a tall figure in white. He had tucked his watch at his waist into a fold of his white dhoti. He pulled it out and said: 'Half an hour I have to walk, come with me, Sriram. You can talk to me

undisturbed'. A few others joined them. Sriram felt he was walking through some unreal dream world. The Mahatma was in between him and Bharati (Waiting for the Mahatma).

The role of Gandhi is given a focal point at this juncture. Gandhiji's concept of voluntary poverty has been duly represented in this part of the narrative. Gandhi stays in a hut, which obviously imposes on his followers to forego the basic comforts as well even though they are wealthy. One more character called Gorpad is introduced in the narrative, and he explains the sacrifices of his brother and Bharati's father. Sriram comes forward to share the experience of Gandhi and his followers about the voluntary poverty. There is a glimpse of the development of the theme of mass movement at this juncture.

Sriram attitude undergoes a rapid change and is now prepared to get absorbed into the campaign of Gandhi against the British in full spirit. He expresses his willingness to take another vow to oust the British from India. Gandhi enquires him how he would help the campaign to oust the British. Sriram replies that he needs the blessings and guidance of Gandhi in this endeavor. Gandhi is pleased to observe the devotion in Sriram and blesses him:



“Well, young friend, if God wills it, you will do great things, trust in him and you will be all right”(Waiting for the Mahatma).

Gandhi prescribes him some more principles, which are regarded as a prerequisite for the task of ousting the British. They are:

- (1) He should drive vestige of violence from his system.
- (2) He should forget the term 'Enemy' and must think of him as a friend who must leave him.
- (3) He should have an overpowering love at heart for his enemy.

(4) He should become a hundred percent ahimsa soldier.

(5) Protection of animals.

The advice of Gandhi represents his mode of war against foreign rule in its miniature. This makes the narrative as the narrative of freedom struggle beyond doubt. Subsequently, Sriram is admitted to Gandhi's campaign. He joins Bharati and Gorpad and they, in turn, form a trio in the campaign. Gorpad plays a pivotal role in making Sriram understand the impact of the British rule on the life of the villagers. His comment on foreign rule reflects the injustice meted out to the native people:

‘See what the British have done to our country: this famine is their maneuvering to keep us in enslavement. They are plundering the forests and fields to keep their war machinery going, and the actual sufferer is this child’, pointing at any village child who might chance to come that way, showing its ribs, naked and pot-bellied’ (Waiting for Mahatma).

Gandhi is about to complete his four campaigns in the south. The narrative dwells upon how Gandhi could fool the British officials to keep them away from his campaign and the style of his tour. Regarding the former, it is described that Gandhi has defeated the calculation of officials by refusing to give a programme of his tour and by visiting unexpected places. Through this method, Gandhi can undertake the campaign more effectively.

About the latter, it is described that Gandhi has toured the villages of the foot, stationed himself at the lowliest hut in the village and traveled in a third-class compartment in the train. These behaviors of Gandhi play a great source of motivation among the masses of the village to participate in the struggle. As a result, the freedom movement could emerge as a national movement in its true spirit.

On the completion of the tour, Gandhi provides some moral tips to Bharati and Sriram to sustain the campaign in Malgudi in his absence. They boost up the courage in them to



become prepared for sacrifices if required for the cause of the nation. This reflects the apprenticeship given to the youth by Gandhi which helped the whole nation to participate in the freedom struggle.

In the absence of Gandhi, Sriram became more devoted and committed to the task assigned to him, Gandhi. He begins to adopt the principles in every walk of life. It is manifested in:

He was going through a process of self-tempering, a rather hard task, for he often found on checking his thoughts that they were still as undesirable as ever. He had thought that by practicing all the austerities that he had picked up in Gorpad's company, he could become suddenly different. Gandhiji had blessed his idea of self-development. He had said: 'Spin and read the Bhagavad Gita, and utter Ram Nam continuously, and then you will know what to do in life' (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Sriram carried a change of dress and went downhill to a brook and bathed. He felt so invigorated after the cold bath that he sang aloud all alone in his wilderness. He went on repeating: "Raghupathi Raghava Raja Ram, Pathitha Pavana Seetha Ram"- Mahatmaji's litany" (Waiting for the Mahatma).

The narrative reflects the Quit India Movement launched Mahatma Gandhi to a considerable length Gandhi's message to the people to participate in the Quit India Movement spreads across the country like a wildfire. The novel depicts how it becomes popular among the youth through the deeds of Sriram. He responds to this call instantly and gets into the action to campaign for the Quit India Movement in his village.

This is described as follows:

Sriram dipped the brush in paint and fashioned carefully, 'Quit India' on the wall...all their armament being this brush and black paint and black walls... It also seemed to him possible that Britain had imported the letter 'Q' into India so that there might be a national drain on black paint. He was so much obsessed with this thought that he

began to do write a modified 'Q' expending the very minimum of paint on its tail so that it read, until one scrutinized it closely, 'Quit India.' The villagers asked: 'How long ought this to be on our wall, sir?' 'Till it takes effect' 'what does it say, sir?' 'It is "Quit" -meaning that the British must leave our country'(Waiting for the Mahatma).

This holds a mirror to the transformation freedom movement into a mass movement subtly. Sriram's elevation from ignorance and aimlessness to a matured nationalist is represented in his act of tackling the opposition to call for the Quit India campaign. People like a school teacher and a carter object to the campaign of Sriram. The teacher argues that the natives are not yet ripped to the country themselves. Hence, he endorses the continuation of foreign rule. The carter sees the campaign as an unnecessary interruption in the normal life of the village folk. He educates them in the following manner:

'Do you know Mahatma Gandhi is in jail?' 'Yes, master.' 'You know why he is there?' The man shook his head. 'So that you may be a free man in this country. You are not a free man in this country now' (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Then Sriram visits the location of timber yard and appeals to the contractor that sending our woods to the foreign country is unpatriotic. Here also Sriram's intervention is viewed as a nuisance by the workers. But Sriram does not lose heart. He persists in his campaign to take the message of 'Quit India' to the mass. His undiminishing enthusiasm in seeing India free is reflected in: "We will spin charka, wear Khadi, live without luxury, and we shall have India ruled by Indians" (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Sriram moves on to another village called Solur. He indulges in educating the people of this village against buying and selling the foreign goods. On this occasion, the purpose of Gandhi's Dandi march is highlighted. He dissuades the people from the consumption foreign goods by citing examples of Gandhi's sacrifice by walking three hundred miles across the country to boil the salt-water on the beach of Dandi and help anyone to boil salt-water and make his salt. He reminds the people that it is a symbol of boycotting the foreign goods.

Subsequently, he makes a raid to a local grocery shop and exposes the sale of foreign goods in that shop to the people.

The protagonist conversion from the extremism to Gandhism

In the career of Sriram as a freedom fighter, a significant change occurs. Though Sriram is introduced to the freedom struggle by his attendance at the meetings of Gandhi, his career in the freedom struggle is not just characterized by Gandhian ideology. He happens to be influenced by the ideology of extremists for quite some time before he emerges himself as a thorough Gandhian. In a way, the author tries to incorporate the freedom struggle in its whole by depicting not only the struggle of moderates but also that of the extremists.

The author goes about it by creating a character called Jagadish. He shames as a photographer in Malgudi and claims that he has got a formula to jeopardize Britain in India. In reality, he is an extremist freedom fighter and has arrived here to install a small radio set which is expected to transmit code messages.

Sriram falls prey to his influence on two accounts. First, his mind has become imbalanced due to the departure of Bharati from him. Second, Jagadish coaxes to him that he and Bharati are good friends and birds of the same feather. To dejected Sriram, they ignite his mind with the passion for joining Jagadish, which is humorously depicted:

‘I am Jagadish. I used to know Bharati also. We all are doing more or less the same work’. ‘This was enough to stir Sriram out of his lethargy. He sat up and welcomed the other profusely with a great deal of warmth’(Waiting for the Mahatma).

Jagadish makes use of Sriram’s weakness in his deep love for Bharati and provokes him to opt out of the Gandhian mode of struggle. The conversation between Jagadish and Sriram reveals it clearly:

‘Are you going to court imprisonment?’ ‘No, I have other things to do. That is why I have come here’. Sriram was happy to find a kindred soul and at once poured

into his ears his feelings. ‘I told Bharati not to be a fool....’ ‘Don’t say that. In this matter, we all judge and act individually. Those who cannot follow Mahatmaji’s orders are free to act as they think best’. The other said, ‘This is a war in which we are engaged, we are passing through abnormal times, and we do what we think best’ (Waiting for the Mahatma).

As a result, Jagadish installs the radio in Sriram’s room. Then he chooses the temple as the center of his activities by transforming it into a fortress. Sriram obeys to the instructions of Jagadish as if he is under a spell. It becomes evident in the depiction of Sriram who “had become a blind slave of Jagadish (Waiting for the Mahatma). After this Jagadish’s real identity is revealed. He is not a photographer in Malgudi as he has introduced himself earlier, but is a staunch follower of Subhas Chandra Bose. He has been secretly carrying out the agenda of propagating Bose’s ideology and drawing the cadets to this campaign. [Sriram’s interest in Bose’s] The author has skillfully managed to include the imaginary speech of Bose in the narrative thus as:

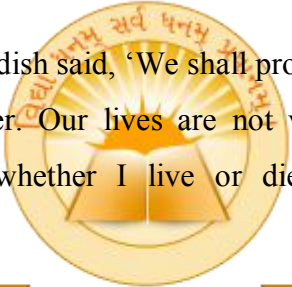
Subhas Chandra Bose’s voice said, ‘Men of the Indian Army, be patriots. Help us free our dear Motherland. Many of your friends are here, having joined the Indian National Army, which is poised for an attack on your borders. We are ready. We shall soon be across, and then you can join the fight on our side. Till then don’t aim your guns at us, but only at the heart of our enemy’. And then followed a ten-point programme of National Service that the men of the Indian Army should undertake (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Sriram gets drawn towards the Bose’s campaign gradually. The influence of Bose’s radio speech upon Sriram and his response are manifested in the following:

‘This is Subhas Chandra Bose speaking,’ Sriram sat up respectfully. ‘What good fortune that I should hear his voice!’ At the sound of it, Sriram felt reverence for this man who had abandoned his home, comfort, and security, and was going from country to country, seeking some means of liberating his Motherland... Sriram wrote

at breakneck speed. He felt as if the commanding presence of Subhas Chandra Bose himself was at his elbow dictating. He filled up several sheets of the pad in respectful silence (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Sriram takes down the speech of Subhas Chandra Bose broadcast but gets disappointed at the end of the speech due to lack of clarity in broadcasting the message of Bose. Sriram feels hurt for being unable to hear the message of Bose. He meets Jagadish and asks him as what would be Bose's last words. At this juncture, friction seems to creep in the coordination between them due to Jagadish's indifference. However, Sriram remains faithful to Jagadish and obliges to perform the duties of sticking pamphlets in the Army quarters, which Jagadish assigns to him. Though this job dangerous, Sriram does not hesitate which is portrayed as follows:



Before parting, Jagadish said, 'We shall probably all three of us get shot in this enterprise. But don't bother. Our lives are not very important. Our work is more important.' 'I don't care whether I live or die,' said Sriram (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Sriram sets out to the army quarters following Jagadish's directions. He catches a bus and reaches the destination. When he is about to cut a portion of the barbed wire fence, a strange thought mixed with panic occurs in him. For the first time, he begins to reconsider his decision of taking risks for the cause of freedom. He realizes that he should not invite death into the hands of unknown persons. As a result, he withdraws himself from the active involvement in the extremist's campaign. In this regard it is worthwhile to note what Dr. M.K. Naik observes:

His lack of genuine faith in the cause of the freedom struggle also makes Sriram a coward and cowardice and freedom go ill together. Thus, he is asked to distribute copies of Subhas Chandra Bose's message to the Indian Army in the army camp at Bellaire, but he loses his nerve when he approaches the barbed wire fence (Waiting for the Mahatma).



Later, a turning point takes place in Sriram's association with Jagadish. He grows anticipation to meet Bharati but gets only a letter from her instead of her arrival. In the letter, she asks him to pay a visit to his grandmother at once. As a result, he arrives at 14 Kabir street only to learn that his grandmother is dead. She has been mistaken to be dead and put on the pyre. Unexpectedly she rises from the pyre. After this, Sriram surrenders himself in the police station and subsequently is put in detention at the Central Jail. This paves the way for Sriram to part ways with Jagadish and his extremism. Harish Raizada sums up the whole episode in the following:

While leading a lonely and dejected life in the ruined temple hidden from public gaze, he meets Jagadish, a terrorist and a zealous national worker. He joins his new friend in his terroristic activities and helps him first in noting down the messages and speeches of Subhash Bose from Tokyo and Berlin and circulating cyclostyled copies among the Indian soldiers and afterwards in overturning and derailing trains, cutting telegraph wires, setting fire to the records in law courts, exploding crude bombs, and indulging in such other acts of violence. This makes the police announce a heavy price on his head. One day as he goes to see Bharati in the prison house and his dying grandmother at his own house, he is traced by the police and put behind bars (Waiting for the Mahatma).

The episode of the Sriram's company with Jagadish throws light on some significances of the theme of 'Freedom Struggle.' Firstly, it reflects that Waiting for the Mahatma dwells upon the theme of freedom struggle comprehensively with due scope for the extremist and moderate factions of freedom fighters. Second, it shows the influence of extremism on Sriram and his escape from violent to non-violent mode of the freedom struggle. Third, it indicates that Sriram is superficial in his commitment as a freedom straggler. Sriram's response to Jagadish's invitation to join his campaign is governed not by his genuine interest to espouse Subhas Chandra Bose but by his dejection at that time. He has been isolated from Bharati by the latter's departure to Delhi. When he suffers from desolation, Jagadish's mention that he and Bharati are of the same vocation, he mistakes that

Jagadish is a follower of Gandhi and volunteers himself to support subsequently. P.K. Singh elaborates it thus:

His separation from Bharati (after her arrest) deviates him from Gandhian path to the way of terrorist movement. The agony of the separation turns into the fire of violence and his peaceful protest into the turbulent agitation (Waiting for the Mahatma).

Last, it shows the inclination of narrative as being towards Gandhian freedom struggle by depicting Sriram to have returned from Jagadish to Bharati.

In the subsequent narrative, the struggle of Subhas Chandra Bose to free India through non-violent mode is depicted through the creation of a character called Jagadish. He arrives at the place and provides the transmission of Bose's speech through a radio. Sriram gets an exposure to the attractive method to Gandhi's to free the nation for the first time. He is impressed by the speech of Bose too. The depiction of Bose's mode of freedom struggle adds a holistic picture to the theme of struggle in the novel:

Britain will leave India with a salam if we crush the backbone of her administration'. He was always talking regarding backbone... Sometimes he said: 'Britain's backbone is, you know where?' (Waiting for the Mahatma).

This phase is not developed fully to confine only to the Gandhian movement. Hence only the theme of a national movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi becomes dominant in the narrative.

In the forthcoming episode, Sriram is arrested and kept in detention at the central jail. Sriram asks for privy arrangements in the jail on the ground that he has not yet been tried and proved guilty in the court. But his request is denied to him. He is regarded neither as Gandhi's man nor a criminal but as a dangerous person by the I.G. This explains the crude attitude of imperialism in India.



Subsequently, more and more people are brought to the jail and Sriram makes use of this chance to convert the jail into a platform for the discussion of nationalism in the jail. Thus, the novel portrays the strength gained by the Gandhian ideology in jail in this part of the narrative.

Sriram is not able to contain his being away from Bharati. So he contemplates an escape from the jail. While he is in this state of mind, the situation becomes favorable for the freedom of India. The British have decided to Quit India. As a result, the political prisoners are released from the jail. But Sriram's name is not found in the list of persons to be released. On the advice of the chief, he submits a representation for his release. Subsequently, Sriram is let free the prison, and the nation has also become free from the British rule by now.

Sriram returns to his place and finds that Bharati has gone to Delhi to join Gandhiji. A letter is lying from Bharati to Sriram asking him to come to Birla House in Delhi. Sriram boarded a train and reached Delhi. Bharati is present in the railway station to receive him. While the travel in the tanga to Birla House, Bharati briefs the developments which took place when he was in the detention.

The plot of the love story of Sriram and Bharati and the plot of the story of freedom struggle are skilfully merged towards the end of the narrative Sriram, and Bharati succeeds to the consent of Gandhiji for their marriage. Gandhiji is portrayed to agree not only for their marriage but to perform the marriage rituals himself. He assures them that he would conduct their marriage the next day and proceeds to the stage for the prayer in Birla house. Sriram and Bharati become satisfied at the decision of Gandhiji. At this juncture, a sudden change is brought into the plot that Gandhiji is assassinated while he is in the prayer. Thus, the narrative ends with an anti-climax. In a way, the climax is deliberate to sustain the novel not as a novel of love but as a novel of Freedom Struggle.

'Waiting for the Mahatma' contains several movements of Indian Freedom Struggle not only under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi but also under that of Subhas Chandra Bose, under the leadership of Gandhiji such programmes as Khadi movement, Quit India



Movement, Dandi March, Boycott of Foreign goods, Salt Satyagraha, Voluntary Poverty, Courting arrest and non-violence movement, etc., are incorporated in the narrative pattern. In addition, Gandhi has included as a central character in the novel. Under the banner of Subhas Chandra Bose, the campaign of military and the concept of the Indian National Army are subsumed in the narrative. Finally, the novel has successfully depicted the transformation of freedom struggle into a mass movement or national movement and its subsequent triumph to win freedom. Therefore, 'Waiting for the Mahatma' can be regarded as a true narrative of Indian Freedom Struggle beyond any doubt

Biased nationalities and their view on Gandhian ideology

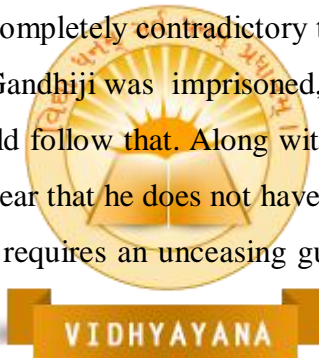
The novel 'Bachelor of Arts' Chandran is portrayed as a young man with self-trait, determined and driven by his thoughts. He at first had a solid fascination towards the western way of life. He is a lad who admires modern culture and creates disdain for his home country as he feels westernization is genuine freedom. All these things considered, he faces numerous battles as he endeavors by his particular choice as he is an individualist. Chandran carried the real-him and pushed ahead in life with passion and likings. Despite the fact many times his instinct proved him wrong on many occasion, he self-realized and attempts to clear things relating to its cause. Though he questions the tradition, taste and love marriages, he felt that it could not be expelled from the society. The modernism within him had prompted him to lead a painful life as he couldn't marry his love. He takes a wrong choice again to wind up as a sannyasi. Later, Again the self-realization thought brings him back to his home and marries the girl of his parents' choice. His mind starts to think in a matured way, and he remembers that his friends were his stronghold.

Whereas, in 'Waiting for Mahatma' Sriram is projected as a person who is not self-propelled and who has no clear aim. He is drawn towards Gandhian ideologies simply because of love towards Bharati and not because of any patriotic feeling. Along the period, his love drew for freedom struggle due to ceaseless listening to Gandhiji's speech. Gandhiji's discourse influenced him on various things like untouchability, the freedom struggle against the British, etc. From his speech, he comprehended that each thought later would reflect in



life which will cause pain however obscure. On his journey with Gandhiji, he was able to manifest self-control and focussed more on Bharatham and not in Bharati. Sriram was under the mentorship of Gandhiji was able to change all the ideologies and surpassed into real life. Despite the opportunity he had to express his love towards Bharati, he couldn't reveal it to her when the opportunity knocks. But when she comes to know that Sriram is an orphan, she develops an adoration towards him. Knowing this finally he proposes to her. This character in him, unceasingly reveals that he is not an initiative person and only Gandhi imposes his teachings on him and his followers, and they all thoughtlessly followed like a goat. Gandhiji has to ask him and every follower to take a vow before every mission so that he will be able to drive the campaign of his ideology. All through this time, he was under the mentorship of Gandhi who believes in non-violence and thought he became rationalized.

Gandhiji's ideology was completely contradictory to Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose who believes in extremism. When Gandhiji was imprisoned, Sriram was plotted by the Bose follower, and Sriram felt he should follow that. Along with this line, there happens a shift in his ideologies. The character is clear that he does not have a distinct plan in his life and he is not a Gandhian follower. Sriram requires an unceasing guideship from someone to lead his show.



Both the characterization in the narratives of RK Narayan depicts a different characterization. The writer feels that the real freedom is not getting freedom from the British as Gandhiji felt. Even though Gandhi got freedom for India, still the nation suffers from casteism, race, and creed. The real freedom can be only begotten only when each takes a stand and fight for it to live a harmonious life.



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