



The role of Susila in her husband Krishna's life to attain Salvation in The English Teacher

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ABSTRACT

Rasipuram Krishna Swami Iyer Narayan Swami is one of the greatest Indian English writers. He has written many famous novels. One of them is *The English Teacher*. This popular novel is published in 1945 and centers round the lives of Krishna, the English College teacher and his lovely wife Susila. They have a very rich bond. Though Susila dies prematurely because of typhoid but after death Susila helps her husband to attain mental tranquility and spiritual bliss. Krishna spiritually connects with his dead wife Susila through a communicator. Actually R. K. Narayan has also lost his loving, caring wife Rajam and they have a little daughter Leela. Similarly in this novel we find that Krishna and Susila have a little daughter Hema. Through his fictional protagonist character R. K. Narayan depicts his intense personal tragedy. This novel is divided into two parts. The first part deals with happy, peaceful domestic life and the second part deals with spirituality and a mystic connection between Krishna and his wife Susila. Towards the end of the novel, we find Krishna resigns himself from his job as a college professor and joins as a primary school teacher where Krishna gets real mental peace and calmness, tranquility. This is one of the popular works of R. K. Narayan. Both the writer R. K. Narayan and his literary piece *The English Teacher* have made one another immortal in the world of literature.

Keywords: Bliss, communicator, mystic, prematurely, spiritual, tranquility.

INTRODUCTION

Rasipuram Krishna swami Iyer Narayan Swami is one of the noteworthy Indian English novelists. He is a versatile writer that he has given a new dimension to his literary creations. He has created different types of female characters. Narayan's fictions present women characters within the Indian socio-cultural area, *The English Teacher* is one of the famous novels of R.K. Narayan. It is published in 1945. R. k. Narayan has revealed the problems of nameless, futureless, faceless Indian housewives in his literary writings like Savitri, Malathi, Janamma, the wife of the headmaster. At the same time R. K. Narayan has portrayed in his novels some highly educated, empowered, elite female characters like Bharati, Grace, Rosie/ Nalini, Malathi. His fictional female characters are based on his personal recollections of Indian middle-class women.

The touch of humanity is another most important aspects of Narayan's writing style. His fictional characters have uniqueness in their own way. If we go through chronologically R. K. Narayan's female characters, we can see that they develop gradually with time and gain their individuality. R. K. Narayan has created a new type of women race who are not fully traditionalist nor extremely ultramodern but they respect conventional virtues and at the same time accept modernity to the best of their quality and delicacy.

Susila, the wife of Krishna in *The English Teacher* leads her husband to the path of salvation after her death and helps to attain Spiritual maturity, a new vision of life. In this novel we find the picture of a happy ,blessed couple. The male character Krishna is an English teacher in a college and his wife Susila, a domicile, quiet natured housewife. This novel has two parts. The first part deals with happy marital life but in the second part we find the bereavement of the husband and his reconciliation with life and reality. In this novel we find the intense personal tragedy of Krishna. But we find no social or religious upheavals in breaking the conventional standards of the society. Krishna respects his parents too much and they fix his marriage and he marries the girl without any questions. It seems quite ridicule to the western readers but R. K. Narayan shows that in the context of Malgudi as well as in the Indian society it is nothing but a way of life. According to some critics it is an autobiographical novel. Narayan writes in his memories *My Days* page ix, "More than any other book, *The English Teacher* is autobiographical in content, very little part of it being fiction, the toll that typhoid took and all the desolation that followed with a child to look after, and the psychic adjustments are based on my own experience. The book falls into two parts one is domestic life and the other half is spiritual." [1]

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The role and importance of Susila in Krishna's life:- R. K. Narayan wants to emphasize the fact that Krishna, an educated holding M.A. degree respects his wife Susila as his better half contrary to Ramani in *The Dark Room*. We observe the basic difference between two male characters. The writer tries to give the hint that their difference of their attitude is born out of their disparity academically. Susila is Krishna's life and even after her death she becomes spiritual partner to Krishna. Susila never feels threatened in the presence of Krishna. Krishna is an ideal father to her daughter. So, Susila does not need over protection like Savitri. R. K. Narayan actually wants to show that all men are not like Ramani. Most of the men are also like Krishna. Krishna behaves very politely and respectfully with his young wife. Susila also stands as a loving, devoted wife. Unlike Ramani he never behaves rudely except one day when Susila sells off his old table clock. According to Krishna the old table clock bears the memory of his student and bachelor life. Krishna forsakes his anger and makes deliberate efforts to bring back peace in the household. Krishna does not feel any ashamed to bent down before his wife. Krishna also finds a very beautiful, suitable rent house for his family. They live happily in that rent house. But their happiness is short lived. Susila is attacked by typhoid after visiting a public toilet and lavatory adjacent to the house which Susila goes to inspect. Despite heavy efforts Susila dies. The little town suffers from the shortage of trained physicians. The doctor fails to diagnose the typhoid and prescribes medicines of malaria. To the poor people of Malgudi the physician is like a savior but Krishna becomes skeptical to his casual approach. Krishna also mentions that taking the medicine of Malaria Susila's health is going to worse. The entire circumstances of the doctor's dispensary appear to Krishna as the village meeting ground –

"From an ante-chamber issued voices of women and cries of children. Somewhere else a dispenser was jingling his glasses. He came out presently, a businesslike man wearing silk trousers, in shirtsleeves and apron. He held up a bottle wrapped in brown." [2]

Finally, the doctor comes and he has hardly any time to listen the symptoms of illness of Susila. At first, he tries to examine Krishna but he says that wife is suffering from fever. Within a fortnight Susila's health is going to deteriorate but the doctor till advises to take his old medicines, mixture and anti malaria pills. Susila's parents come to assist Krishna. They also very much worried about their daughter. But at the last stage the doctor is able to diagnose that it is not malaria but typhoid. But it is high time and it is beyond all medicine assistance. Susila prematurely dies due to wrong treatment. But Malgudi people are used to such diagnosis and hardly care to either contradict the doctor or insist his visiting their homes. One of the most popular novels of R. K. Narayan this novel *The English Teacher* presents the coherence of a sensitive's man self-development. The three novels *The Bachelor of Arts*, *The English Teacher* and *Mr. Sampath* are related with each other. These novels of his early phase focus on the human personality. Some personal attachment of the writer we find in the novel. Like the central character Krishna R. K. Narayan's wife Rajam dies prematurely and he has a little daughter Hema like Leela, the little daughter of Krishna. After five years of their marriage Rajam is caught by typhoid and on 6th June, 1939 she passed away around midnight. In 1939 the writer's life turns out to be the disaster year. Decades later R. K. Laxman, the brother of R. K. Narayan narrates his elder brother's grief:

"He could not write, he could not think, he could not sit, he cried." [3]

His little daughter Hema looks like his wife, restored him slowly back to life. Krishna in *The English Teacher* is a mature Chandran. The bachelor Chandran is now the householder Krishna, two progressive stages of human life -the bachelor and the householder of the Hindu way of life are delightfully dramatized for us as a moral cycle. Krishna moves to a more conscious metaphysical awareness than Chandran. He positively accepts life as well as death. The theme of *The English Teacher* extraordinarily focuses on the self-development, intense self-awareness, self-felt need for spiritual education. The family of Krishna, the other minor characters, happy marital life help Krishna to attain his quest. Graham Greene like a true friend of R. K. Narayan writes sympathetically in a letter 20th June, 1939-

"I don't suppose you'll write again for months, but eventually you will not because you are just a good writer but because you are one of the finest." [4]

R. K. Narayan writes this novel and depicts some aspects of his own life. It represents a new departure in Narayan's fiction. The whole novel is written in 1st person narrative. It is his attempt to explore his Brahmin protagonist's psychology from the inside. The passage of the conversation between Krishna and Leela, his daughter is very convincing. The location is very central, the particular properties of rooms, buildings link the social themes of the 1st half which deals with domestic life of Krishna and Krishna's place in Malgudi colonially oriented educational system and the second part deals with psycho - spiritual aspects of the central character Krishna. Another title of *The English Teacher* is *Grateful to Life and Death*. The mystic or spiritual quest centers on Susila's death and the hero's vehement efforts to make contact with his dead wife's spirit and experiences her presence. This novel links with *The Bachelor of Arts*. Susila, Professor Brown and Mr. Gajapathy all these figures appear in both of the novels. The writer shows the stages of Hindu religion and indicate the four Ashrams in human life. At first Krishna leads bachelor life like Brahmacharya. After his marriage to Susila he enters into Grihastya when Krishna's father-in-law proposes that he should live with his wife and little daughter. Both Susila and her mother - in - law appear to be happy in their domestic life. It is the consequence of the respect and attention they get from their husbands. Both Krishna and his father entirely depend on their wives blindly and it is this trustworthiness that satisfy the feminine ego of both the ladies and they willingly undertake the task of looking after their families. R. K. Narayan in *The English Teacher* is the poet of Indian domestic life and it is interesting to note the significant between his method and that of another Western writer, Katherine Mansfield. According to Prof. Srinivas Iyenger, "Speaking generally Narayan's is the art of resolved limitations and conscientious exploration." [5]

R. K. Narayan is content like Jane Austen with his little bit of irony. He would like to be a detached observer, to concentrate on a narrow scene, to sense the atmosphere of the place, to shape a small group of characters in their oddities and differences. He tries to expanse the mind of his characters, the heart and the soul, catch the uniqueness in the language, the tragic and the prosaic. In his writings we find the note of the writer who believes that the real world is not ultimately real. Here we find R. K. Narayan's respect for religion and mythic imagination, tradition. In this intensely autobiographical novel, we find the writer speaks of death with witticism and intelligence. Narayan emphasizes about the metaphysics. The world beyond this material world explains the philosophical portions of the novel which is primarily a novel of self-development.

This view of the writer throws light on the Vedantic allusion. Some critics think that R.K. Narayan as a social realist writer who reveals Indian characters, their feelings, emotions, social customs, conventions. He has an extra ordinary sense of understanding of human beings. Narayan very wisely portrays the shades of social and personal feelings in his novels.

After the publication of the novel, it turns from the autobiographical to sequential narratives and centers repeatedly on cross section of Malgudi citizens. The story is a series of experiences in Krishna's life some joyful. Some sorrowful and his journey towards achieving the inner peace and self-development in the traditional Indian scene. The novel contains fifty-four characters. They are very lively, independent. They are so wonderfully fleshed out and presented in such a crystalline manner that each of them leaves a lasting effect. salary Krishna and Susila can afford. R. K. Narayan shows the growth and realization of Krishna's love for his wife and child. The sought for and achieved in this treatment, is a blend of the lyric and the domestic, the one in its pure intensity, the other in its sober ordinariness. The flame like part of the emotion is never in this scene of feeling allowed to escape from the common materials of everyday life. The love of Krishna and Susila deepens and intensifies in the midst of household problems, prudent housekeeping, religious ceremonies and his sad reaction to it, family irritation, awkwardness, simple visit to a café or a cinema, children's game and sickness and so on. The development between them offers the writer to reveal the developing nature of both the protagonists. We see, too, in Susila the depth and strength of a girl of a simple traditional upbringing and habit of mind whose exquisite manners and difference to her husband go with clarity, conviction and self-respect. The more complete her relationship with Krishna, the more positive and independent her personality. Above all, she possesses that serenity of psyche which seems so powerfully a part of the mature Indian sensibility, achieving a point of equilibrium between the unavoidable accommodations with and the necessary responses to the rhythm of life. R. K. Narayan presents many other social evils prevailing within the Indian culture through characters. He humorously draws our attention towards the injustice heaped on the poor. The contractor insults the poor servant and says,

"You are a careless fool."

Narayan exposes the persons who seek excuses for begging, "Father seriously ill, money for his medicine. One or the other numerous excuses for begging. Of late they are on the increase." [6]

The pre- independence novel of R. K. Narayan *the English Teacher* depicts Krishna's disappointment proceeds from the academic iconoclasm of the West in the colonized education the issue of Indian roots is an important theme discussed in the novel. Krishna who studied in the English language, English writers, and poets and the Bible and also made a career out of the same education did not bring him comfort and support of relief at his time of need. Krishna's self-pity at the beginning of the narrative directs him to seek a free identity. It reshapes his identity by making him realize the existing importance of his own tradition and culture that remain far from the cultural invasion of the West. R. K. Narayan shows that the exploration of his characters is not confined in particular social roots and identity. Narayan's writings are very close to our hearts because he chooses materials from our everyday life. Through his craftsmanship of art and beauty he presents them in such a manner that the readers are attracted from the beginning to the end.

As an autobiographical novel we also find the colonized education system of pre- independence India. The central character Krishna, M.A. in English is a professor of English in Albert Mission College. He realizes that his choice of career has actually removed him from his roots and culture. He apprehends the futility of such education that serves to effectively confines him not only physically but also in their approach of life and mind set being discontent with their lot of and hankering after another culture which will not sustain them. It is R. K. Narayan's credit that he has interwoven. This is the theme of roots, with the major theme Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, so effectively that the novel is not a contemptuous and spiteful account of the hatred of the British ruler. Krishna's bitterness about such education system manifests in the following lines,

"I was going to explain why I could no longer stuff Shakespeare and Elizabethan meter and Romantic poetry for the hundredth time into the young minds and feed them on the dead mutton of literary analysis and theories and histories while what they needed was lessons in the fullest use of the mind." [7]

According to R. K. Narayan, he understands better the Indian Middle Class and its ethics better and presents all these not only in his autobiography *My Days* but also in his novels *The English Teacher* and *Swami and Friends*. One of the famous critics K.R. Srinivas Iyenger says,

"R. K. Narayan is content like Jane Austen with his little bit of ivory just so many inches wide." [8]

R. K. Narayan thinks that his own life has been a major theme like many other themes. His own experiences, his familiarity with other people, kinsmen, the major incidents of his life all of these things he restructures and remodels them and presents them in such a way that they appear not mere self-expression but the readers can connect them with these events.

To Krishna his daughter's school is a symbol of pure joy and happiness and a created universe of children with dazzling alphabets, models and paintings of men, trees. The environment is suitable for encouraging students to learn and gives vitality and spontaneity to them instead of pedagogic routine. R.K. Narayan mentions about one of his friends in his autobiography *My Days* who after death of Narayan's wife Rajam hints at the therapeutic value of art,

"You will write a book which is within you, all ready now, and it is bound to come out sooner or later, when you give yourself a chance to write." [9]

The English Teacher deals with various themes and motifs juxtaposed. According to the famous critic M.N. Srinivas, "I remember accompanying Narayan on a few of his walks around this time. Narayan talked about the death and after life and incidentally his preoccupations expressed themselves in a few ghost stories. Sometime later he went to Madras and there met the medium through whom he was able to contact Rajam. All this is narrated in *The English Teacher*." [10]

Narayan's brother the famous cartoonist R. K. Laxman speaks about his depression after the death of Narayan's wife Rajam. He also tries to contact with his dead wife like Krishna in this novel. Paul Brunton, the resident of Mysore becomes his medium. R. K. Narayan records his sorrowful experiences in this psychic journal *The Indian Thought*. Among all these events Rajam's death is most convincing events of his life that inspires R. K. Narayan to write this novel. The central interest of Narayan's Gunas Comedy connects the three novels of his early phase *The Bachelor of Arts*, *The English Teacher* and *Mr. Sampath*. They focus on the human personality. In this novel the theme focuses on the self-development, intense self-awareness and self-felt urge for inner development.

Conjugal love, family and his surroundings and other minor characters help Krishna in his quest. It is a complete and heart touching literary creation where we find keen and gentle urge of inward perspective of the spirit. He realizes the positive acceptance of life and death through self-education. The critical point in Krishna's professional life is illuminated by the Headmaster of Leela's school. He asks Krishna an important question,

"But do you think you are happy in your work there?" [11]

The headmaster is what Krishna's subconscious has always wanted to be. The headmaster is a pioneer in his own way and Krishna achieves salvation only after following his way of life. The headmaster requests Krishna to take charge of his school and children. His attitude shows his dislike of games and sports and believes that schools and colleges preferring sports to studies are turning out robust, "sturdy idiots" (Narayan 202) The Headmaster's thematic importance lies in the fact that he becomes the usher of a new dimension in Krishna's life. Krishna achieves a fine balance between private and public life. The importance and charm of the novel arise out of this insistence on a wholesome inner world. This novel focuses on human loneliness in a tragic edge.

Krishna's self-piety at the beginning of the novel directs him to seek the path for salvation. This change in Krishna is actually consequence of his acquaintance with the headmaster of Leela's school. His resignation from his workplace and his decision to start teaching in a native school shows and establishes a cultural conversion of his heart. Gradually Krishna becomes able to relocate himself in touch of his own indigenous culture and principles of education and rediscover his own law of life. This novel also shows the practice of occultism in Hindu culture, the automatic writing by a spirit medium. Krishna appears to be a benevolent husband who is too eager to please his wife Susila. Narayan gives emphasis on academic achievement to reveal the fact that education improves man qualitatively. R. K. Narayan shows that this value of education remains centre among middle class Indians. The fascination for university degree is given importance in the writings of the authors of that period. Narayan also gives importance to the educated youth in his novels. In this novel R. K. Narayan shows the simplicity of child education through the headmaster. The headmaster reveals his terrible condition in his family.

"I've no control over them. They are their mother's special care, you know. My school is for all the children in the world except my own." [12]

Here Narayan shows that the wife of the headmaster is the controller of the family. Unlike Savitri in *The Dark Room* the wife of the headmaster is the ruling deity here. She is not victim rather she suppresses her husband. Though she gets very little education or may be illiterate but through her will power and robust attitude she manages everything. As soon as she sees the sight of her husband, she becomes angry and ill tempered. The man finds it easier to stay away from home the greater part of the day. During the conversion of Krishna and the headmaster a woman of

"Thirty-five age, with sparse hair tied into a knot at. Her face shining with oil and perspiration" comes. She does not take any notice about the guest of her home and speaks, So you have found the way home after all! Gritting her teeth. How long must I keep dinner waiting? Do you think I'm made of stone?" [13]

Then starts the quarrel. She speaks continuously with any pause.

The headmaster feels awkward and notices her attention to the guest. The headmaster does not find any other way out. He boldly states,

"Don't speak rubbish. Here is a cultured visitor, who will laugh at us." [14]

But she remains so arrogant and rude in her behavior. She speaks,

"Let him, what do I care? If he is big, he is a big man to you. He is not a big man to me. Do you think I'm a paid watch keeper for this house?" [15]

It is very clear from her attitude that she does not approve of her husband's school and finds it difficult to run her household with his meager income. There is comical irony that though the headmaster's task is to make the men literate and illuminate but he forgets the philanthropic proverb that charity begins at home. Actually, the attitude of his wife is the consequence of her frustration. The headmaster is also stubborn and headstrong because he cares very little about the family and their little children and gives entire responsibility on the shoulder of his wife only, he helps very little with his meager income. Though illiterate but she is very outspoken woman. There is no hypocrisy in her attitude. She does not feel ashamed to reveal her attitude in front of guests. They also start quarrelling in front of Krishna. He feels awkward and wants to return to home with his little daughter Leela. The headmaster realizes the situation and rebukes his wife for her rough behavior in front of his known friend. But she replies,

"Ah! What a fine sermon. I'm not going to be another woman than myself even if the king is here. What did I do to him?" [16]

The women characters in R. K. Narayan's novels stand for resistance to change and tries to emancipate themselves from chains of rule, class, poverty and tries to find their own self-identity and overcome the crisis. The headmaster's wife is no exception from this. According to the famous critic William Walsh,

"The effect on the reader is twofold. The world dealt with in the stories strikes him as enjoying an objective existence independent of the contribution of the author. The attitude of the author is modest and unobstructive. Actually, one feels, is not being sucked up into some dominating and abstract symbolizing system." [17]

The headmaster also tries to find his own mental and inner happiness, his actual aim in life. He also searches his quest of life. He narrates to Krishna about his past life and how he comes to take profession of the school headmaster. He speaks,

"Some twenty years ago when I passed my B.A. at the University, they wanted me to take law; and then wanted to rush me into an office chair, but I resisted. I love children and wanted to start school. How can anyone prevent me from doing what I want? I was not going to be hustled into a profession I did not care for." [18]

The second part of *The English Teacher* shows spiritual preoccupations and quest of Krishna who struggles with his loneliness like R. K. Narayan for a long time. The very sight of Susila suggests that she is very modest, calm and gentle type of woman. She and her husband live very happily with their little daughter Leela. She remains in central focus of human aspiration in this novel. Her beauty is rarely described in direct terms. Interpreted through the eyes of her husband the personality and beauty of Susila comes through with vivid charm. This novel celebrates wedded love of the central character Krishna and his wife Susila. Somerset Maugham also appreciates R. K. Narayan for his description of the homely life.

He says,

"The portrait of Susila is very graceful and touching and very human." [19]

R. K. Narayan's writings are blending of explicit realism with poetic myth, experience with imaginations. His novels depict the rebirth of the self and the revelation of his intimate experiences through his characters who live their day to day lives with happiness and sorrow, ups and downs. The writer utilizes the fact of his life in his writings to elevate the fictional quality of his works. In his childhood he remains attached with his loving and caring grandmother who teaches him prayers of Mata Saraswati, multiplications, and gives him proper lesson of conduct, moral lessons and behavior. We find that the figure of his grandmother becomes an epitome in his novels. In *Swami and Friends* we find the picture of loving grandmother. This old lady finds a reflection in *The English Teacher* in the form of Krishna's mother. In this novel Krishna's mother comes to Malgudi to set up the house for the young couple. Narayan's mother demands the same perfection in the household matters from his wife Rajam. R. K. Narayan writes in his autobiography *My Days*,

"Rajam was less than twenty but managed the housekeeping expertly and earned my mother's praise." [20]

Both Rajam and Susila attacked by typhoid. Krishna tries his best to prevent Susila from death. Krishna consults with the local physician but without examining the patient the physician gives medicines for malaria. Krishna tries to relate him the fact that Susila is gradually sinking instead of taking the medicines. But the physician does not give any value in this fact.

"The doctor had arrived. Everybody pressed forward to receive him. He looked like a film star being mobbed by admirers. He waved his hand, smiled, and gently pressed his admirers back to their seats." [21]

Then arrive doctor appears quite skeptical about the abilities of European doctors. On hearing about the illness of Susila the house owner also warns Krishna,

"Never trust these English doctors. The English doctors always try to starve one to death." [22]

Within a fortnight Susila's health becomes worsen. At the very last moment the doctor diagnoses the actual disease, typhoid. But it is too late then and Susila is beyond all medical assistance. She succumbs to death.

"For there is the law that, the body, even if it is an Emperor's must rest only on the floor, on Mother Earth. The downward curve of her lips gives her face a repressed smile..... Everyone gathers a handful of rice and puts it between her lips- our last offerings." [23]

This novel is an attempt to bridge the gulf between the man and the novelist. Krishna in this novel tries to accept the death of his wife and perform his duties and responsibilities of his everyday life.

"I had become a sort of professional receptacle of condolence and sympathy and I had received them in such quantity these months that they had ceased to move me or mean anything. Death and its associates after the initial shock produce callousness....." [24]

Narayan through the act of writing reveals his grief and learns to come to terms with it. The act of writing acts as a cathartic therapy which helps him to overcome his grief, sorrow and the subsequent upheaval in his life by submitting it to the orderliness of art. It is similar to resolving the discords of his life into some brilliant writings. R. K. Narayan also writes in his autobiography *My Days* about his spiritual experience of his dead wife Rajam through Raghunath Rao.

Narayan writes his autobiography almost thirty years after this novel. He takes disguise of Krishna to reveal his personal grief. He thinks it necessary to know the reader about his experience about the effect of the death of his wife Rajam.

"I have described this part of my experience of her sickness and death in *The English Teacher* so fully that I do not and perhaps cannot, go over it again. More than any other book *The English Teacher* is autobiographical in content, very little part of it being fiction." [25]

The novelist expects to make a connection between his fiction and autobiography. Rajam's death makes him so grief stricken that he cannot tolerate to repeat it in the unfiltered form of an autobiography. He expects that the reader fills the gap in his autobiography by reading this novel. According to Timothy F. Weiss

"This extrinsic reality is reflected in the novel, and thus the extrinsic is in a sense the intrinsic as well and vice versa." [26]

Most of Narayan's characters go through an experiment with truth. In this novel we find the evolution of the central character Krishna who at first remains victim s of two illusions. His social status as a college lecturer and spiritual illusion deriving from his belief that happiness in life can be an end in itself.

"Then I reconciled myself to this separation with less struggle than before. I read a lot. I wrote a lot, I reflected as much as I could My mind was made up. I was in search of a harmonious existence and everything that disturbed that harmony was to be rigorously excluded, even my college work." [27]

In Krishna's college one young and stranger boy, fifteen years old comes with an envelope and inside it there is a letter. The person writes in his letter that while he is writing some messages automatically comes in the paper with the name and address of Krishna, the English professor. The unknown informer writes to Krishna about his peculiar experience.

"I received this message last evening, while I was busy writing something else. I didn't understand what it meant. But the directions, address and name given in it are clear and so I have sent my son to find out if the address and name are of a real person and to deliver it. and forgive the intrusion." [28]

Krishna reads the letter. He feels astonished after reading the letter. It is from his loving and caring dead wife Susila who finds this suitable gentleman for the medium of expressions. She wants to tell her husband that she remains in happiness in the other regions and also wants Krishna to forget the grief in his mind. Now she becomes nearer to her child and husband and always watch them. Susila's message gives a great consolation to Krishna. Krishna is thankful to God that the new way is opened out to communicate with Susila. The core of R. K. Narayan's vision and art seems to exists in an awareness in which imagination and reality, the mundane and the spiritual, the cosmic and the human, the tragic, the comic interchanged. In his writings we find fusion of earthly and spiritual values. R. K. Narayan mentions in his autobiography about a mystic friend who speaks about the therapeutic value of art.

"You will write a book which is within you, all ready now, it is bound to come out sooner or later, when you give yourself a chance to write." [29]

Krishna wants to go to the messenger's house with the boy. The boy replies their village is very far, Tayur. A mystic kind of fear and doubt strikes in Krishna's mind. An aspect of new life waits for Krishna. The way of spiritual enlightenment gradually unfolds before Krishna. In the second part of the novel Krishna meets two important persons who provide him with possibilities for overcoming his despair.

The stranger man, the medium through which he contacts with his dead wife Susila and the headmaster of Leela's school whose educational thinking, independent choice of profession strikes Krishna a lot. They stand for different approaches of life. His initial visits to the messenger and the place the man lives create a kind of mystical atmosphere.

"The Sun inclined to the west. If I did not reach the crossroad before the dusk, I'd never be able to spot the boy. The west ablaze with the sun below the horizon. Dusk would soon fall on us. But there was no sign of the boy..... at the sloping tiles visible through the dense cluster of trees. [30]

We find the evolution of the central character Krishna. He has a social dignity as a college lecturer. but in doing the job he finds himself in chains under colonial educational norms. He does his duties without any satisfaction in his mind. Later he leaves this job and attains as a kindergarten assistant as opposed to his previous position, but he finds solace, consolation and satisfaction in doing this job. The role of the headmaster is very important in the evolution of Krishna's character. Life can be interpreted in religious terms. He makes aware of his position in the universe. It helps him to transcend his material, mundane life to something spiritual existence. He becomes one with the being and the non- being. R. K. Narayan also elevates the significance of The Hindu religion. Until one has reached such a stage as Krishna attains after the death of his wife, one remains a mere victim of illusions such as Krishna at the beginning of the novel. Krishna gradually realizes that isolation cannot exist because man is part of society, society is also part of nature, and of universe which encompasses past, present and future. After a long journey Krishna reaches the man's house. He feels nervous and both excited and remains in anxiety. He remains skeptical about the truthfulness of the stranger man. But he cannot avoid this man because Krishna feels a strong yearning to connect with his dead and loving wife Susila. The stranger man narrates the events to Krishna in an evening when he wants to write his verse or drama he posed his pencil over the paper, but the pencil automatically moves,

"Here we are, a band of spirits who've been working to bridge the gulf between life and after life. We have been looking about for a medium through whom we could communicate. Please, help us, by literally lending us a hand, your hand, and we will do the rest." [31]

After a week later Krishna and the man sit together with the arrangements to make contact with Susila. After sometime the pencil makes movement as if it is given life. Sheets after sheets are covered with letters but it's very hazy and vague. It does not create any meaning. Then his hand writes,

"This is an attempt to turn the other side of the medal of existence, which is called Death. Please go on for half an hour today and then stop or if there are unfinished messages, a maximum of forty minutes..... don't attempt it again for a week more, that is, exactly this same hour, next week this day. [32]

Krishna goes down to his sweetest memories. He remains excited when first time he meets his future wife Susila with a glimpse of her in another room through a looking glass. Now he feels same excitement to meet with her after her death. An intense personal tragedy of Krishna pervades here. Krishna remains as a bereaved husband and he encounters gradually with reality of life. Life is here depicted as larger part of religious experience and the search of discovery of one's true self and identity becomes the central theme of the novel *The English Teacher*.

Krishna finds solace through a peculiar change in circumstances involving the death of his wife and his psychic communication with her in telepathic messages under the supervision of a spirit- medium. His decision to change the profession is occurred by the idealist headmaster of Leela's school. It shows him the way of the ideal system of education. His resignation from his college and his decision to teach in an indigenous school indicate and establish a cultural conversion of heart. In this novel Narayan also shows the reflection of Hindu civilization. The Lotus Pond and temples in Malgudi fiction is a deliberation to reflect the long-established Hindu ethos. Lotus is a traditional Hindu flower and associated with the Goddess of Wealth Laxmi. The existence of the Lotus Pond in the dense foliage stands for the existence of beauty and ugliness, happiness, sorrows in everyone's life in this world. It becomes universal significance. It is near this lotus pond that Krishna makes contact with his dead wife Susila. After a week the man and Krishna meet again. They become very good friends. The atmosphere is very friendly, the Casuarinas tree creates music for the great occasion. Purple Lotus blooms on the pond. After waiting for some time, the time comes and his hand automatically starts write the messages.

"Your friend's wife has been here all along. In fact, we are at this task mainly for her sake. She is so eager to communicate with her husband..... The lady wants to say that she is deeply devoted to her husband and child and the family as ever. She watches over them and prays for their welfare. Only she is able to see things than what she was on Earth, although you are not aware of my presence at times..... God's blessings be upon you and the child." [33]

Krishna becomes able to relocate himself in terms of his own culture and the principles of education that helps him to rediscover the Law of Life. This novel offers both the conventional, value-based education system and also elevates the philosophical aspect of the practice of occultism of Hindu Culture. It is a practice of communicating with the dead, the method of automatic writing with the spirit medium. Krishna feels very happy after communicate with his dead life. As the result of his skeptic mind, he wants to know the name of their little daughter from his dead wife. She answers correctly and also narrates some events correctly. Krishna becomes astonished and fully realizes the existence of his dead wife. R. K. Narayan in his autobiography *My Days* categorically shows the circumstances in which Krishna's wife died and the psychic communion between them correspond to the writer's real-life experience. The novelist upholds the view that in the sphere of Indian mysticism and philosophy the evolution of human souls through generations, the effect of spiritualism on the elimination of self. R. K. Narayan reveals his realization in his autobiography.

"The full view of a personality would extend from the infant curled up in the womb and before it , beyond it and ahead of it, into infinity. If one could have a total view of oneself and others one could see all in their full stature, through all the stages of evolution and growth, ranging from childhood to old age, in this life, the net one, and the previous ones.... Somehow, for the working out of some destiny, birth in the physical world seems to be important - all the dynamism, power, the beauty of sex, have a meaning only in relation to its purpose." [34]

Krishna's eagerness to meet with his dead wife increase gradually. On the following week again the medium man and Krishna sit together. Then Spirit of Susila comes and narrates very secret and confidential events of their family.

Susila speaks very joyfully that she always watches her daughter.

"I have direct access to her heart now; I am always watching her. Children are keener sighted by nature. She sees me, and perhaps takes it naturally, since children spontaneously see only the souls of persons. Children see spirit forms so often that it is natural to their condition and state of mind." [35]

This urge for search in the principal characters of Narayan's novels brings a different sphere of reality. It is new place which is neither fully based on tradition nor fully based on merchandise society, a place of transcendence from the established individual subject position. It shows the path to reach an ultimate realization of the truth of exclusively Indian existence. One of the renowned critics Sarbani Putatunda,

"Narayan is treated mainly as a good story teller and the readers hardly acknowledge the intrinsic merit of his narrative art. Undoubtedly, Narayan enjoyed portraying the mundane in an apparently simplistic style, but the quintessence of his narrative art lies in metamorphosing the mundane into something extraordinary." [36]

The spirit of his dead wife tries to console him by saying that his agony, sorrow hurt her even after her death. Krishna asks him how in a different space they spend their times. She replies,

"Time in your sense does not exist for us. A considerable portion of our state is taken up in meditation, and our greatest ecstasy is in feeling the Divine Light flooding us.....We've ample leisure." [37]

Like his other novel in this novel the symbolic significance of the Hindu Temple is depicted excellently. It is also reflect our national values too. According to Narayan the Hindu temple is like an united object of religious tradition and cultural heritage. The temple becomes a safe shelter for Savitri in *The Dark Room* until she recovers from her mental stress. In *The English Teacher* the Srinivasa temple bears with it the long lost traditional values. When Susila remains alive they visit the temple and Susila says,

"What a lovely place" [38]

After Susila's death when Krishna searches for peace, it is in the scares atmosphere of another temple he receives the messages from his dead wife through a medium. Temple stands in the form of catharsis where one can attend purification of soul and mental peace. The temple is a traditional institution which provides safety, shelter and tranquility. Narayan depicts Susila's death not as the end of the novel though after her death an existential emptiness pervades but the novelist real intention is to depict a new , different sphere which is free from mundane objects, somber reflection. It is a place where Krishna and Susila find their actual quest for life, the meaning of existence and the possibility of contact even after life. Krishna feels happy after making contact with Susila,

"I went home singing. I felt I had picked up the key to a new world. I had never known such joy before. I felt that my duty was now to converse all the force of my mind for this communion." [39]

This novel is written in the first-person narrative. It is the novelist's attempt to explore his psychology through his characters. One of the great critics Prof. Srinivasa Iyenger remarks,

"The attempts at psychic communication is a whimsical or fantastical element into a story that has so long been transparently true to life with the consequence that it is difficult to feel that the first and second halves of *The English Teacher* blend naturally and make an artistic whole." [40]

This second part of the novel upholds childhood innocence and purity counteracts to the feeling of existential futility that swallows up Krishna after his wife's death. Their little daughter Leela should be protected from the fact of her death and prevented from the entry of a metaphoric place. In a self - reflexive passage Krishna talks with her daughter Leela shows an interesting relationship between the father and daughter which shapes its unequal and separate , individual distinct forms into one form. Leela asks her father Krishna to read from her favorite book.

"It had illustrations in green and a running commentary of a couple of lines each..... I fused them all into a whole and gave her a story- Sam ate the apple, but the lion and the tiger wanted some of it.....so on. [41]

Narayan very skillfully uses different aspects and approaches of demands to life make on the individual. The novel sometimes appears as pseudo - science the stranger, medium man is a suspect figure and the sense of mystery revolves around the issue of his existence whether he is a genuine medium to the spirit world or a mere pretender, quack man. But gradually Krishna finds proof and believes him.

"If you want any evidence of my presence, pluck about ten jasmine buds and

Keep them near your pillow to night. Before I go away I will take their scent with me that I can do. You will see the difference when you smell the flowers in the morning." [42]

They become very good friends. The novel upholds the view of belief in paranormal. Narayan is very conscious about the value of Hindu religion. This medium man is not a sanyasi or any other worldly guru. He is also a family man, belongs to a particular kind of Grihastya and gifted with the power of communicating with the spirit - world. In the chapter where Krishna gives up his job as a lecturer provides the closure of Dharma. Krishna gives an envelope to Mr. Brown.

"I can't go on with this work any longer, sir.... I am beginning a new experiment in education with another friend. It is a fraud I am practicing for a consideration of a hundred rupees a month.... It doesn't please my innermost self...." [43]

This resignation letter may be treated as a response to the language policy of Macaulay's Minute in 1835. It takes English language as Pan - Indian communication designed to service the needs of the colonial administration. The novelist R. K. Narayan shows the political system of the then time through the mouthpiece of Krishna. It seems to be perfunctory return to the main subject matter of the novel's opening. The unconventional primary school headmaster and the details of the locations made the consequence for Krishna's resignation and attack on the educational curriculum. The day on which the headmaster supposed to die but remain alive the astrologer prediction proves wrong. The novelist juxtaposes two related approaches of paranormal activity. The paranormal elements of the novel are associated with ancient spiritual beliefs. One of the famous critics C.D. Narasimhah remarks,

"Narayan turns to the occult rather than the profoundly spiritual which his own heritage could have offered in abundance." [44]

The location and environment of the headmaster's house reminds Krishna about Susila's illness and death. Krishna leaves his previous job in search of inner peace which can be gained if he withdraws himself from this adult world and adult work into the world of children. The novel brings together the domestic, the political, the psycho analytical and spiritual aspects together. The use of rooms use as reflection of Krishna's mental stage. The state when he tries to make contact with her.

Susila tells that he needs a great mental detachment and calmness if he wants to contact with Susila. The physical rooms stand as metaphor for mental state, later his mind becomes of clean, bare chamber of fragrance. The English Teacher is a product of Krishna's consciousness from first to last part. His transcendentalism is completed by a domestic promise where he rejects his conventional role of grihastya and processed to a new spiritual life and quest for truth and inner peace. He becomes a loving, caring father. This progress is associated with ancient Hindu religious beliefs and customs. The temple is very much associated by Sankara. Susila's speech is very remarkable. "Yes, for the purpose of your complete communion with me or with anyone a degree of concentration is necessary and this can be done only with some order and plan.... I can hardly come to you, because the grief creates a barrier and this should be avoided for both our sakes." [45]

Krishna's wife Susila plays very significant role to enhance human aspiration. Through the eyes of her poet- husband Susila's personality comes through with vivid charm. She advises Krishna to be calm and ready, receptive mind is very important. She becomes his guide to attain mental peace and tranquility. Krishna becomes so happy and he feels that he finds a new world of joy. Now his only duty becomes to communicate with his dead wife Susila. In his private room Krishna struggles with his mind and many things appear in his mind his college, work, evening friends, Susila's voice. Krishna himself tries to make communicate with his dead wife Susila. He takes piece of paper, pencil. But he feels exhausted and fails to communicate with her. Next Wednesday Krishna and his friend arrange to contact with Susila.

It is found in R. K. Narayan's novels that his characters go through the quest for life and achieve transcendental truth. *The English Teacher* celebrates the happy wedded love. R.K. Narayan is not fully didactic or moralistic but his value system is revealed in the fates of his characters. The best example of true love is the relationship of Krishna, Susila in *The English Teacher*. The picture of caring, loving husband and father all are the aspects of the value of true love. The symbolic significance of Hindu Temple is most important. After Susila's death Krishna finds solace in the quiet compound of temple. When she was alive they both visit the Srinivasa temple. Temple affects as a catharsis. The imaginary place Malgudi acts as a place between oriental age old traditions and the modern occidental civilization. This novel shows the philosophical aspect on occultism of Hindu Culture, the practice of communicating with the dead through the automatic writing by a spirit - medium. Towards the end the novel Krishna, the central character appears to remain aloof from everyday life for a mystical connection with after life. The totality of various aspects of the novel pulled Krishna at different directions. At last Krishna finds mental tranquility and a state of equilibrium. Krishna says,

"I am so happy Calm, calm I repeated to myself like a mantra. I blamed myself for not being aware of so simple a remedy." [46]

Susila needs not to fight to attain her identity and self respect like Savitri in the novel *The Dark Room*.

But it is shown that both of them are under the mercy of their husband. What appears to be emancipation in case of Susila actually is the sign of a benign form of patriarchal assumptions. So Susila fully enjoys happy conjugal domestic life. Susila gives very valuable speech-

"At the last setting I gave you advice about the psychic development. Since then I have been observing the struggle going on within you and your utter helplessness. I feel that it is too early and that the wound is still very raw.

I think therefore you ought to postpone your attempts for some time until you are less agitated than you are now." (45)

Krishna gives garland to the spirit of Susila,

"I picked up the garland from the nail and returned to bed. I held it to her For you as ever. The boundaries of our personalities suddenly dissolved. It was a moment of rare, immutable joy- a moment for which one feels grateful to Life and Death." [47]

The reunion of Krishna and Susila is like the marriage of lovers, they achieve psychic developments. This can be said as the motto of Indian story.

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