



The Passion of Love For Nation in R.K .Narayan’s Novel “Waiting for the Mahatma”–A Romantic Perspective

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Abstract: The love of Bharati for India is greater than her love for Sriram. Normally there should have been a conflict in her mind between these two alternatives. But in the novel there is no such clash because for Bharati love for Sriram can come only after her love of India is fulfilled. That necessitates the introduction of a character who can embody that principle of the Nation. Hence the presence of Mahatma Gandhi. Once Gandhi is introduced as a character in the novel, not marginally but centrally important to the theme, it becomes necessary for a critic to trace the emotion embodied in the Mahatma. But Narayan has not made of Gandhi, either. As a matter of fact Gandhiji as a character mixes unobtrusively into the plot of the novel not as a fictional character but as one who is known to all of his contemporaries in real life.

However for my seminar presentation I have chosen the title called “The Passion of Love for Nation in R.K. Narayan’s novel “Waiting for the Mahatma”- A Romantic Perspective which explores the love of Sriram on his love for Bharathi which embodiment of Bharatha Maatha who sacrifices all his valuables for the sake of her children by the call of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi whom Sriram waited a lot for his call for the patriotic movement.

Keywords: Patriotism, Mahatma, Love, Bharata Maatha, Embodiment, conflict.

INTRODUCTION

R.K. Narayan, a creative artist in fiction for over four decades, draws his strength from an inexhaustible source of Indians’ and He is the most essentially and comprehensively Indian of the Indo Anglian novelists.”¹ Narayan’s novels have a strong story line and his characters are clearly delineated. Placed in situations which are well developed in the novels, they exhibit a wide range of feelings through which it is not difficult to identify the main emotion. The traditional method of storytelling that Narayan follows in his fiction makes his novels more Indian than Western, though the novel itself is a Western form of literature, in that like all Indian stories it has a beginning, a middle and an end. Of course, his characters are not idealized, but one can still find in them the interplay of emotions out of which the predominant emotions could be identified and worked out.

But while analyzing Narayan’s novels from the Patriotism point of view the traditional method of working out only the friendly emotions has been followed. But as the traditional theory permits an alignment of inimical Rasa’s through the intervention of a catalytic emotion, like, for example, the emotion of the Wonderful (Adbhuta). The analysis has taken recourse to the traditional theory of reconciling the opposites (Virudha) through an intermediary emotion. Without deviating very much from the traditional mode, and by sticking to it by and large Narayan’s novels have been analyzed from the Rasa point of view.

One of the principles by which the true Erotic emotion is to be distinguished from the shadowy is that if the woman desired by man is somebody else’s wife, the love of that man for that woman is not true Srngara but the

simulacrum of love sentiment. Another instance is where the love is not reciprocated and the third where the love is for a lowly woman. In *The Guide* Raju loves Rosie who; is a dancing girl, who does not reciprocate his love and who is Marco's wife. As pointed out earlier the shadowy love emotion which can all be traced in Raju's desire for Rosie.

As a self styled guide Raju has been guiding people to the tourist spots in Malgudi. It is his blood to be a guide wherever he is and in whatever he does. So his affair with Rosie though one sided marks another side of his guiding disposition. At a time when she is drifting without a proper sense of direction to exhibit her talent as a dancer, Raju enters her life as her lover and starts guiding her form out of a moribund existence to a thrilling life of glare, publicity and renown. The instinct to guide others is an instinct for self – effacement, putting the others above oneself. By his own confession towards the end of the novel there is something of a Karma Yogi in Raju. This dormant emotion surfaces slowly and gets manifest when by a quirk of fate Raju is thrown into jail. Even the act of forgery which lands him in jail is done with a view to preserving Rosie nee Nalini for art so that Marco may not again consign her into oblivion. Once he has all the time to himself to ruminate over his life, the latent yogic instinct in him starts asserting itself. But it requires greater impetus to manifest itself completely and this final push forward is supplied by the saintliness thrust upon him by the people of Mangala. The factors that contribute to the generation of the Quiet emotion are worked out sometimes through hints and sometimes directly by Narayan in the last few pages of the Novel. In fact there is more of suggestion (dhvani) than statement (vacya) in the words and actions of Raju on the twelfth day of his fasting, culminating in the excellent suggestion of his final action, the body is sagging and the spirit soaring.

And there is an uneasy fluctuation in the love between Sriram and Bharati in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. In both, there is separation followed by union. But while in *The English Teacher* there is pattern of union, separation and reunion, in *Waiting for the Mahatma* separation predominates over union in the first part of the novel and the actual union with Bharati totally participation in it comes towards the end of the novel and even there it is only hinted at. The uneasiness of Sriram in not being able to find the exact response that he is looking for in Bharati makes for an interesting situation of separation (Vipralamba). It takes a considerable amount of time for Sriram to know that Bharati is responding to his love and even then he is not quite sure that he will receive encouragement from her. This ding-dong battles between his desires and the fulfillment being postponed makes Sriram a typical lover in separation. The majority of the forms of separation as per the Indian traditional theory like separation desiring union (Abhilasha Vipralamba), caused by exile (Pravasa Vipralamba) and by curse (Sapa Vipralamba) can be observed in Sriram's fluctuating fortunes.

THE PASSION OF LOVE FOR NATION-WAITING FOR THE MAHATMA

The love of Bharati for India is greater than her love for Sriram. Normally there should have been a conflict in her mind between these two alternatives. But in the novel there is no such clash because for Bharati love for Sriram can come only after her love of India is fulfilled. That necessitates the introduction of a character who can embody that principle of the Nation. Hence the presence of Mahatma Gandhi. Once Gandhi is introduced as a character in the novel, not marginally but centrally important to the theme, it becomes necessary for a critic to trace the emotion embodied in the Mahatma. But Narayan has not made of Gandhi, either. As a matter of fact Gandhiji as a character mixes unobtrusively into the plot of the novel not as a fictional character but as one who is known to all of his contemporaries in real life.

In *Waiting for The Mahatma*, we get absorbed in the situation. We see Sriram hearing Gandhiji's speech: 'But', Mahatmaji was saying, "If I have the slightest suspicion that your heart is not pure or that there is no bitterness there, I'd rather have the British stay on. It's the lesser of two evils." "Sriram thought, 'Oh revered Mahatmaji, have no doubt my heart is pure and without bitterness. How can I have any bitterness in my heart for a creature who looks so divine?'"(p.20)

Here the emotional experience of the character is so different from the reader that the reader knows what Gandhiji is talking about and when he sees Sriram's misinterpretations of Gandhi's speech, he experiences the Sthayin Hasa, whereas the naïve Sriram experiences a kind of Rati. It is the technique of R.K. Narayan to let the reader get better of the hero. So as for Abhinavagupta would be a better suitable term for the novels of R.K. Narayan. Waiting for the Mahatma is a love story "Of a weak and infatuated youth and his Strong willed Lass"¹

The love of Sriram for Bharati is portrayed against the back drop of Bharati's love for her country, India. In a way this novel is a love story within another love story. At every point, these two loves cross each other and bring the lovers into a kind of clash. With Bharati loving a greater entity than an individual with all her heart and soul, naturally she is of a stronger mettle than Sriram. This strength of character than Bharati exhibits puts Sriram in many an awkward situation and also creates in him a consciousness of his being weaker of the two.

As Srinivasa Iyengar 2 says, the theme in the novel is the Bharati-Sriram romance. The scene where Sriram meets Bharati for the first time is not an ideally romantic one. Bharati makes a dramatic appearance before Sriram, shaking a sealed tin collection box and asking for his contribution. This is the first time in his life when he is spoken to by any girl. The portrait of a beauty in Kanni's shop has been the only picture of beauty that Sriram has seen at close quarters. But now Bharati 'was slender and young, with eyes that sparkled with happiness'. The European beauty in Kanni's (p.13) shop pales into insignificance before Bharati's beauty 'he wouldn't look at the picture again even if Kanni should give it to him free. The sudden appearance of Bharati causes a wild flutter in his heart and makes him lose himself in a reverie from which he is jolted back by the rattling sound of the tin box. The agents of love or the stimulants are Sriram and Bharati. The ensuant is the reverie into which Sriram falls; and the fleeting emotions are infatuation (Moha), exhilaration (harsa), deep expectation (Autsukya). Sriram is so infatuated by Bharati's beauty that he considers her far superior to the European Queen whose portrait adorns Kanni's shop. Expectation is in wanting to ask: How old are you? What Caste are you? Where is your horoscope? Are you free to marry me? (p.13) and also in his wild hope that she would left him touch her hand. On seeing her disappear into the market like 'a bird gliding on wings' he feels like singing a song for her, which is exhilaration (Harsa). Starting to find out Bharati again he makes discreet enquiries about her. But soon he becomes indiscreet when he asks the jaggery merchant who she is. The traditional Erotic science (Kama Sastra) mentions different stages passed through by persons in love. The desire to see is the first, desire which leads to loss of shame, here in Sriram enquiring about Bharati undiplomatically. He is almost in a trance since his meeting Bharati from which he is brought back to the fact of Mahatma Gandhi's visit by the jaggery merchant. This state of forgetfulness is also one of the stages of loves. "Sriram suddenly came out of an age-old somnolence, and woke to the fact that Malgudi was about to have the honour of Receiving Mahatma Gandhi." (p.14) It is with the desire of seeing her again (Cakshu preeti) that Srirama goes to attend the meeting on the banks of Sarayu where Mahatma Gandhi is to speak. He searches with his eyes for Bharati all around when he spots her on the dais. Narayan looks at Bharati through Sriram's eyes and records Sriram's feelings: "She was clad in a Saree of Khaddar, white home-spun, and he noticed how well it suited herHe paused for a moment to consider whether it was the wearer who was enriching the cloth or whether the material was good in itself" (p.19) If the first meeting at the market fountain between Sriram and Bharati sows the seed of love, called in the Erotic Science, sowing of the seeds (Ankuritatva), this sight of Bharati on the dais could be described as the sprouting of the seed (Pallavi tatva) "She was at a great height on the platform, and her features were not very clear in the afternoon sun which seemed to set her face ablaze. She might be quite dark and yet wear a temporarily fair face illumined by the Sun or she might really be fair. If she were dark, without a doubt his grandmother would not approve of his marrying her." (p.20) This is cogitation (Cinta) and extreme doubting (vitarka), two fleeting feelings which feed the emotion of love. As Sriram sees Bharati more and more

his feelings towards her are a mixture of admiration and fear. He admires her beauty which makes him love her but at the same time he is afraid of her organizational ability and assertiveness. This mixed attitude is also a natural feeling of a person in love. The object of love is both loved and feared. Sriram pursues Bharati though from her side there is no encouragement, but there is enough indication of her becoming soft towards him, shedding her initial stiffness towards him. Sriram seems to believe that nothing succeeds like success and perseverance will pay ultimately. Though there is no encouraging sign from her, there is nothing from her to deter him from pursuing her. "He feared that if he touched her she might push him into the river. The girl was a termagant; she would surely develop into the same type as his grandmother with that sharp tongue of hers. Her proximity pricked his blood and set it coursing." (p.38) The Pricking of his blood and its coursing is suggestive of both love and fear. His equating her with his grandmother is the revelation of unconscious oedipal complex in him. Bharati is apparently unmindful of Sriram's presence, in spite of his pursuing her. But as her stiffness gets more and more relaxed she shows a positive response, which is only suggested by Narayan, to Sriram's feeling towards her. The normal traditional idyllic setting for the generation of the emotion of love is given by Narayan not in the earlier meeting between Bharati and Sriram, but when they meet in the presence of the Mahatma in his Ashram. "The only sound at the moment was the flowing of the river and twitter of birds. Somewhere a cow was mooing. Even Bharati, the embodiment of Frivolity, seemed to have become somber."(p.46) Once Sriram chooses to join the Ashram as an accredited member of the group, then Bharati shows a more positive sign: "However grim the surroundings might be, Sriram and Bharati seemed to notice nothing. They had a delight in each other's company which mitigated the gloom of the surroundings." (p.59)

This stage is described in the erotic science as the blossoming (Kusumitatva) where the communion of the two hearts takes place. When Bharati goes to Sriram to give Babu's letter, Sriram's love for her bursts out in an exuberant and almost violent action which is neither mistaken nor stopped by Bharati. This is a clear indication of her total approval of his love for her. She makes initially a feeble attempts to stop him from demonstrativeness, but when his action convinces her of how much he loves her she responds to his caresses: "She wriggled in his grasp for a moment and at the same time seemed to respond to his caresses. He rested his head on her bosom and remained silent. He felt that any speech at this moment would be a sacrilege. It was a night of absolute darkness. The trees rustled, crickets and night drone. He wanted to say something about the stars and moon light, but he felt tongue-tied. The only thing that seemed to be of any consequence now was her warm breathing body close to his." (pp. 89-90) Apart from the usual external stimulants (Uddipanas) we can also notice the two extreme stages of love, madness (Unmada) and stupor (Jadata). Bharati also recognizes it and so she gently releases herself from his hold. But she stands firm in her resolution that she will marry him only if Babuji agrees to it.

Thus, the lovers, especially Sriram, have passed through the nine of the ten stages of love. The first stage is desire (Abhilasha) when Sriram wishes to see Bharati after his first meeting. Then follows an agitated state of mind (Utkanta) when he frantically search for her in Mahatma's meeting. While sitting at the meeting, Sriram's mind is so fully occupied with the image of Bharati that his proximity to the Women's enclosure triggers in his mind the thoughts of a suitable wife for him. However much his mind reminds him of Gandhiji who has been exhorting all men to think of all women as their sisters and mothers, he cannot resist the temptation of fancying himself as a center of attraction for any woman if she happens to look in his direction. This is the feeling of memory (Anusmriti), the third stage of a lover. On hearing her name from Bharati herself he remarks that it is a nice name and goes on to flatter her by telling her: "I too wish I could be with you all and do something instead of wasting my life." (p.38) 'What a nice name:' he remarked.....'Oh, how grand:' he cried.(p.38) By contrasting his own purposeless existence with Bharati's devotion to a great cause, Sriram here shows himself as the devotee of a Goddess. This is described as the praise of qualities (Guna Kirtana). Sriram does not stop

with merely admiring her patriotism, but even goes to the length of pleading with her. "Please let me also do something along with you. Why don't you take me as your pupil? I want to do something good". (p.39)

He has thus assigned to her already the role of his guide. The very presence of Bharati fills him with excitement (Udvega). The prospect of meeting Bapuji unnerves him, not only because of the august personality of the Mahatma but also because subconsciously Sriram feels that his love for Bharati is too inconsequential an affair for Bapuji. His excitement is witnessed again when at the door of Gandhiji's Ashram he is impaled on the horns of a dilemma whether to enter it or get away from it. "But still the pull of Bharati was strong and he could not get away from the place so easily as he had imagined." (p.43). When Sriram is forced to live with Gopad in Gandhiji's Ashram, he feels awkward in Gopad's presence because the latter appears to be quarrelsome. Then comes a long wailing (Vilapam) of Sriram over what the intentions of Bharati might be in her thus pushing him into the company of a pugnacious fellow:- "What did the girl mean by putting him in with this fighter? Could it be that she disliked him, and wanted him to be beaten? If she disliked him, she would not have given that Jasmine was exchanged only between persons who liked each other, and yet the girl gave him a Jasmine with one hand and with the other led him into the company of this terrible man and try to choke him." (p.49)

Then comes the next stage when Sriram becomes almost mad (Unmada) in Bharati's company which even prompts him to be demonstrative, in spite of Bharati stopping him, feebly thought, from being aggressive; he almost smothers her with his embrace. "Her braid laid its pleasant weight on his forearm. Her cheeks smelt of sandalwood soap. He kissed the pit of her throat. He reveled in the scent of sandalwood that her body exuded. 'You are sweet-smelling,' he said. 'I will be your slave. I will do anything you ask me to do for you. I'll buy you all the things in the world.' He behaved like an idiot." (p.89)

After passing these seven stages, desire, agitation, memory, praise of qualities, excitement, waiting and madness, Sriram is to experience the other three stages like disease (Vyadhi), dullness (Jadata) and death (Marana). If the first seven stages constitutes love-in-union (Sambhoga Srngara), these three make for love-in-separation (Vipralama). As Bharati involves herself more deeply in Gandhian movement which entails her leaving Sriram, he relapses again into his old aimless drifting. His meeting with Bharati has given him a purpose and a meaning in life. He needs by virtue of his natural disposition somebody's protection and guidance to take the right path. If before meeting Bharati Sriram has been under the guidance of his grandmother, ever since his meeting with Bharati, he has looked upon her as the rudder of his ship of life. He even confesses this to Bapuji. When Bharati leaves himself in her preoccupation with the Gandhian movement, he feels orphaned and suffers from what may be described in the Erotic terms, disease (Vyadhi). A dullness (Jadata) comes over him as he is drifting aimlessly during his separation from Bharati which leads him into the company of Jagadish, a terrorist. Sriram has never understood fully the nationalist movement, left alone Gandhian idea of fighting for India's independence. So when Jagadish tells him that he is also a nationalist fighting differently from Gandhiji, Sriram gets drawn towards him. Not that Sriram is interested in the nationalist movement of any brand, the non-violent Gandhian method or the violent Bose method. Time hangs heavily on him with the departure of Bharati from his life. The pain of separation is so acute that he has to engage himself in something or her other. He cannot do better than wait for Bharati's return. Once again his mind is confused and marries him. It is in this state of mind that he enrolls himself in the terrorist movement which may be described as almost suicidal and which constitutes the tenth stage of death (Marana). Sriram has to wait, as though endlessly, for Bharati's grace. This comes about when India attains independence and, the General Amnesty brings Bharati out of jail. In the meantime, Sriram also gets disillusioned with Jagadish's terrorism and as he comes out of that traumatic experience, like a fresh lease of life Bharati comes back to him. With the blessings of Mahatma the lovers are about to get married. Mahatma ever promises to act as the priest to solemnize their marriage. Now Bharati also reciprocates fully and totally Sriram's love for her which state could be described as the stage of

fruition (Phalatatvam). Love or Srngara is primarily divided into Union and Separation. Love-in-separation is classified into four types: Separation desiring union, which caused of jealousy, of exile and of curse. When the lovers wish to meet each other, when, they are separated the first type, desire (Abhilasha Vipralamba Srngara) arises. When Bharati is in jail Sriram experiences this desire. But in a way it is also exile (Pravasa vipralamba Srngara). Sriram also feels a sort of jealousy when Bharati goes with Gorpada which is the third type, of jealousy (Irshya Vipralamba Srngara). By an extension of the meaning of word 'curse' (Sapa) we may even say that even this fourth type of separation is experienced by Sriram. In the state of mind in which Sriram becomes almost peevish at the too much of importance being given by Bharati to nationalism it may not be farfetched if we infer that Sriram should have considered the Gandhi movement as a curse (Sapa) like Durvasa's in Kalidasa's *Abhijana Sakuntalam*. This makes Bharati forget her lover, Sriram.

While Sriram entertains doubts over Bapu's blessings which alone would make Bharati marry him, Bharati does not even think of a negative answer from Bapu. She is most sure of the Mahatma's Blessings. That is why she does not answer Sriram's question as to what would happen if Bapu says 'no'. This type of love when it is not expressed outright is described by the Sanskrit erotic science as unalterable or unswerving attachment (Nili Raga). We do not notice the second variety of love, the outward affection (Kusumba) which shows up, is gone as quickly as it comes up. But we observe the third variety, which may be described as both expressive and lasting (Manjista). If Bharati's love is of the first kind, Sriram's is the third.

As S.C. Sanyal rightly says: "In the novel, the theme is actually the romance between Sriram and Bharati".¹ Therefore, the main rasa in *Waiting for the Mahatma* is the erotic and to be precise love-in-separation leading to union. But Narayan very skilfully infuses the emotion of the Quiet (Santa) into the romantic story of Sriram and Bharati. In fact we may even say that Gandhi's presence as well as movement arches over the Bharati-Sriram romance like a rainbow under which their love drama is enacted. When two inimical emotions (Virudha rasas) are brought into a story by the author, the tension between them could be resolved according to the traditional rasa theory through the intercession of the emotion of the wonderful (Adbhuta). In this novel, the Erotic emotion in Bharati-Sriram romance in the Gandhian figure and movement. These two adverse emotions are brought into excellent synthesis by the author. If the traditional theory of the intercession of the wonderful (Adbhuta) emotion is to be applied here, the awe-inspiring personality, Gandhi and his non-violent acts are heroic elements of the wonderful. Significantly also it is in Gandhiji's Ashram and presence that the lovers meet and their love grows. Even when Bharati meets Sriram away from Gandhiji's Ashram their talk centers round Gandhi. Her insistence upon Gandhiji's approval of their marriage is another pointer towards Gandhiji's participation in the romance. The wonder that Gandhiji could work out is stressed again and again by Bharati when she tells Sriram that nobody can speak a lie in his presence and everyone would be made to know himself and involve himself in the right act. The change that Gandhiji can bring about in the people who come in contact with him is a miracle. Therefore, if Gandhiji's personality is the stimulant (Alambana) for the emotion of Wonder, the experience of the people who come in contact with him is the ensuing (Anubhava) and thus this emotion mediates between the Erotic and the Quiet. The opening exhortation of Mahatma Gandhi to the people gathered on the Sarayu Sands immediately establishes the mood of placidity (Sama): "Then he raised his arm, and instantly a silence fell on the gathering. He clapped his hands rhythmically and said: I want you all to keep this up, this Beating for a while." (p.16)

The enveloping silence sets the right situation (Uddipana) to arouse in the gathering a feeling of the Quiet. The rhythmic clapping of the hands which Gandhiji starts and asks the gathering to follow is the suggestion of a discipline which is needed for cultivating the mood of the quiet. Rhythm (Laya) in music is a state of balance. This rhythmic clapping is followed by Gandhiji's usual prayer 'Raghupathi Raghava Rajaram'. Prayer flushes the

mind of all evil and dirty thoughts and brings it to a state of tranquility (Sama). Having prepared the mind of the assembly to receive in a calm state his message Bapuji makes a long speech on the need to cultivate nonviolence as a way of life. Non-violence involves affection for others and continued affection for others even against heavy odds brings about a change in the others. At this stage, Narayan very cleverly combines the Miraculous and the Quiet when he says: "He (Sriram) could not grasp what he (Gandhiji) was saying, but he looked rapt he tried to concentrate and understand." (p.18)

What is wonderful about this is that Sriram's mind has always been wavering and he could never concentrate on anything. The speeches of Gandhi made him for the first time in his life concentrate on something and understand him. This is a miracle indeed! The exhortation proper and the general mood of the people are suggestive of the emotion of the Quiet. The evil thoughts of untouchability; lust and greed are to be exercised out of the human mind. The Quiet emotion is in operation where one feels the same emotion of affection towards all creatures. The state of Equilibrium is attained by the mind when one experiences this mood. There is another pleasure nor pain, neither desire nor hatred in one's mind in that mood: "When someone has wronged you or has done something which appears to you to be evil, just pray for the destruction of that evil. Cultivate an extra affection for the person and you will find that you are able to bring about a change in him. Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ meant the same thing when he said "Turn the other cheek". (p.18) Gandhiji does not stop with advising others to live simply and think highly. Simple living and high thinking are his own way of life. For him all the same: "The Mahatma himself emerges as a saint who can sympathise and remonstrate with ordinary men true to the definition of Jivanmukta and at the same time retain an internal calm. The Jivanmukta state is that in which a saint has ceased to have any desire." P.36

The state of being above material desire connotes a mood called transcendence (Lokottarata), a permanent mood for the emotion of the Quiet. Some critics say that lack of desire (Trsna Kshaya) can also be the permanent mood of the Quiet. Abhinavagupta says that those who are quietistic and spiritual by temperament respond to the emotion of the Quiet. The calm that pervades through the entire gathering at the time of Gandhiji's address is the experience of the reader also. So, the emotions of the reader and the character are identical. Himself a soldier of non-violence Gandhiji appeals to everyone-"You must gradually forget the term 'enemy', You must think of him as a friend who must leave you. You must train yourself to become a hundred percent Ahimsa Soldier".(p.52) The emotion of the heroic has many ramifications in the traditional theory. One such is the heroic of the nonviolent (Ahimsa Vadam). It consists in fighting against evil in a non-violent manner, without entertaining any ill-will or bitterness against those who are fought with. Here Bapuji wants to fight against the British rule without nurturing any ill-feeling against the British. This kind of heroism has a spiritual dimension because it involves the conquest of the spirit, not only of the fighter but also of the fought. The ferocious enemy to be overcome is not an individual but the abstraction called hatred, which is deadlier than the deadliest weapon. So Gandhiji wants his soldiers to be armed with love and non-violence so as to score a victory over the powerful British raj. "He (Gandhiji) is not a preacher in the novel; he is a wandering minstrel with special spiritual power to the people of Malgudi."1

The desireless Bapu acts as a catalyst in Bharati- Sriram romance. In keeping with the dignity of Gandhiji's presence as a mentor of the lovers, there is very little physical side to Bharati-Sriram love. Bharati's love is deep, and so silent. She cannot and does not have the carnal desire because she has been brought up in Bapu's ashram. Though Sriram feels physically attracted towards thoughts out of his mind because any slight step in that direction might result in his loss of Bharati. In fact Gandhiji's advocacy of celibacy cannot be practised

naturally which is very difficult to do; the practitioner must forcefully put carnal thoughts out of his mind and a constant practice in this way would fructify ultimately in total celibacy. Though Sriram Practises it for his own reasons he is at least moving in the right direction in Gandhian scheme of things. One of the reasons for Bharati being steady in her love for Sriram may also be this. Though he desires less, Gandhiji is not blind and unsympathetic towards two young people desiring each other. He is not also so unworldly as not to see Sriram's feelings and failings. He understands that Sriram is the Weaker of the two and so needs a hand to guide him. He also understands that for Sriram Bharati is that hand. So, when during the absence of Bharati Sriram strays into terrorism, Gandhiji admonishes Bharati more than Sriram for the lapse. Bharati went away to jail, and there was no one who could tell me what to do; no one who could show me the right way.' 'That is an excellent confession,' Mahatma said with a smile, 'Yes, the mistake was hers in leaving you behind.'(p.171)

As one who has brought up Bharati he is a father figure to her and as such knows his responsibility that the daughter at the appropriate time must be married off. So, when the nationalist movement has ended in the country's gaining independence, the right time for Bharati's entry into the duty of the householder has come, and Gandhiji who has withheld his blessings all the time now readily grants it. It is not with any attachment towards Bharati that Bapu does this but as a 'Karma yogi' he has to discharge his responsibility and prepare himself for the onward journey from this world. Perhaps Gandhiji feels that his duties in this world are over, and he must be prepared for his final journey. That accounts for the apparent contradiction in Gandhiji's words to Bharati. First he tells her and Sriram that he will act as their priest at the marriage. Next day, he contradicts himself by saying that he is afraid that he is afraid that he may not be present at the marriage. Is it a premonition that Gandhiji is expressing? The novel ends with the assassination of Gandhiji, and not with the marriage of Bharati and Sriram. But we cannot miss the suggestion that Gandhiji is reincarnated in the consummation of love between Bharati and Sriram, their marriage which is only hinted at but not presented in the novel.

CONCLUSION

Thus the two emotions, the Erotic and the Quiet are artistically fused by Narayan, the Jagadish episode seems to jar on this perfect harmony. The emotion that the Jagadish episode exhibits can be described as the Loathful leading to the Fearful. In the context of Gandhiji's non-violent movement to which the majority of the people are drawn, the exhibition of violence through Jagadish throws a very interesting light on the artistic skill of Narayan. The episode, by serving as a contrast to the Gandhian peace movement, throws Gandhi's character and action into bold relief. The feat generated by Jagadish's odious acts creates hatred which is what precisely Gandhiji wants the people to avoid. In the scheme of the Rasa theory these three emotions – the Erotic, the Quiet and the Fearful – are inimical, but in the interest of the rules of dramatic representation (Natya dharmi) this contradiction may be explained away as being necessary to elevate Gandhiji's character. Without Ravana being fearful and loathsome in his behaviour, Rama cannot be noble minded and great. The emotion in Jagadish's episode can also be explained as the simulacrum of the sentiment of the Heroic (Vira abhasa). The elements of such an emotion are a blind fury and confusion between the ends and means. Only the physical action is predominant and it is unsupported by a carefully planned strategy. Impulsiveness is one of its characteristics. Terrorism in its various manifestations exhibits only feelings of horror and never inspires those involved in it to noble thoughts. Waiting is one of the excitations of the Erotic. Mahatma is the symbol of a sublime love and tranquillity. All the impatience and irritations caused by waiting will be resolved into a quiet enjoyment as the consummation of love takes place. So, it is not Bharati who is waiting for the blessings of Mahatma but it is Sriram's love that needs to be steadied and fulfilled in marriage. One of the last acts of Mahatma in the novel is to bless the would-be husband and wife, thereby suggesting that in his marriage Sriram would find the much needed anchor for his agitations, excitements and anxieties.

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