

**Tribhuvan University**

**Jagan's Resistance to Western Influence in R K Narayan's *The Sweet-  
Vendor***

**A thesis submitted to the Central Department of English  
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in English**

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**December, 2006**

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This thesis entitled "Jagan's Resistance to Western Influence in R K Narayan's *The Sweet-Vendor*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Madhav Paudel has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Pushpa Raj Acharya, Lecturer at the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for his scholarly guidance and valuable suggestions and instructions that made this project a reality. I am deeply indebted to him.

Likewise, I am obliged to Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Head of the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for granting me permission to conduct this research work. I am grateful to my respected teachers Prof. Dr. Abhi Narayan Subedi, Dr. Birendra Pandey, Dr. Arun Gupto, Dr. Sanjeev Upreti and Lecturer Devi Gautam for providing me genuine encouragement. Mr. Jitendra Nepali deserves special thanks for his co-operation in preparing this work.

Similarly, my special gratitude goes to my friends, Dipak, Govind (Hardcore) Baldev, Suresh, Basant and Kamal for their continuous support and encouragement.

I am also highly grateful to my parents, Yuv Raj Paudel and Shanta Devi Paudel, brother and sister-in-law, Chandrakant Paudel and Leela Paudel who assisted economically to bring me in this state with love and patience.

Lastly, I am also grateful to Mr. Manik Dangol, proprietor of M.M. Communication, Kirtipur for fine typing and printing.

December, 2006

Madhav Paudel

## **Contents**

**Acknowledgements**

**Abstract**

<b>I. Indian Culture and Gandhi's Influence on R.K. Narayan</b>	<b>1-13</b>
<b>II. Imperialism, Indian Nationalism and Mahatma Gandhi</b>	<b>14-29</b>
<b>III. Jagan's Resistance to Western Influence in <i>The Sweet-Vendor</i></b>	<b>30-45</b>
<b>IV. Conclusion</b>	<b>46-47</b>

**Works Cited**

## **Abstract**

The present research deliberates on the resistance of the western cultural influence in R.K. N.'s *The Sweet Vendor*. The protagonist, Jagan, adheres to Indian Cultural Values and Gandhian Nationalism to counter the Western Cultural Values. He even opposes his son's Western idea of starting new writing business for purely profit making and sticks to the sweet business which he considers includes service also.

## **I. Indian Culture and Gandhi's Influence on R.K. Narayan**

This research is a study into R.K. Narayan's novel, *The Sweet-Vendor* published in 1967. The study attempts to examine the major character, Jagan's resistance to the influence of the Western culture on his son. As his son Mali is influenced by modern Western way of living, a conflict begins between the father and son and Jagan feels the encroachment of the Western culture on the Hindu culture, and he tries to counter the Western influence by following Eastern Hindu culture and Gandhian way of resistance. So, Jagan's strict adherence to the Hindu culture by committing himself to the *Bhagvad Gita* and by using Indian national products like *Khadi* clothes and herbs reflects his voice of resistance against the Western culture.

In the novel, Jagan, a sweet-vendor of Malgudi, a famous place in India comes into conflict with his Western influenced son, Mali who insists on using imported products and adopting modern business. But Jagan sticks to the use of Indian national products and traditional sweet business. They have a quarrel over continuing this business. The son brings a half-American woman as his mistress which terribly offends him.

Jagan's everyday life is disturbed when his son announces one morning that he cannot study anymore. Jagan gets his second shock when he learns from his cousin that Mali has made all preparations to go to America to learn the art of story-telling. His decision to leave without Jagan's permission hurts him. With the sudden return of Mali from America that Jagan's problems with his son become more complicated. In

fact, real challenge of life begins from now and his professed faith in teaching of Gandhi and more particularly of *Gita*, are in a test.

The traditional culture of India (Hindus) has its roots in the *Vedas*, "the truths suggested in the *Vedas* and developed in Upanishads" (22), said Radhakrishna in his *East and West: Some Reflection*. As F.S. C. Northrop has also written "every idea contained in at least the older Upanishads, with no exceptions, is not used to the *Upanishads*, but can be found set forth, or at least very clearly foreshadowed, in the older *Vedic* texts" (313).

The Indian culture is found to be very much old. Northrop quotes the lines of Surendranath Das Gupta: "when the *Vedas* were composed, there was probably no system of writing prevalent in India" (313). The *Vedas* were handled from orally from a period of unknown. As Northrop writes ". . . even if one goes back to the earliest date at which they have seen that the people had to look upon them not only as very old, but so old that they had theologically at least no beginning in time" (331).

Again Radhakrishna in his book further writes: "The Vedic period, on a most continues estimate, covers the period between 1500 to 600 B.C. The *Rig Veda* is older or *The Old Testament*" (21). Whatever the date is, Indian civilization is found to be older than other in the world. Tagore had said, "For centuries we did hold torches of civilization in the East when the West slumbered in darkness" (63). He continues "India is the cradle of the world's oldest civilization . . ." (222). Raghavana Iyer in *The Glass Certain between Europe and Asia* agrees with the point, "the transmission

of ideas, goods and influence was mainly from East to west in the ancient world and from west to east on the modern age . . . (7)"

The date or the period from which the Indian civilization started is not much important, what is important what is set the tone of this Indian culture. Spiritual yearning (truth is known by spirit and spiritual salvation is the end of life), immediate experienced aesthetic continue (love, beauty, loyalty), transcendental thinking (i.e. other world hell or heaven is important than this world) set forth tone of Indian culture. Whole Indian culture is directed according to what is suggested in Vedas. F. S. C.

Northrop quotes:

Even at this day all the obligatory duties of the present day well shows that the system of image worship is one that has been grafted upon his life, the regular obligatory duties of which are ordered according to the old Vedic rites [. . .] the laws which regulate the social, legal, domestic even to the present days are said to be but were systematized memories of old Vedic teachings, and are held to be obligatory on their authority. (341-15)

The conversation of the west to Christianity between the first and the seventh centuries gave a decisive turn to the development of the west, the Christian religion or civilization took firm root in Western Europe. With whatever the origin western culture now has developed a rationalistic philosophy of life by breaking from the purely 'aesthetic' eroticism of the eastern civilization. Westerners attempt to give a relational justification



for their ethical and religion view. They have faith in the power of human reason not in mystic God or divinity. The yearning for material life, individual selfness are also the marked features of the West. The principle of 'fit farexist motivates them to have material prosperity rather than spiritual salvation.

In traditional India the production of commodities is brought under the law of social adjustment. Its basis is cooperation. Their food production is not for the individual but for the family as Rabindranath Tagore said: "Western civilization is more mechanical than spiritual, more political than religious, more mindful of power but for perfection" (270).

Religion in the East is the cultivation of the interior life. It is the attainment of spiritual freedom and is essentially the private achievement of the individual won by hard effort in solitude and isolation on mountain tops and in monasteries, whereas in the West religion is a social phenomena and a matter of the ecclesia in the community. Religion for them is a support for social stability. The western converts religion into a sort of police system for the sake of social order.

In the East, religion is the life of spirit. It is the perception of oneness of man with the spirit of truth, love and beauty in the universe. Religion is more a matter of spiritual culture than that of scholastic learning. An Eastern religion lays stress on the patience of spirit and the gentleness of soul, vigorous life and active service appear to the west. For Westerns, life is a thing to be possessed and enjoyed, the western minds is rationalistic and practical while the Eastern mind is more unived to

inward life and intuitive thinking. Eastern religions is mystic whereas western is intellectual. For Easterners, God is not seen, He is every where, and His grace is attained by sacrificial deeds. God is divine power which holds the key of the universe, while Europeans want to make life better for themselves, individually as Radhakrishana comments:

We learn the truth not by criticism and discursion but by deepening life and changing the level of consciousness. God not the highest four to be known but the emphasized, like the meditative claim and the strength of spirit, which are outcome of self- control and waging war on lost, anger, and worry.

(52)

In this regard, the Eastern culture and religion is more inclined towards nationalistic thinking. The beliefs on Hindu mythology, religion and the use of the national products such as herbs and food, cloths (khadi) reflect the Gandhian philosophy of nationalism.

R. K. Narayan was born in Madras in 1906 and educated there and at Maharajah's College in Mysore. Most of his work, starting from his first novel *Swami and Friends* (1935) is set in the fictional town of Malgudi which at the same time captures everything Indian while having a unique identity of its own. After having read only few of his books, it is difficult to shake off the feeling that one has vicariously lived in this town.

Malgudi is perhaps the single most endearing "character" R.K. Narayan has ever created.

He has published numerous novels, five collections of short stories (*A Horse and Two Goats, An Astrologer's Day, Lawley Road, Malgudi Days, and The Grandmother's Tale*), two travel books (*My Dateless Diary* and *The Emerald Route*), four collections of essays (*Next Sunday, Reluctant Guru, A Writes Nightmare, and A Story-Teller's World*), a memoir (*My Days*), and some translations of Indian epics and myths (The Ramayana, The *Mahabharat*, and Gods, Demons and others). In 1980, R.K. Narayan was awarded the A. C. Benson award by the Royal Society of Literature and was made an Honorary Member of the American and Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1989 he has made a member of the Rajya Sabha (the non- elective House of parliament in India). He received the Sahitya Akademi Award for writing.

His writing career began with *Swami and Friends*. At first, he could not get the novel published. Eventually, the draft was shown to Graham Greene by a mutual friend, Purna. Greene liked it so much that he arranged for its publication. Greene was to remain a close friend and admirer of his. After that, he published a continuous stream of novels, all set in Malgudi and each dealing with different characters in that fictional place. Autobiographical content forms a significant part of some of his novels. For example, the events surrounding the death of his young wife and how he coped with the loss form the basis of *The English Teacher*. Mr. Narayan became his own publisher, when World War II cut his off from Britain.

Narayan's novels are characterized by Chekhovian simplicity and gentle humor. He told stories of simple folks trying to live their simple lives in a changing world. Characters in his novels were very ordinary down-to-earth Indians trying to blend tradition with modernization, often resulting in tragi-comic situations. His writing style was simple, unpretentious and witty, with tongue. Many of Narayan's works are rooted in everyday life, though he is not shy of invoking Hindu tales or traditional Indian folklore to emphasize a point. His easy-going outlook on life has sometimes been criticized, though in general he is viewed as an accomplished, sensitive and reasonably prolific writer of India.

The influence of Gandhi on Indian writing in English is very evident. The Indian English writers emerge as a very specific 'breed', shaped by the negotiations between cultures. Pankaj Mishra gives an interesting analysis of R. K. Narayan as "a colonial who uses certain narrative solutions because he is faced with a 'chaotic and unformed world'" (205) that he does not know how to interpret adequately because neither he nor his characters ever really come to terms with modernity.

Gandhi was in himself a legacy of philosophy. The longer-term impact of the man warrants every comment on him in its own right. If all those individuals and movements that have been influenced by Gandhian ideals were to be listed it would read like a roll-call of the great moralist of the twentieth century, and of its great crusades. Talking about the influence of Gandhi on different great personalities, Partha Chatterjee says:

The careers of men like Danilo Dolci and Martin Luther King or the numerous civil rights campaigns and peace movements were inspired by the ideals of passive disobedience and non-violence. Gandhi has inspired operas like Philip Glass's 'Satyagraha,' and novels, such as R. K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*. (135)

It is often assumed that within India Gandhi suffered the fate of all political saints – he was placed on a pedestal and forgotten. This is untrue. The ideas of Gandhi continued to be debated among Gandhians, his opponents, especially the Indian communists, and the ruling elite, particularly during the premiership of Jawaharlal Nehru. The ideas of Gandhi continued to be debated among the followers of Gandhi, his opponents, especially the Indian communists, and the ruling elite, particularly during the premiership of Jawaharlal Nehru.

What is most striking about the famous work, *Waiting for the Mahatma*, perhaps, is the portrayal of Gandhi, who appears in Malgudi to speak to the people, an event that we see from a number of widely differing perspectives. For the authorities this is potentially awkward, as India is at war and the British are anxious about the tide of feeling Gandhi is provoking. At the same time, even those who represent the state are aware of the importance of this man and the resonances of his message of Indian freedom and of love.

Narayan is a widely known novelist of Indian soil. He is one of the 'Big Three' among the Indian novelists in English. He is admired for his remarkable gift for telling stories, for portraying memorably, the people of

small oddities and eccentricities, and for his humor. Hariprasanna comments on Narayan's themes and says, "The themes Narayan chooses are man's susceptibility to self deception due to entertaining illusion, the renunciation, generational disaffiliation, conflict between tradition and modernity, the East west encounter, education etc" (9). He further comments, "Narayan's novels make a universal appeal although they confine themselves to a narrow region in south India" (9).

Critics like A. Hariprasanna. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar and Nagendra Nath Sharan interpret the novel in different ways in terms of its meaning and theme. For Hariprasanna, the theme of renunciation is the key point in the novel as a whole:

It is novel revealing his deep insight in to the complexities of human nature and human behavior. It is whiled exploring the embarrassments, confusions and complexities of the relationship between the middle- aged protagonist Jagan and his only child and son Mali that the theme of renunciation is brought fore. Unable to solve the riddle created by Mali, Jagan voluntarily withdraws himself from all contact with his son and retires in to a grove outside Malgudi to live the life of a recluse in a determined bid to free himself from the delusion of attachment. (121)

Narayan highlights the theme of renunciation by showing Jagan's apparent devotion to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which teaches the ideals of non-attachment and disinterested action. A copy of the *Gita* is his constant

companion. He reads aloud the Lord's saying everyday for his own edification and on occasion for the benefit of his staff in the sweet shop. He honestly believes that he understands its teaching and refers to them complacently every now and then whether relevant to the occasion or not.

Chinna Dorai opens up an entirely new and fascination world of gods and goddesses to Jagan whose fixed orbit for years had been between the statue and shop and whose mental operation were confined to Mali, cousin and frying. He inspires Jagan to, look at himself and his problem from an angle and to discover eventually an answer to his questions. Jagan himself has realized this as he says, "Yes, yes god knows I need retreat. You know, my friend, at some stage in one's life, one must uproot oneself from accustomed surroundings and disappear so that others may continue in peace" (Narayan 123).

The conflict between good and evil is also one of the themes that critics deal with in *The Sweet-Vendor*, though it is not "so sharply polarized in *the Sweet-Vendor* as in the other novels of Narayan" (Iyengar 383). In *The Sweet-Vendor*, evil takes possession of Mali and uses him as a "vehicle for fouling the sanctities of home and marriage, and even the sovereignty of the creative imagination" (Iyengar 383). Commenting on the theme Iyengar further says, "In the theatre of Jagan's mind, Mali's machine is pitted against the stone man's chisel that can release a goddess from her imprisonment in stone" (383). Just when Jagan is in the need of a cure for the oppressive feeling induced in him by his son, there comes the barded man as a rescuer. There is an inner revolution in Jagan, something

like religious conversion and he now begins a new life. On the other hand, the end of Mali's dreams to become the manufacture of story writing machines is the beginning of his new career, after he returns from prison, as vendor of sweets. The termination of everyday worldly life of sixty long years is to give Jagan the start of a new life study and contemplation in the quietude of forest and, as Iyengar further says, "Death of heavy amorphous stone might betoken the birth of Goddess of Radiance and a new lease of life of now abandoned temple" (Iyengar 383). The novel also leaves in ambiguities and uncertainties as there are some contradictions like Jagan's reliance on his cheque book even when he decides to live of a recluse. However, "the demon has been worsted though deity hasn't arisen yet" (383).

The theme of East-West encounter has also been popular among the critics like Nagendra Nath Sharan. Sharan says, "Jagan not very much tensed on hearing the news about Mali's imprisonment, remains undisturbed since he thinks that he is not responsible for Mali's fall. Mali's lack of sanctity constitutes his modern way of life and leads him to the wrong tracks" (265). His defiance of Indian concept of marriage and his going against what is treasured in the scriptures, as Sharan thinks, mean "little sympathy for him" (265). Mali stands for the violation of all that is decent and sanctified in the society. His living in with Grace without marrying her properly is highly objectionable from the Indian way of life. The idea of marketing a machine for story writing in American collaboration is a funny idea indeed. At last, Mail is arrested for the illegal



possession on liquor. Narayan's Malgudi is immune from the blemishes of modern western culture are fast disappearing from Malgudi society and loveable rouges like Raju, Sampath and Mali are profoundly involved in their heartless commercial world" (Sharan 265).

On the other hand the references to Gandhi, his theory and practice form a significant part of the novel *The Sweet-Vendor*:

As a matter of fact, the novel depicts the degeneration of Gandhian ethos in its central character Jagan. The post independence is represented by his son Mali who has rejected Gandhism in favor of modern technology. His sense of baffling novelty comes in sharp clash with Gandhian values. (Sharan 268)

Narayan refers to Gandhi incidentally but his main purpose is to "deal with the contradictions in Jagan, a follower of Gandhi" (Sharan 268). Ever since Mahatma visited Malgudi, Jagan Khaddar spun with his own hands and worn non-violent footwear. "In spite of his seeming plain, Jagan is a hypocritical character" (Sharan 268).

Thus, various critics interpret the novel *The Sweet-Vendor* in their own ways and their interpretations differ from one another. Some focus on the theme of father-son conflict, some on the theme of renunciation and some probe into of theme of the degeneration of Gandhian Ethos. No one seems to have touched yet another important aspect of the novel i.e. the theme of resistance. Jagan's steady evolution from an ordinary man to self-realization shows, test and ordeals and hopes and betrayals into the

ultimate state of self-realization shows his resistant voice against the Western culture. Therefore, the research will be centered on the same issue throughout to prove the hypothesis.

In this way, this chapter presents an introductory outline of the present study, a short historical background to the novel, a short introduction to R. K. Narayan, Gandhi and his influence on him a short literature review. The following chapter tries to briefly explain the theoretical modality that is going to be applied in this research work. It discusses shortly culture, culture and imperialism, and Indian nationalism.

## **II. Imperialism Indian Nationalism and Mahatma Gandhi**

Postcolonial discourse gave rise to the awareness of the marginalized people about their culture, history, and about the way in which they were represented by the colonizers. Natives were not only neglected but also never discussed about before. But after the rise of postcolonial discourse it is taken only accepted norms as the European measuring rod still measures its value. The practical meaning and the operating ideology of culture and literature were Euro-centric.

Culture reaches out to create a symbolic textuality to give the alternation everyday and area of self hood a promise of pleasure. As Homi Bhabha rightly observes:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transitional because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement [ . . . ] it is translational because such spatial histories of displacement [ . . . ] Make the question of law culture signifies, or what signified by culture, a rather complex issue. (438)

Edward W. Said, from the cultural dimension standing in a position of a cultural critic rather than a radical political theorist is interested in studying relationship between the East and West, which is governed by discourse. He focuses on culture representing as well as functioning as a form of hegemony. Edward Said in this connection finds Mathew Arnold

as using culture as a powerful means of differentiation. Culture is an ideal for Arnold but Said argues:

Culture, with its superior position has the power to authorize, to dominate to legitimate, demote interdict and the power of culture to be an agent of and perhaps the main agency of powerful differentiation within its domain and beyond it too.

(9)

The concept, culture as a way of life or the historically transmitted patterns of meanings codified in symbol is vast in itself. The elements of culture such as: family relationship, marriage, love affairs, sexual means, attitude towards religion, attitude towards having children or attitude towards life style and living standards are the main dominating elements.

Postcolonial writers write in order to give expression to the experiences related to colonialism. They write to destabilize the discourse which supported colonialism directly or indirectly. In these days we can experience empire textually and culturally in a retrospective manner through newspapers, articles, novels or any other form of writing .In this sense, Empire is a textual and cultural exercise. Elleke Boehmer writes:

Colonial settlement too was expressed textually. Writing in the form of treaties was used to claim territory. The text, a vehicle imperial authority, symbolized and in some cases indeed performed the act of taking possession . . . writing served also as instrument of rule, as a means of collecting information and exercising power. (13)

English studies, cultural analysis, anthropology can be seen as affiliated with the empire and, in a manner of speaking even contributing to its method for maintaining western ascendancy over non western native. In the introduction to *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, Padmoini Mongia writes:

It is a historical marker referring to the period after desalinization as well as term signifying changes in intellectual approaches, particularly those which have been influenced by post-structuralism and deconstruction. Secondly, in the last twenty years, the term has been deployed to replace what earlier went under the named of third world or common wealth; literature, to colonial discourse analysis. To deal the situations of migrant groups within first world stakes, and to specify oppositional reading practices . . . The problems surrounding issues of definition and the purview of postcolonial theory reflect the difficulties of engaging with such notions as representation, identity, agency, discourage and history. (2-3)

The post-colonial literatures are the product of interaction between imperial social and cultural and indigenous social and cultural practices.

Edward Said in introduction to his book *Culture and Imperialism* defines culture as "a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought" ( xiii). Edward Said further says, "Imperialism means thinking

about, setting on, controlling land that you do not possess that is distant, that is lined on and owned by others" (5). Said, thus, argues that imperialism includes multiple activities that exceed the mere fact of the political control of land mass.

Previously non-Indians wrote about India but this is an attempt by Indian themselves to narrate the Indian approach. There are no mediators and the message that come directly from India to the world. There is no manipulations, no derivations, no change we see India as it is.

"Independence was for whites and Europeans; the lesser or subject people were to be ruled; since, learning history emanated from the west" (*Culture* 26-27). Postcolonial writing is a written reply against written documents of white people. They embody the cultural responses to the injustice done by imperialism:

Westerners may have physically left their old colonies in Africa and Asia, but they retained them not only as makers but as locals on the ideological map over which they continued to rule morally and intellectually . . . Moreover, it focuses not on what was shared in the colonial experience, but on what must never be shared, namely the authority and rectitude that come with greater power and development.

(*Culture* 27-28)

Colonial adverse effect remained in effect even after freedom. After freedom, the expectations of the people proved futile and useless. In some cases they themselves realized that the situations had even worsened

further. Decolonization did not bring any change in their life style, replacing old settler ruler. They frequently maintained a touch with Westerners and courted their matters of governance. "One that began to hear and read how futile it was to support revolutions, how barbaric were the new regimes that came to power, how – this is an extreme case- decolonization has benefited world communism" (*Culture* 30). Said adds: "West is an enemy, a disease, an evil [. . .] in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory taken back from the empire" (*Culture* 35). Now these writers can truly read the great colonial masterpieces, which not only misrepresented them but also assumed they were unable to read and respond directly what had been written about them.

After World War Second people became more conscious about Nationalism and all that writing have some nationalistic deep feeling rooted message, which strengthen the colonized party to resist colonizers. Now different parts of the world gathered together and all the experiences, knowledge slowly knitting into one intellectual state, which will be the true bond of the entire colonized world. It has helped to widen the scope or the horizons of their imagination. "Europe and the United States together were the center of the world, not simply by virtue of their political positions, but also because their literatures were ours most worth studying" (*Culture* 54).

Now most of the world is politically free from colonization and through geographical control they controlled culture and history but now slowly geographical decolonization is leading to cultural and historical

decolonization; which is now on going. To dismantle is easy but to construct is very difficult and invites hard labor. Same kind of difficulty is now being faced by ex-colonized countries

Postcolonial studies sketch the interacting experience that links imperialists with the people who suffered the burden of imperialism. The study of the relationship between culture and imperialism doesn't demand the chronological study it can be attempted through description. After World War II scholars, historians, activists have been in both for and against the subject.

This is the age of indirect colonialism as well as an age that celebrates various forms of resistance to it. This age belongs to a period of theoretical elaboration, of the universalizing techniques of deconstruction and structuralism. Said says: "From the late eighteenth to the middle nineteenth century, when the cultural riches of India, China, Japan, Persia and Islam were firmly deposited at the heart of European culture" (234).

During the period of imperialism, there seems very little domestic resistances in comparison to the aftermath of the imperialism. There seems a kind of tremendous unanimity on the question of having an empire. Although the empires were very frequently established and maintained under adverse and even disadvantageous condition, there was very little domestic sentence to empyreal expansion.

The idea of having an empire is very important. Imperialism acquires a kind of coherence, a set of experiences and a presence of ruler and ruled alike within the culture. To every great degree, the era at the



high nineteenth century imperialism is over. But the impact of the imperialism in the colonized are always lured by the colonizers and their culture because they always find the culture as new and innovative. The meaning of the imperial post is not totally contained within it, but has entered the reality of hundreds of millions of people. Its existence as shared memory in a highly conflicted teetles of culture. Ideology, memory and policy still exercise tremendous force. Frantz Fanon says:

We should really refuse the situation to which the western countries wish to condemn us . . . colonialism and imperialism has not paid their dives when they withdraw their flaws and their police faces from our territories. For centuries the foreign colonists have behaved in the underdeveloped world like nothing more than criminals. (3)

A proper understanding of imperialism must take stock also in the presence of the nostalgia and also exists is the anger and resentment it provokes, the memory of empire, in those who were ruled and who see in empire nothing but an unmitigated disaster for the native people. It is necessary to look carefully and integrally at the culture that returned the sentiment, the empire, and to understand the beginning of imperial ideology. It had become completely embedded in the affairs of cultures whose less regrettable features we still celebrated.

Imperialism does not end in a point. It continues from generation to generation through the culture and it becomes the legacy. Said writes, "Imperialism did not really end, did not suddenly become past once

decolonization had set in motion the dismantling of the classical empires. A legacy of connections still binds countries like Algeria and India to France and Britain respectively" (4).

The authoritative, compelling image the empire, which crept into and overtook so many procedures of intellectual mastery that are central in modern culture finds it opposite, therefore, in the renewable, almost sporty discontinuities of intellectual and secular impurities, mixed gents, unexpected combinations of tradition and novelty, political experiences based on communities of effort rather than classes or corporations of possession, appropriation or power.

Thus, Imperialism consolidates the mixture of cultures and identities on a world scale. But its West and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively white or black western or oriental. Just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities no one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national language and cultural geographies. Those who attempt to escape from their original culture are engulfed by the loaded culture of the colonizers and the alien culture gives only pain and discomfort rather than soothing life style of own cultural legacy.

Nationalism is the devotion to the interests or culture of a particular nation. Nationalism is driving force that can help a country thrive. There are also different ways that a country can achieve nationalism. It is one of the modes of defending a particular culture in the face of powerful imperial culture.

Gandhi remained in South Africa for twenty years, suffering imprisonment many times. In 1896, after being attacked and beaten by white South African, which made Gandhi formulate a policy of passive resistances and non-cooperation with the South African authorities.

Gandhi became a leader in a complex struggle, the Indian campaign for home rule. Gandhi advocating *Satyagraha* launched his movement of non-violent resistance to Great Britain. *Satyagraha* spread throughout India gaining millions of followers. *Satyagraha* was a big campaign initiated by Gandhi to resist Western political and cultural domination. Thus, this campaign can be taken as a typical Hindu mode of resistance. In this regard, Gandhi says: "The rightness of *Satyagraha* is not a philosophical or even a legal proposition, but a full and complete expression of the Hindu people, resting firmly upon their willingness to rise or fall" (116). In this way, Gandhi devised a purely Hindu way of countering Western political and cultural domination.

Gandhi became the international symbol of a free India. He lived a spiritual and ascetic life of prayer, fasting, and meditation. Indians revered him as a saint and began to call him Mahatma (great-souled), a title reserved for the greatest sages. Gandhi's advocacy of non-violence, known as "ahimsa" (non-violence), was the "expression of a way of life implicit in the Hindu religion" (*Gandhi Lives* 110). By the Indian practice of nonviolence, Gandhi held, Great Britain too would eventually consider violence useless and would leave India. Gandhi formally resigned from

politics, being replaced as a leader of the congress party. Gandhi traveled throughout India teaching "ahimsa."

Obviously, Gandhi is taken as the respected personality because of his simple but noble attitude. He is pure by his heart, clear in mind and favorable by his attitude. Gandhi brings the unity in religion, self-realization or liberation which is the goal of Hindu philosophy. Gandhi is taken to be one of the greatest spiritual leaders of India. His first introduction to the *Bhagavad-Gita* was in England. Gandhi's life was much influenced by *Gita's* Message. He took to reading *Gita* everyday, later in the original Sanskrit language. Jyotsna Kamat comments on "Krishna of *Bhagavad-Gita* as wisdom personified to Gandhi" (35). He might or might not be an incarnation of God. That point was immaterial. A person who thinks and acts ahead of his times and who is a deeply religious person is considered "avatarapurasha" (*Gandhi Lives* 112). He saw complete emancipation in Lord Krishna. Gandhi is taken as the incarnation of God.

But for Gandhi, *Gita's* stress is on attaining liberation through selfless action. Gandhi comments on the *Bhagavad Gita*:

The *Gita* is the universal mother. She turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks. But that peace and joy come not to skeptic or to him who is proud of his intellect or learning. It is reserved only for the humble in spirit who brings to her worship a fullness of faith and an undivided singleness of mind. There never was a man who worshipped her in that spirit and went disappointed. I find a solace in the

*Bhagavad Gita* that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount.

(9)

This shows Gandhi's strong faith in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is one of the unique features of the Hindu religion. And this is his Hindu cultural stand against Western culture.

Another feature of Gandhi's mode of resistance to Western domination is his concept of "passive resistance" (*Gandhi Lives* 119). Gandhi's 'passive resistance' became more and more popular and he soon had many followers and he encouraged peaceful protests. Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal sufferings; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. In passive resistance, the means is non-co-operation. Gandhi writes: "The non-co-operation movement is a revolution of thought, of spirit. It is a process of purification, and, as such, it constitutes a revolution in one's ideas" (117). People still followed Gandhi even though many of them were killed by the British government in the protests. Gandhi's campaign of nonviolence and the self- sacrifice of his followers slowly forced Britain to agree to hand over some power to the Indians and to meet other demands of the congress party.

The whole social and political philosophy of traditional India is founded upon the concept harmony. Nationalism is the key that unites people, and an idea of how nationalism can be achieved differs from the ways in other countries. Bipin Chandrapal reads Indian nationalism as:

the youngest in age among those who stand in the forefront of the nationalist propoganda in India, but in endowment,

education and character, perhaps superior to them all-  
 Aravinda seems distinctly worked out by providence to play  
 in the future of this movement a part not given to any of his  
 colleagues and contemporaries. . . . (88)

The Indian Nationalism is much expressed in the national anthem;  
 the song was composed in 1875 by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and  
 adopted as the national song at the Bewares session of the All Indian  
 Congress Committee on September 7, 1905. A controversy broke out as  
 some minority leaders felt it glorified Hindu deities, idol worship and had  
 a regional biasness. In October 28, 1937 a committee comprising Mahatma  
 Gandhi, Maulana Azad and Subash Chandra Bose observed Gandhi's  
 nationalistic attitude:

Gandhi is taken as the most remarkable nationalist. Nehru  
 was also in relation with Gandhi. Jesse S. Palsetia comments  
 on their relationship as: Nehru was attracted inexorably to  
 Gandhi, and the nationalist thought went along at every step  
 with Gandhi, Nehru, the supreme rationalist, was attracted to  
 the indefinable thing that is personality. Furthermore,  
 emotionalism coupled to political expediency united the  
 nationalists to Gandhi up to the 1330s, as the popular Gandhi  
 was 'democratizing' nationalism and bringing supports to  
 congress. (30)

Jesse S. Palsetia further comments on Gandhian nationalism as:

Gandhi's coupling the means of attaining independence with goal accounts for the vicissitudes to which he subjected the nationalist movement. The rationale nature at Gandhi's actions to some degree explains the convergence of Gandhi's and Nehru's worlds and answers why Nehru was struggling with his Indian identity, both its emotional and rational sides.

(35)

Gandhi is a remarkable for the Indian independence and Indian nationalism N.B. Sen commenting upon the Gandhian view about Nationalism comments: "It is impossible for one to see that internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, there is no uncertainty about my patriotism or nationalism [. . .]" (158).

Gandhi is taken as the important Indian and cultural leader. The role of Gandhi for the Indian independence is immense, Nehru's appraisal of Gandhi as being more an idealist than a realist answers why leadership eventually fell to Nehru and other nationalists. Gandhi's active non-violent protest was a logical, moral and political goal. It shaped British-Indian relations, attracted peaceful followers, and achieved a goal that Indian could be proud of.

Gandhi is related with issue of non-violence. Through Gandhi support the First World War to achieve a political end, which included Indian support in exchange for greater liberties. Gandhi took 'non-violence' as a weapon to resist any kind of injustice and domination. But he never took being non-violent as a sign of weakness. He writes: "We

must secure and atmosphere of enlightened non-violence as fast as possible, not the non-violence of the weak but the non-violence of the strong who would disdain to kill but would gladly die for the truth" (112).

Aijaz Ahmad commenting upon the cultural domination says that:

Cultural domination is doubtless a major imperialist domination as such, and 'culture' is always therefore major site for resistance. But cultural contradictions within time imperialized formations tend to be so very numerous – sometimes along class lines but also in cross-class configurations, as in the case of patriarchal cultural focus or the religious modes of social authorization – that totality of indigenous culture can hardly be posited as unified, transparent site of anti-imperialist resistance. (100)

For Ahmad, culture becomes the major mode of resistance; and culture determines the modes of the class. The totality of the mass culture shows the anti imperialist resistance.

The editor of *The Statesman* complained that the *Bandemateram* "reeked with sedition potently visible between every line, but was so skillfully written no legal action could be taken" (4). It was the most effective voice of what we then called Nationalist extremism.

Sri Aurbindo built up a comprehensive scheme of political action known as passive resistance, the most potent and fruitful contribution to the whole of India in the beginning of the twentieth century. He writes:



the first principle of passive resistance, which the new school has placed in the forefront of their programs, is to make administration under personal conditions impossible by an organized refusal to do anything which shall help either British commerce in the exploitation of the country or British officialdom in the administration if unless and until the manner and to the extent demeaned by the people. (67)

Aurbindo expounded detailed programs of non-cooperation. While advocating non-cooperation Movement Sri Aurbindo was careful to define its limits. He writes:

There is a limit however to passive resistance. As long as the action of the executive is peaceful and within rules of the fight, the passive resistance scrupulously maintains his attitude of passivity. Passive resistance cannot build up a strong and great nation unless it is masculine, bold and advent in its spirit and ready at any moment and at the slightest notice to supplement itself with actions resistance. We do not must to develop a nation of women who know only how to suffer and not how to strike. (97)

In this way, different Indian thinkers, politicians and the statesman have expounded the theory of Nationalism so as to protect Indian culture and religion. On the basis of the theoretical framework out lined in the second chapter, the third chapter will analyze the text, *The Sweet-Vendor* at a considerable length. It will analyze the activities of the major

character Jagan in terms of his resistant nature. It will sort out some extracts from the text as evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study – Jagan's resistance to the Western influence.

### III. Jagan's Resistance to Western Influence in *The Sweet-Vendor*

R.K. Narayan in his novel *The Sweet-Vendor* presents a Gandhian sweet-vendor, Jagan who believes in the simplistic, cultural and religious life styles. Jagan believes in the national culture though his son Mali leaves Malgudi (the Indian village at the centre of Narayan's fictional Universe) for America to learn writing. But he unexpectedly returns with a Korean-American girlfriend and an outlandish business scheme to manufacture creative writing with a machine. His actions bewilder his father, Jagan whose own life collapses as a result of his much loved son's strange new demeanor and actions. Eventually, he ends up in prison for driving whilst drunk.

The father character of *The Sweet-Vendor*, Jagan chooses the life style of simplicity. Jagan is highly influenced by Gandhian philosophy of "simple living high thinking habits" (Narayan 86). Jagan is the believer of the Indian national products like herbs and home-made clothes. He uses the herbs like *margosa*; he has kept the *margosa* plant in his courtyard. He opposes to the use of a toothbrush. He uses the *margosa* plant for his morning's toothbrush. Narayan writes:

Jagan had immense faith in the properties of *morgosa*, and in spite of its bitterness he called it "Amrita"— the ambrosia which kept the gods alive; and sometimes he called it 'Sanjeevini,' the rare herb, mentioned in the epics, which had at the nostrils could bring the dead to life. (26)

This belief of Jagan in national products is his stand of resistance against Western products.

He believes that the toothbrush is made of the pigtail's hair. He opposes the lifestyle of the modernized and imposed lifestyle and commodities. Jagan even opposes his wife and his son when they simply insist on using the medical pill to prevent the severe headache. Jagan says to his son: "Boy, don't go near it; it is poison" (28).

Jagan is much attached to the religious things too. Whenever Jagan gets into any trouble, he remembers God, prays and opens the *Bhagavad Gita*, the holy book of Hinduism. The words of the book work for him as medicine. He finds the peace and calm in reading the book. Narayan writes:

He had uneasy thoughts sometimes when he sat on his throne in the shop looking at the pages of the *Bhagavad Gita*. However profound the lives before him may be, his own thoughts seemed to be stranger and capable of pushing aside all philosophy, while revolving round the subject of Mail's manuscript. (30)

The calm and religious person, Jagan is disturbed by his ambitious and westernized son, Mali. Mali is the product of the modern, academic, and westernized society. Jagan sends his son to the campus but, the son always tries to drift away from the Indian social, cultural and traditional boundaries. Mali does not want to continue his study. Mali's repeated actions of the drifting away really bewilder his father, Jagan. Mali

collapses as a result of his much drinking behavior which is the result of Western influence.

Jagan remembers much about Gandhi and his term "service" (47).

Jagan is much influenced by Gandhian philosophy of nationalism. Narayan shows the relation of Jagan and Gandhi to show the liveliness in the novel.

He writes:

The first time he had heard the word 'service' was in 1937 when Mahatma Gandhi visited Malgudi and had addressed a mass gathering on the sands of the river. He spoke of 'service', explaining how every human action acquired a meaning when it was performed as a service. Inspired by this definition, Jagan joined the movement for freeing India from foreign rule, gave up his studies, home and normal life and violated the British laws of the time. (47)

Jagan is the freedom fighter of India. His close attachment with Gandhi has become successful to shape his nationalistic ideology. When his son talks about his plan of writing the books, he compares his son's 'service' to the nation. Jagan thinks of this in terms of upholding India's respect and honor.

At first, Jagan is surprised by hearing about his son's plan of leaving study and writing the books and going to America. Mali hardly talks to his father but Jagan knows every plan of his son through a mediator, his cousin. When he learns about the son's plan for America, he shows the indignation as well as he is shocked:

[. . .] he caught his breath as he had a momentary panic of the thought of his son removing himself geographically so far. . . . Jagan was furious at this notion; it was outrageous and hurt his national pride. Going there to learn story telling. He shows rather go to a village granny. (51)

The matter of choices varies between the father and the son Mali. Mali's plan for moving to America is not completely supported by Jagan. Creating a creative work, the writing of the book and the visit to America does not suit with Jagan's view. Jagan opposes the plan by giving the example of Ramayana: "Did Valmiki go to America or Germany in order to learn to write his Ramayana?" (51). The talks between Jagan and his cousin always gives the information about Mali and his nature and plans. The cousin and Jagan criticize American. Jagan finds the bad and unmatched behaviors of American and Indian culture. American society does not keep any remarkable positive meaning for him. Jagan criticizes American way of life:

They eat only beef and pork in that country. I used to know a man from America. . . . They also drink a lot of intoxicating drinks, never water or milk. . . . And the women are free. . . . I have seen some of their magazines about films; their women mix freely with men and snap off marriages without ado, and bask in the sun without clothes. (52)

Jagan does not oppose Mali when he decides to discontinue his education. Jagan loves his son very much as an Indian father should do.

Jagan feels very sad when he knows that Mali is going to America by the airplane. Jagan almost weeps as he says, "Please tell him to go by steamer. It's safer. Let him be safe. I don't like airplane" (55). It is not only the love that Jagan shows but also his cultural identity of using the steamer. The money counts nothing for Jagan in comparison to his son as he says, "What is the cash worth to me? It's all for him. He can have everything he wants" (55). This attitude of Jagan reflects the typical Indian way of thinking which is quite different from western materialistic attitude.

The most challenging and changing aspect of his life is the changes we see in his life. Although he does not like the changes in his culture and identity but the love towards his son cannot stop him. Narayan describes, "Gradually his reading of the *Bhagavad Gita* was replaced by the blue air mail letters. Pram their study we farmed a picture of America and was able to speak with authority on the subject of American landscape" (61).

To some extent, Jagan takes easily about America and his son's behavior. The optimum indignation of Jagan arises when he reads about his son's experience in America. Mali is changed in Jagan's opinion. The ideology of Mali and Jagan varies to great extent. Jagan compares the American way of thinking, lifestyle and the Hindu *shastras*. Narayan writes about Mali's Western influence from America and Jagan's response:

I've taken to eating beef, and I don't think I'm now the worse for it. Steak is something quite tasty and juicy. Now I want to suggest why don't you people start eating beef? It'll solve the problem of useless cattle in our country . . . slaughter useless

cows which wander in the street and block the traffic. Jagan felt outraged at this. The *Shastras* defined the five deadly sins and the killing of a cow headed the list. (62-3)

The attitudinal gap between the father and son is vast. So the glorification of father's attitude about life and ideology is broader. Jagan represents the Indian nationalistic hero. He follows Bapu's (Gandhi) ideology. The use of *Khadi*, *Chharka*, and the traditional business of sweet-vender supports his ideology. Jagan even keeps the ideology of "simple living high thinking" the materials that he uses for the sweets that he makes are also pure, natural and best. The sweet-business becomes his Indian identity. He takes bath every morning. He chants the Hindu *Mantras* everyday. But, on the other hand, Mali, his son brings the hybrid, impure and low cultured women, a Korean-America girl, Grace as his mistress. But Jagan does not show any anger and rudeness to the girl, but instead he asks her "tell me what you want. I will get it. I do not know exactly what you will like to have" (65). Although the girl is unknown about her own cast, Jagan only wants to keep their relation fine. Jagan is of the view that "whatever it is, one can only do one's duty up to a point. Even in the *Gita* you find it mentioned" (66). Jagan is the follower of *Gita* as Gandhi was. Whatever the changes come in his house and his son, he never changes himself. Instead, he follows his cultural practices strictly. He cooks his food by himself. He protects Grace by allowing her to mix up with him only because Mali may not like it all the things. But Grace



openly appreciates the house of Indian society as she says "this is the loveliest house I have ever seen in my life" (68).

Jagan is the follower of Gandhi. He had also the company of Gandhi during the 'Quit India' movement. He always remembers and prays for Gandhi. "He silently prayed to Gandhi's spirit to forgive the lie he was about to utter" (70). Jagan is the man of simple and kind heart. Jagan accepts a castless girl because he knows that the cast system is bad and Gandhi himself had fought against the cast system. Jagan says, "Well, we don't believe in caste these days, you know, Gandhi fought for its abolition" (72).

Jagan has the strong religious beliefs. The literature of the *Vedas* and *Gita* are everything for him. He finds the direct relationship between God and the texts. Jagan says, "Margosa is the ambrosia mentioned in our *Vedas*, . . . of course they do, all the *Vedas* have emanated from God's feet" (74). In contrast to these lines, he opposes even the wearing of the socks. He opposes when he finds his son wearing the socks, "Socks should never be warm, because they are certain to heat the blood. Though interference with the natural radiation. . ." (74). The wearing of the socks is taken as the western culture. Jagan does not like the *Jibba* and pants-like cloth. In stead he prefers dhoti. But his son never wears dhoti but wears only pants and the shirts. This shows Jagan's strict adherence to typical Indian way of life.

Jagan always tries to resist the western hegemonic culture. He raises his voice against the degenerating western culture. By adopting the

Gandhian philosophy, lifestyle, and traditional business of sweet-vender, Jagan glorifies the importance and heyday of Indian culture. Jagan never gets down in front of the Westernized culture, ideology, but whatever he does is the great love for his son which is the luminous aspect of Indian society.

Mali, the product of modern American society, has the deep effect of mechanized world. Mali wants to do the creative writings through the machine. Mali's thinking has changed. The gap between the ancestors and present economics and culture is remarkable. The father son relation is seen through the gap of the ideology. Mali finds the present world a different one Narayan writes: "Oh, these are not the days of your ancestors. Today, we have to compete with the advanced countries not only in economics and industry, but also in culture" (43). Instead of respecting the Indian culture and ideology, Mali starts to see the profit in it. Jagan, on the other hand, looks silently about the happenings of the household. Mali even makes a proposal to his father to leave his traditional business of sweet-making. Mali says to his father as, "You may have to give up your sweet-making and work in our business. I'll give you a nice air-conditioned room with a couple of secretaries" (84).

Jagan opposes the proposal of Mali to become even the principal promoter of Mali Enterprises. The opposition is not merely the rejection of being the new mode of businessman but it is also the resistance of his own traditional sweet making business. He does not want to bring any changes in his business. The new enterprise becomes the main attack on his

nationalistic and cultural view. He rejects the son's proposal; he opposes son who is totally grasped by the western mode of culture. Jagan likes the Indian traditional business, productions and consumptions. Narayan writes:

He wore a loose 'Jibba' over his 'dhoti,' both made of his material spun with his own hand. He draped his shoulders in a 'khaddar' shawl with gaudy, yellow patterns on it, and he shod his feet with thick sandals made out of the leather of an old animal which had died of old age. (15)

The conflict arises between Mali and Jagan all the time. Jagan even proposes Mali to accept the traditional business of sweet. But on the other hand Mali shows anger and claims that the sweet business is trivial. He argues with his father "you expect me to do that? I have better plans than to be a vender of sweet-meats Jagan did not wait to hear more"(96). Jagan's rejection is physical as well as psychological. The repeated opposition and ignoring the presences of his son shows his extreme resistance to his Westernized son.

Jagan is a poor father. He cannot provide him the sufficient money to buy the motor bike and to keep the telephone. But he shows the Indian culture, national identity and the spirit of freedom by giving the repetitive example of Gandhi. The path shown by Gandhi leads to feeling of nationalism. Even in his business he uses this thinking. Once he says: "I won't touch buffalo butter, though it may be cheaper; Gandhi was opposed to buffalo products" (67-7).

The Western world is more economized. The world runs more with money and matter of consumption. The feeling of humanity dies in the westernized mind; Jagan always opposes the money, the mechanized world and mind. Mali is much influenced by the western ideology. Mali observes everything through the perspective of money, profit and consumption. But on the other hand, Jagan opposes the Western view. He criticizes the money, Jagan comments, "Money is an evil we should all be happier without it. It is enough if an activity goes on self-supported; no need to earn money is an evil's. We should all be happier without it. It is enough if an activity goes on self- supported; no need to earn money" (98). Jagan does not care about the earning. He is satisfied to serve. As Gandhi used to be happy with the simplicity and service, Jagan, takes satisfaction in other people's happiness. Jagan distributes all the sweet packets of his factory in a very low price. He sells the productions at the loss. He says, "Let more people eat sweets, that is all. Aren't they happy? . . . We shall reduce nothing, either in quantity or quality" (100). This behavior of Jagan is an example of Eastern thinking.

Jagan starts to give much time to the *Gita* reading. He takes the reading of the religious book as the best way to utilize time. The reading gives the peace and solace. He explains the importance of The *Gita* to the common people:

You have leisure now and do not know how to use it. Let me help you. Sit down and learn how best to utilize the precious hours that come to us, not by longing in the market place or

discussing money matters. Sit down, all of you. I will read to you from the *Bhagavad Gita* everyday for an hour. You will benefit from it. (102)

The reading of *Gita* becomes a ceremony to the people. People from distance places come to listen to him. He makes his identity like a god. Everyone becomes happy when they find the place by his feet "the bearded man edged nearer and sat on the platform at Jagan's feet" (104). Jagan is happy when he replies "so that more people may enjoy the eating of sweets" (104) to the question about the cheapness of the sweets. Mali wants to make a large profit-making business but Jagan is happy to serve the more people as far as possible. Jagan destroys himself by serving the people. Jagan is more influenced by *Gita* and says, "I can help you to get the supplies if you like. As Lord Krishna says in the *Gita*, it is all in one's hand. Make up your mind and you will find the object of your search" (105). Jagan is much influenced by *Gita* and cannot tolerate of other cultures ideology and religions. Jagan feels regret when he counts that he has not visited nearby temple for months. He feels bad about his business which stopped him. He takes the business as the monotonous job of frying and cash counting. He even does not feel good about his traditional business in front of the serving to the God.

Gandhi is a national leader for him. He takes Gandhi as the leader who can solve the economic and psychological ills. Jagan follows the path of Gandhi; he uses the *charkha* (spinning wheel) and takes pleasure in it. Narayan writes, "Gandhi had prescribed spinning not only for the

economic ills of the country, but also for any deep agitation of the mind" (127). When Mali opposes the reading of the *Gita* by his father, Jagan resists saying "I am a new personality and have to speak new tongue" (127).

Jagan protests against his son's western attitude. Mali wants to change his father's traditional business of sweets. He wants to utilize his knowledge gained from the United States. Mali says, "I have learnt valuable things in the United States at a cost of several thousand dollars. Why your business can't . . . In any case is worth nothing now" (131). Jagan keeps silent. He feels bad about his son's interferences. By keeping silent Jagan wants to evade the matter. Here, the resistance is silent but strong. He never lets his son implement his Western knowledge and behavior. Jagan raises the questions about Grace when he knows about her returning back. Jagan again brings the eastern belief that "wife must be with her husband, whatever happens" (133). Jagan wants to keep the marital relation of his son and Grace. But Mali counters his father by taking it as the old eastern ideology. Mali believes that if Grace is not earning much in India she can go back to America. But Jagan wants to keep them together.

Jagan takes Grace as a problem when he knows about their unmarried relationship. Jagan thinks that if they are unmarried and live together, it is very bad. He takes the advice of the cousin and makes a plan for their marriage ceremony. He opposes their style of living. He cannot accept the western mode of youths' living. He takes them to the temple and

compels them to perform marriage ceremony in the eastern Indian cultural way. He does not like Mali who even does not know about his own wife. Mali lets her go everywhere freely even in the night. Jagan questions, "Was this how a man kept track of his wife?" (133). Jagan is furious about Mali's lying about his marriage. When he finds a beef-eating Christian girl for a daughter-in-law, he feels most shameful. His day passes with complete obsession. The stress of his son's marriage leads him to his own past. He recollects the every events of his marriage. As he cannot do any harm to his son, he juxtaposes his past life. The silent and shameful were the jewels of his time. Narayan writes: "Jagan's father had set his elder son to accompany his and had commanded Jagan, 'Don't stare at the girl. I have seen her and I know she is good looking. Don't imagine you are a big judge of persons'" (254-5).

Jagan's own marriage was full of relations, cultures, experiences, and love. In contrast to this, Mali had a marriage in unknown caste, irrelevant religion and culture. R.K. Narayan wants to glorify the Indian culture, nationalism by presenting the two types of culture by juxtaposing them in the same context. The matter of dowry, feast, customs are part of Indian marriage, the whole journey of marriage ceremony becomes the complete representation of India. The marriage contains the reciting of sacred *Mantras*, not the beer parties. Jagan takes sex as the natural things. Narayan writes, "Nature had never means of being anything more than a means of propagation of the species" (172).

Jagan gives emphasis upon the familial relation. The relation should be sacred. The sex should not be taken as the mere way of enjoyment. He takes the relation as pure and fertile; on the other hand, Mali defines the relation in mechanized way. Mali defines the relation in the monetary matter. Jagan never fails in his struggle. He counters the idea of his son by presenting his history. He even remembers that the son is the blessing of the *Badri Yatra*. Mali, the blessing of god because the Westernized man. Jagan takes Mali as the fulfillment of the prophecy. He even delivered an offering of Mali's weight gold to the god on *Badri Hill* at his birth. Jagan believes in "God and prophecy" (179). "A new son in God and *Badri*, at his birth. He believes: "A new son in the house is a true treasure in this life and beyond life" (180). The belief on legacy, heritage and property is the luminous aspect of the Indian culture.

Towards the end of the novel, Jagan the widower of sixty indulges himself everyday in spinning of the *Charka*. Jagan cannot leave *charka* and his son completely. He believes that the age of sixty opens him for new birth "I am sixty and in a new *Janma*" (184). But on the other hand, Mali starts a life of drunkard. The alcohol becomes his favourite thing. When Jagan knows about Mali's condition, he opposes everything. He thinks the car, bottle of alcohol are the causes of his ruin. Mali is arrested and kept in the prison. The dialogue between Jagan and his cousin presents the contrast between Jagan and Mali's ideology:

"Mali is in prison since last evening . . .'Jagan came to a dead stop on the road and screamed 'oh God! Why'?"



'He was found with half a bottle of alcohol in his car'.

'Siva!' cried Jagan. 'That's why I discouraged his idea of buying that horrible car!' (185)

Jagan decides to leave the business completely. He makes the plan for visiting the different holy places. He is tired of listening his son's activities. He even does not care about him. He says:

I don't care what he does; I am going to watch a goddess come out at a stone. I don't like the place, I will go away somewhere also. I am a free man . . . The world doesn't collapse even where a great figure is assassinated or dies of heart failure." (191)

Jagan compares his leaving the business to the death of Gandhi in the same manner. As the death frees a man from his life's bonding, he takes himself free from every thing. Jagan passes the every responsibility to his son through his cousin. Jagan takes every thing positively. He says: "A dose of prison life is not a bad thing" (91). He is even satisfied with his son's imprisonment. He thinks that it will improve him. He is satisfied with Grace too. He takes all responsibilities to himself. He praises her and takes promise for ticket of her return, if she wants. Thus, by being mild and sticking to Indian way of life, Jagan resists the Western cultural influence.

Jagan's struggle with his son's changing behavior comes in a conclusion that he has won. He believes Mali is changed after going to the police-lock-up. And Grace has also found a job and has not planned for

returning back. Jagan has changed himself and plans for pilgrimage. He hands over all the business to his son. His continuous resistance to the western influenced son never ends in a compromise. But he advocates for his Gandhian ideology, Indian Nationalism, Hindu religion and Eastern Indian culture.

#### IV. Conclusion

R K Narayan has tried to glorify the Indian culture, tradition, customs, and religion in *The Sweet-Vender*. Narayan voices against the Westernized Indian people who imitate the Western manners and try to erase the original Indian cultural values. Narayan resists the Western influences by presenting characters like Jagan.

Jagan is the product of typical Indian culture, history, and society. Jagan has worked with Indian national figure, Gandhi and has been influenced by his philosophy 'simple living and high thinking.' Jagan regularly reads the *Gita*, uses the Indian products, like herbals, *Neem Khadi* and spins the *Charkha*. On the other hand, his son Mali is much influenced by American life style after visiting America. Mali wants to do creative writings in the machine work. Mali brings a Korean-American girl to his house without marrying her and keeps her as his mistress. He declares that he eats beef and keeps a Christian girl. Jagan opposes such activities. He takes them to a temple and makes them get married in the Indian way. Jagan does not fail in his resistance to the Western influence. He proves that the Indian cultural tradition and heritage is strong enough to counter the invading cultures.

By showing this, Narayan celebrates the Indian identity and Hindu culture. Jagan's happiness is in service to others. He never leaves the traditional business of sweet making even when he is in loss and also distributes the sweets to all. Mali, on contrary, wants to make profit by turning his writing into business and opens the Enterprise. But Jagan

rejects to be the chief promoter of his business resisting the business without much service. Jagan resists the profit making business and continues his traditional sweet-making business. By doing this, he counters the Western culture.

This act of Jagan highlights the victory of Indian culture and tradition. The Western culture is cheap, everybody can use and adopt it, but the Indian culture has its own identity and context. Those who bring alien culture to it are vanished or collapsed. Mali who brings the Western culture to the Indian soil merely spoils himself in alcohol and mechanical life. He cannot keep his wife as wife. The ideology of Indian culture is needed to reunite them. Jagan manages everything for them about their life.

Thus, Narayan writes with the genuine power of Indian culture because he had sufficient honesty towards India. Narayan supports the Indian tradition and cultures. Culture, for him, is the genuine living motive. Without original culture, man cannot run smoothly and be satisfied. The novel *The Sweet-Vendor*, thus, celebrates the originality of Indian culture. It emphasizes the tradition, culture and religions which are the true assets of the mankind. Narayan is successful in presenting Jagan as the true person who resists to Western influences on the Indian people.

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