CHAPTER V

Narayan As a Regional Novelist

SAGA OF MALQUDI

Professor P.P. Mehta suggests that R.K. Narayan "can be called the father of the regional Novel in India". (1) At the very outset it should be remembered that R.K. Narayan moved away from the general tendency of the fiction writers in India, who wrote at that critical period of the Nationalist's Movement for Freedom. He showed little concern to Political Novel but concentrated his attention on the mood of comedy, 'the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors, the crisis in the individual soul, -- the resolution and above all the detached observation. For him all these aspects constituted the stuff of fiction, but they were unconstrusively forced into the background by his predecessors. Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao dealt with political fiction, being largely concerned with social and political ills of the country. Narayan worked in a different direction and hoped to express through his Novels and short stories the way of life, of the group of South Indian people with whose psychology and background he was most familiar. He had bright hopes that such a picture was bound to appeal to his own circle and a larger reading public outside.

R.K. Narayan has created a wonderful region through his Novels and short stories named as Malqudi. There is hardly any doubt that he would have drawn inspiration for creating this hypothetical region from great masters of English and American fiction - Thomas Hardy, Arnold Bennet and William Faulkner -
who enriched their fictional world with Wessex, Pottery Town and Yoknapatawpha. Like Hardy's well-known Wessex Narayan's Malqudi is quite familiar to every reader of his fiction. Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar has admirably a high opinion of Narayan's Malqudi. He states:

"...Malqudi is Narayan's Casterbridge, but the inhabitants of Malqudi - although they have their recognizable trappings, are essentially human, and hence have their kinship with all humanity. In this sense, Malqudi is everywhere." (2)

Malqudi is whether in South India or everywhere depends very much on the penetrative perception of the reader and the sagacious critic who happen to find a convincing reflection of Narayan's hypothetical town in the world at large. It is a very small town in comparison to the locales of Thomas Hardy which is populated with the peasants and the farm workers who are tormented with the relentless designs of human fate.

William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha, in comparison to Malqudi, is also a bigger world because there struggle between the blacks and whites involves the past, present and future and precipitates the violent action time and again. In this way, despite of its Universality and engaging beauty Malqudi is a much smaller place.

"...Compared to the vague vastness of Hardy's Wessex or the dark immensity of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha --- moving from Wessex or Yoknapatawpha, we move from a tropical jungle to the municipal park." (3)
Professor Iyengar’s observation can be agreeable to the earlier novels of Narayan, but his latest fiction presents Malqudi as a bigger world than the municipal park. It is a world where the beast is able to realize that he is a divine soul, not only the forbidden exterior of a ferocious body. It presents a sort of mental pilgrimage to a spiritual aspirant who is allowed to be soled by a master-minded hermit with a tiger speaking in the human idiom. Therefore, Malqudi of Narayan’s latest novels and short stories is certainly a bigger and mysterious world than the old Malqudi of earlier novels.

How surprising it is that Malqudi does not exist on any map except in the world of Narayan’s imagination. Dr. Mirmal Mukerji is said to have drawn the map of Malqudi in her Ph.D dissertation which is still unpublished and hence unknown to a larger section of reading public. Another map of the town was also drawn by an American Professor, giving all physical details of the town, its surroundings and its recurring landmarks. R.K. Narayan, as he himself informs, found it extremely charming.

"An American Professor came to Mysore. He had drawn a map of Malqudi for his students. It was very very charming. I liked it." (4)

But surprisingly enough, Narayan’s plan of the town of Malqudi is hardly charted except in his mind. He is seldom confused to put something different in the same places in different books. He clarifies to Susan B. Croft of France that the question of confusion does not arise at all,
"... because my mind is very clear about that, I have a very
good picture in my mind." (5)

This town of Malgudi was first introduced in 'Swami &
Friends' (1935) and since then it has been appearing in every
novel and short stories of Narayan written todate, growing in
importance and gaining in definition. In the earlier novels
this region is shown with its immortal landmarks - the river
Sarayu, hills and forests, groves and culverts - and the world
of students and teachers, quite whimsical in nature. The world
of boys and children, with their childish pranks and distracting
illusions and hysterics, castes and sects, religious outlook, their inevitable relationship with their friends and the
family is explored in 'Swami & Friends' and 'The Bachelor of
Arts'. The intensity of true love and life after death are
treated with a deeply - felt experience in 'The English Teacher'.
The Dark Room' presents Malgudi as a Semi-Westernized World.

It is here that the Western way of life begins to make deep inroads in the lives of Malgudians. To get in love with another
married woman is not considered sinful now. Malgudi has advanced
in status and now it is no longer the world of school and
college boys. But one thing is there - there is hardly any dis-
turbance caused by horrible Second World War. What has caused
trouble in the domestic affairs of people is the arrival of a
new wave of realism. The result is that some ultra-modern
people begin to behave abnormally. In later novels, from
'Mr. Sampath' onward Malgudi is corrupted by outsiders who
come to this dreamland and intermix with the natives. The new
wave of so-called modern culture invades the silent pools of
Malgudi and it all results into the topsy-turvy of social obligations. Children, nurtured in modern culture start revolting against their parents and the age-old social customs and conventions. Husbands do not hesitate to betray their wives; men are victims to the glitter of actresses and 'femmes fatales'. Conflicting claims of the world and the spirit are able to sway the heroes tremendously. Despite all such disturbances in Malgudi, there is a hope of bright spark in the minds of people. It is nothing but the spirit of Malgudi which brings harmony and fulfilment of positive hopes. No outsider like Vasu in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' can play so long with the sentiments of its people.

Malgudi is a developing town but it is not so big as Madras. It has the offices of both the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police. In 'Swami & Friends' Rajam's father is the District Superintendent of Police who lives in the Official Colony, Lawley Extension. In 'Waiting for the Mahatama' both the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police are introduced to attend the meeting organized under the presidency of the Municipal Chairman, Matesh, to welcome Mahatama Gandhi in Malgudi. 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' mentions the Superintendent of Police listening to the complaint of Malgudians against the self-styled taxidermist, Vasu who had not only ravaged the wild life of Mampi forest but also had threatened to kill Kumar, the sacred temple elephant, with his gun.

Malgudi is also a seat of judicial courts, as it is told in 'Swami & Friends' that the courts are closed in the second week of May when the sun becomes unbearable. The adjournment
lawyer figures both in 'The Guide' and 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi'. It is wretchedness of living which cause tremendous trouble to his clients.

"Clients who went to him once never went there again, as they sneezed interminably and caught their death of cold; asthmatics went down for weeks after a legal consultation. It is clients preferred to see him as he lounged about the premises of the district court in search of business, and he tackled their problems standing in the veranda of the court or under the shade of a tamarind tree in the compound. But he liked his inexperienced clients first to meet him at his office and catch a cold. I (Natraj) tried to dodge his proposal, but he was adamant that I should meet him in the narrow room above the cotton shop."

Malgudi is heightened in importance by a Central Jail, P.W.D. Office and its Circuit House. Aniram and Bhazati in 'Waiting for the Mahatama' and Raja in 'The Guide' are forced to spend their term of captivity in its Central Jail. In 'Swami & Friends' the Executive Engineer 'Mr. Krishnan' is shown to have complained against his hard outdoor duties. In 'Waiting for the Mahatama' Mahatama Gandhi is not allowed to be lodged in the Circuit House where the Malgudians wanted him to be accommodated. There seems to be a District Hospital in Malgudi because in 'Swami & Friends' hospital Road is introduced.

The Municipality, a Town Hall, a Town Public Library and a reading room, a clock Tower - all enrich Malgudi with their wide public use. In 'Swami & Friends' we hear of Taluk Office
whose gong strikes the hours in 'The Dark Room' and 'Waiting for the Mahatama' also. In 'The Financial Expert', Margayya's son, Balu is sent to the Higher Elementary Town School. There are two High Schools in Malgudi - Albert Mission High School, and Board High School appearing in 'Swami & Friends', 'The Bachelor of Arts', and a degree college, Albert Mission College where the hero of 'The Bachelor of Arts' graduates and Krishnan in 'The English Teacher' works as a reluctant teacher. There is no dearth of printing presses. In two different novels - 'Mr. Sampath' and 'The Man - Eater of Malgudi' these presses are deceptively run by Sampath and Natraj. A weekly journal 'The Banner' edited by Sri Nivas is published here.

Malgudi has also developed as an industrial town. A mill manager, Mr. Hental is mentioned in 'Swami & Friends'. Mr. Ketty, another European also owns a mill here. Two weaving mills and a Mill Road are introduced in 'The Bachelor of Arts'. Co-operative stores and National stores are also important from the point of view of solving the problem of provision in Malgudi.

In 'The Dark Room' Malgudi flourishes in business on account of a branch of Enlgadia Insurance Company. Its manager is Ramani who owns a Chevrolet car and employs a lady probationer with a view to securing business from women. There is Enlgadia Banking Corporation introduced in 'Mr. Sampath' with a manager named Edward Shilling. The fund office is introduced in 'Waiting for the Mahatama' and Srim's grandmother is shown receiving payments; there. The Central Cooperative
Mortgage Bank is the centre of Margayya's financial activities in 'The Financial Expert'.

Injini railway station is introduced in 'Swami & Friends' and it is further explored in 'The Bachelor of Arts' and 'The Guide'. First of all Swami and Mani are shown on this station to see off Rajam in 'Swami & Friends'. Chandran's parents go to see off Chandran at this railway station in 'The Bachelor of Arts'. In 'The Guide' there is a detailed description of the railway station where Raju spent his childhood and learnt all pranks. It is here at this station where Marco and Rosin alight from the train and after several turns of their personal misunderstanding bid last good-bye to each other once and for all. It is here that we find Krishnan the English teacher to come at the station and receive his wife and child Leela dramatically. With the astonishing growth of Kempi Hills into a well-known tourist centre, Melgudi railway station is extended and acquires more importance. Raju's whole career as a tourist guide begins from this station where he finds it more lucrative to act as a guide than to run an ordinary book stall on the platform.

There is no dearth of recreation centres in Melgudi. There are two important clubs where Principal Brown in 'The Bachelor of Arts' is a member and Swami's father goes to play Tennis as described in 'Swami & Friends'. The Palace Talkies is the only cinema hall where both Tamil and English films are shown. It is here that we find Ramu and Chandran in 'The Bachelor of Arts'; Ramani and Shantabai in 'The Dark Room';
and the Principal Brown in 'The English Teacher'. The Boardless Coffee House is introduced in 'The Painter of Signs' and Raman, the hero, finds here ultimate solace after having parted with his lady-love. In 'Second Opinion' Bambu, desperate as he is on account of his mother's fretful and ever-questioning nature, finds solace at the Boardless coffee House where proprietor Varma entertains him with several cups of coffee without charging a single Naya paisa.

Malgudi is a fast growing town on account of its direct connections with big cities, such as Madras, Coimbatore, Bangalore and Trichinopoly. The town had a legend of Lord Rama, Lord Buddha, Mahatama Gandhi who came here and brought about changes in the dull, old and conservative atmosphere of Malgudi. However, people of this region are hardly susceptible to radical change because the eternal culture of the town is so deep-rooted in their hearts that they are not allowed to peep into the altogether new wave of Western realism. If anyhow the younger generation comes under the influence of the Western culture, their happiness is enervated and they are astonishingly misled. So long as their root is preserved they are mentally healthy and show little inclination to imitate the Western values. The moment they are uprooted, their normalcy is at stake and they suffer from mental aberrations. Balu, the son of the financial expert is controlled in his actions so long as he is under the guidance of his father. The moment he is with Dr. Pal, he easily hastens to prostitution and rebels against his father, tumbling down the entire edifice of his great business concern. But the unique
spirit of Malgudi helps in awakening the minds of almost all protagonists to get rid of their ulterior motives and shed selfishness for ever. Their means help the ends. They learn at last that unselfishness is more paying provided they have the patience to practise it. Forgetfulness of self sounds to be the one great lesson to be learnt in life. The people of this region come to understand in course of their development that it is not only preposterous but also foolish to think that selfishness can make them happy. But for this they have to undergo a lot of struggle to arrive at the decisive conclusion that true happiness consists in the absolute killing of selfishness. There is none to make them happy except themselves.

Narayan, being a regional novelist of higher creative sense, chose his own region of South India to be reflected through the town of Malgudi. As a regional artist, he emphasizes some unique features of his locality and displays its uniqueness through various ways so as to make it differ from other localities. He relies on the process of constant selection and ordering of material. This process of constant selection and ordering of material helps the novelist in stressing the distinctive spirit of this chosen region and displaying a sense of wisdom that despite innumerable irrationalities in it life in its essentials has an unquestionable similarity. The differences which are presumably on the surface tend to help in revealing similarities, from the particular and the local so that the artist could be able to rise to the general and the universal. In this sense, Narayan succeeds as a regional novelist in the higher creative sense.
(II) **His Recurrent References to Malgudi**

Narayan applies a special method in establishing the reality or concreteness of the town of Malgudi. For this he does not give a detailed description of the town at any time but he lets the landmarks emerge with the help of long familiarity. In 'Swami & Friends' Albert Mission School, the Sarayu, the Municipality, the Town Hall with a clock Tower and a club are introduced to form the framework of Malgudi. The world of Malgudi, despite a little disturbance of the Nationalist Movement for Independence in which Swami and his companions also participate, more in a jovial mood to arouse laughter than the spirit of revolt and violence, is a happy world of childish pranks. This childish prankfulness is converted into a holiday mood and romance when a well-equipped theatre brushes aside the Old Corrugated - sheet - roofed variety hall. It is still the pre-dependence world of 1935:

"Malgudi in 1935 suddenly came in line with the modern age by building a well-equipped theater – the Palace Talkies – which simply brushed aside the Old corrugated – sheet – roofed variety hall, which from time immemorial had entertained the citizens of Malgudi with tattered silent films". (7)

Because these places are closely connected with the characters in the way they use them in accordance with their inclination and propensity. We tend to know and recognize the banks of the river Sarayu, Nallappa's grove, Mampi Hills, and, within the town the Palace Talkies, Lawley Extension, Market Road, the railway station, the statue of Sir Frederick Lawley.
Boardless Coffee House, The Truth Printing Press, Albert Mission School and the college of its name, Board High School, Central Jail, Malgudi Grand Circus and the well-known Zoo, Englandia Insurance Company, Regal Haircutting Saloon, the Central Cooperative Mortgage Bank, Anand Bhavan, Modern Lodge, Malgudi Photo Bureau, the Suburban Stores, Malgudi Cricket Club— all are closely related to the protagonists of Narayan's Novels and short stories. A host of streets and bylanes are connected with the Market Road which is the lifeline of Malgudi. Mrs. Holstrom Lakshmi points out.

"The main streets and residential places are given their character and distinctiveness through the people who live there and who are the main characters in the novels. Lawley Extension is described in the early novels as the place where the rich, respectable, mainly Brahmin families live—the New Extension where Rosie and Raju live, after Rosie becomes famous, the enormous showy houses such as Neel Bagh, the house of the Chairman of the Municipality (in waiting for the Mahatama) "whose massive gates were of the wrought iron patterned after the gate of Buckingham Palace". Kambir Street one of the Oldest parts of the town": (8)

Through incidents involved with the places Narayan tries to familiarise them to his readers in order to make them more homely than to let them exist for their own sake. Detailed descriptions of lane and bylanes are seldom thrust upon to exhaust the curious patience of the sagacious reader. For instance, the eccentric behaviour of the community living in
Kabir Street is described with a view to bringing to light how the people are aggressive and revolting in matters of different tastes in relation to compositions. patio tells in 'The Man - Master of Malgudi'.

"I remembered a boy, a brilliant fellow, who strode up and down Kabir Street singing Tyagaraja's compositions for three days and nights continuously. They seized him and bundled him off by the five O'clock Express to Mysore. He was friend of mine in my schooldays and confessed that he had sung Tyagaraja's compositions only because he was keen on letting the people get an idea of the versatility of that great composer, but now he was afraid even to hum the tunes in his bath. Our Kabir Street citizens have exacting standards of sanity." (5)

In a series of novels Malgudi the picture of different streets and buildings and gives an explicit account of the life and relations of variegated South Indian communities amicably living together therein.

Malgudi is explored in every detail in order to give a clear-cut view of the town. And therefore, every new novel and short story unfold the possibilities of this region in the manner of providing a glimpse of changing times and conditions. For instance, names of streets, parks and extensions are changed and nationalized in the honour of the birth of independence in the short story, 'Lawley Road'. 
they decided to nationalise the names of all the streets and parks, in honour of the birth of independence — the town became a wilderness with all its landmarks gone." (10)

In 'The Guide' the town grows in importance because it attracts the attention of tourists, who come here in order to know it historically, scenically and from the point of view of modern developments. There are more than a dozen temples all over the district within a radius of fifty miles. The river Sarayu is highlighted as a sacred landmark having its source on Nempi Hills. In 'Waiting for the Mahatama' the town is visited by Mahatama Gandhi in order to preach the message of castelessness and untouchability, leaving the nationalist agitation aside. The repeated references to Malgudi become worn out. In 'The painter of Signs' Malgudi is compared with New York and in 'Mr. Sampath' with Switzerland. The family Planning movement highlighted in 'The Painter of Signs' echoes the knell of the state of emergency in the country. In the latest novel, 'The Tiger for Malgudi' (1983), Malgudi becomes a wonderland because myth and reality are so closely-knit together that a ferocious tiger named Raja narrates the story and amazingly declares himself as a living soul. Nempi forest is explored and an explicit glimpse of a rich and attracting life is given. Two landmarks of engaging attention are introduced to extend the town. Malgudi Grand circus and the Zoo are depicted to clarify that Malgudi is in reality the symbol of Karayan's own hometown — Mysore more than Madras, Coimbatore and Bengaluru which are frequently identified with the town. The
circus is shifted from Poona after the death of its real owner. Dadhaji. The Captain who is the authorized heir to Dadhaji assures the municipal chairman that if he is allowed to start circus in Malgudi, the town would be put on the world map. He tells the Chairman:

"Just to show my roots are here, although I must confess that I had thought of perpetuating my benefactor's name originally. Hereafter Malgudi will be the home for hundreds of animals and scores of acrobats and performers of all kinds. You will be proud of it." (11)

On account of having a circus and the Zoo Malgudi gives the glimpse of Mysore which has the river Cauvery instead of Sarayu, and Karapore forest in place of Kemp forest. All such recurrent references serve to establish the concreteness or reality of the town which, as Professor Iyengar suggests, appears to be the only hero in the entire bulk of Narayan's fiction.

(III) A Study of the Landmarks of Malgudi

**Major Landmarks of Malgudi**

**SARAYU** - The river Sarayu, the Kemp Hills, Kemp Forest and Wallappa's Grove form the major and abiding landmarks of Malgudi. Sarayu has its ancient history and is considered by the Malgudians a pious river. They go to its sandbanks early in the morning for ablutions. It is some ten miles walk from Allaman Street, the last street of the town. In 'Swami and Friends' Sarayu can be seen from the Town Hall as it is customary to take the distinguished visitor there and show him the flowing river in the moonlight. 'It gleams like a silver belt across
It was Lord Rama who came to Malgudi and created the river Sarayu by pulling an arrow and scratching a line on the earth. The history of the river is given in 'Mr. Sampath':

"He rested on a sandy stretch in a grove and looked about for a little water for making a paste for his forehead marking. There was no water. He pulled an arrow from the quiver and scratched a line on the sand, and water instantly appeared. Thus was born the river Sarayu." (12)

Characters are sentimentally attached to Sarayu. In 'The Bachelor of Arts' Chandran finds Malathi on its sandbank and falls in love at first sight. In 'Swami & Friends' the naughty boys - Swami and Mani gather at the river bank and plan to bundle off Rajam into the river. Sriman in 'Waiting for Mahatma' also finds solace with her sweetheart Sharati here. In 'The Dark Room' Savitri when driven out of home tries to end her life by jumping into the river. Raju, the rogue converted into a saint, collapses in the sacred water of the river. He is spiritually awakened here and turned into a martyr. To Natraj in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' the river serves no more than a resort to take ablutions and meet various sort of people on its sandbank. In addition to the main characters, Sarayu serves the pastoral community in several ways. They utilize it for irrigation, cattle graze and drink water. Therefore, the river symbolizes the timeless quality of Indian spirit reflected through the unbreakable continuation of the town of Malgudi. In 'Mr. Sampath' Narayan highlights the immortal quality of the river which is able to wash clean all the terrible impressions.
of the past. Dynasties rise and fall in course of time, palaces and mansions appear and disappear, the whole country is invaded under the scourge of tyrant and outrageous invaders, but Sarayu’s overflowing bounds are able to wash away all past impressions of sorrowful nature.

In his latest novel, 'Second Opinion' Sarayu finds a disputable discussion between Sambu and his mother. The mother recalls the days gone by when she used to live near Sarayu in Kabir Street. It

"...flowed down rather tamely at some distance from our house --- the river used to be much nearer to us in those days --- it is somehow moved away so far out. When well were dug people became lazy and neglected the river; and no wonder she has drawn herself away; though in those days you could touch the water if you stretched your arm through the back-door." (13)

Sambu does not relish the idea of his mother being a young chap rooted in the so-called philosophy of escapism and renunciation. Even the liger Hermit in 'A Tiger for Malgudi', who lived formerly in Ellanman Street by the riverside, speaks out that he got inspiration for renouncing all possessions from Sarayu. His renunciation was very much on the line of Siddhartha ---

"They searched but gave up eventually, concluding that I was washed off in the Sarayu, which was in flood at that time." (14)

Therefore, the river Sarayu being a major landmark: 
of Malgudi influence all Malgudians in one way or the other. For children like Swami and Mani it is no more than a mere piece of entertainment. Chandran is attached to the river romantically and Savitri has a sacred feeling to plunge into it and get salvation at last. This mysterious river flows peacefully like the constant moving of the Universal wheel of Time, indicating that the life of the cosmos moves on and on without beginning and end. The perpetual attachment of Malgudians with the river is very much owing to its timeless quality and the sacred legacy of the past, the period of the Ramayana.

Kempi Hills and Kempi Forest

Kempi Hill and forest occur and recur in the majority of Narayan's novels. In 'Mr. Sampath' Sampath finds a romantic resort at Kempi when the whole scheme of the shooting of film is altogether disturbed by Ravi. It is here that his so-called cousin—beloved Shanti parts with him for ever. In 'The Guide' Sarayu is referred to be "Starting, of course with its source on Kempi Peaks." (15) Kempi Hills grows in importance when it is explored in a series of novels. There are intermittent references to tea estates on Kempi Hills, ruined temples and of 'half a dozen jungle tribes on its top. In 'The Guide', the "spacious bamboo jungles of Kempi" are informed and Marco comes here to take rooms in Kempi Peak House on the topmost cliff:

"— There was a glass wall covering the North Veranda, through which you could view the horizon of a hundred miles away. Below us the jungle stretched away down to the valley,
and on a clear day you might see the Sarayu sparkling in the sun and pursuing its own course far away. This was like heaven to those who loved wild surroundings." (16)

Kempi Hills is one of the important landmarks of Malgudi and being so it is connected with the railway station of the town by means of buses and taxis. We hear of Kempi Bus Transport Corporation in 'The Man - Eater of Malgudi'. Natraj's journey to Malgudi from Muthu's tea - shop confirms this fact. It is from Kempi Hills that Marco collects material for his archeological book. There are ruins with 'Crack Plaster', broken idols and crumbling bricks and the bungalow on top with all glass sides:

"... from where you could see a hundred miles and observe wild game prowling around." (17)

Kempi jungles are explored by Vasu in 'The Man - Eater of Malgudi'. Being a taxidermist his arrival sounds like a menace to the wild life of Kempi forest. There is a village named as Kempi village at the foot of the hills, and it consists of a single winding street, being half 'a mile away' disappearing into the ranges of Kempi.

The wild life of Kempi forest is depicted at length in the latest novel, 'A Tiger for Malgudi'. The tiger Raja who is enlightened into a living soul by his Master - hermit recalls his early days as a cave-dweller and a jungle beast. It is here one gets a clear view of Kempi forest populated by a large variety of birds, animals, reptiles, beasts and other strange
creatures best known to the Zoo - keeper. Since Mysore is rich for wild life too by having Keraipura forest and other ones surrounding the city, Narayan seems to make the best use of the local material in his latest novel "A Tiger for Malgudi".

Despite bamboo jungles, coconut trees and tea estates, Kampil is rich enough for its wild life. Rabbits, foxes, squirrels, monkeys, apes, jackals, porcupines with their dangerous quills, hyenas, garudas, kites, vultures, eagles, crows, leopards—all live here like different families as human beings live in the populated areas. There are beautiful streams and valleys, rivulets and culverts, wild fruits and strawberries in Kampil jungles where endless game of wild creatures is played on. It is here that the old and sagacious creature like jackal can instruct the tiger to have amity with live creatures:

"The jackal continued ingratiatingly, "If you cannot discover to be enemies, why don't you consider to be friends? How grand could you make it if you joined forces—you could become supreme in this jungle— and no one will ever try to stand up with you— If you combine you could make all the jungle shake." (19)

Kumar, the temple-elephant belongs to Kampil. Mithu, the tea-shopkeeper knows very well about wild life living there in the forest and has a close watch on hunters like Vasu. Thus, Kampil forest and hills are given the treatment of a historical place in the framework of Malgudi.
Nallappa's Grove

Nallappa's Mango grove also forms the major landmark of Belgudi. The river Jarayu flows across it and cattle cross the river with their bells tinkling. The cremation ground is also here as described in 'The English Teacher' when Krishnan gives an account of the whole view:

"I put on a shirt and an upper cloth and rushed out — along Ellaman Street, crossing at Nallappa's grove. As I passed it I could not help looking at the Southern wall of the cremation ground far off. —— Jangling bullock carts, talkative villagers returning home from the town and a miscellaneous crowd on the dusty path leading to Jayur Road on the other side". (19)

These major landmarks of Belgudi region have an abiding value of their own. They are situated beyond the populated area of the town from time immemorial and have sustained all upheavals brought about by critical times in the history of mankind. Professor K.R. Krishna Iyengar is right in his incisive interpretation that

"... Underneath the seeming change and the human drama there is something — the 'soul' of the place — that defies, or embraces, all change and is triumphantly and unalterably itself. All things pass and change; men and women try to live, and even as they are living they are called upon to die. Names change, fashions change, but the old landmarks — the Jarayu, the Hills, the jungles, the Grove — remain. "The one remains, the many change and pass". (20)"
Minor Landmarks

Schools and Colleges:

The three early novels of Narayan - "Swami & Friends", "The Bachelor of Arts" & "The English Teacher" - are focused on school and college life of students and teachers. Albert Mission School, Albert Mission College and Albert High School are the three institutions in Malgudi. They are important because it is through them that the true idea of the academic life of the town is formed. These institutions run on the British Pattern of imparting education to South Indian students are not only disappointing but also have Christian intolerance. There are intolerant school teachers, arrogant priggish school-boys, and therefore, the town is disturbed. But they are the pride of Malgudi in the sense that every new visitor to the place may see how the world of schools and colleges is governed by new culture of the West. The fanatic Ebenezar stands as a fount-in-head of inspiration to the generation of snobs who do not hesitate to cast their derogatory looks on everything Indian and the West is all praise for them.

Albert Mission College is situated at a stone throw from Sarayu. It has got a hostel where a few hundred boys can be accommodated easily. Krishnan in "The English Teacher" lives in the hostel with his colleagues - Rangappa who teaches the boys Philosophy and Gopal who teaches Mathematics. Singaram is the old peon who has been a hostel servant for forty years and is known to all the teachers who are boarders since the time they were undergraduates. Principal Brown,
the English teacher, has remained as head of the institution for long because he appears both in 'The Bachelor of Arts' and 'The English Teacher'. Swami is a student who has got sad experience at both the schools - Albert Mission School and Board High School. Chandran is an undergraduate at Albert Mission College headed by Principal Kwon and Krishnan works as an English teacher in the same school. Therefore, the existence of these institutions is related to Narsayan's protagonists through whom the inner life to be lived and experienced there-in is explored humorously. Natraj in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi', Jagan in 'The Vendor of Sweets' and Margayya's son, Salu in 'The Financial Expert' all happen to be the products of Albert Mission College. The Town Elementary School figures in 'The Financial Expert' where Salu is admitted and Margayya becomes its honorary secretary. These schools and colleges are the reflection of the author's own experience which was bitter and suffocating. He still has got little sympathy for the cut-molded system of education, its organization, outlook and aims. He expresses his views:

"If a classification is called for I may be labelled 'Anti-educational'. I am not averse to enlightenment, but I feel convinced that the entire organization, system, outlook and aims of education are helplessly wrong from beginning to end." (21)

Whether anyone agrees to such views or not, Narsayan has little changed his attitude towards education.
Apart from institutions, Malgudi is enriched by Municipality, which figures time and again in his short stories and novels both. In 'Lawley Road' the foolishness of the Municipality Chairman and his council to change names of streets and parks in the wake of independence is highlighted. In 'Waiting for the Mahatama' Narayan draws a scene how at the arrival of Mahatama Gandhi in Malgudi the Chairman Naresh behaves hypocritically. Every sane person living in this country is well-acquainted with some futile activities of Municipality. Apart from such trivialities, the Municipal Chairman indulges in removing the statue of Sir Frederick Lawley who is said to be "the scourge of Europe, the Nadirshah, with craftiness of a Machiavelli." (22)

Roads, Lanes, Streets, Extensions, & Sports.

Roads, lanes, streets and extensions occur and recur in Narayan's novels and short stories just to familiarise his readers about the framework of Malgudi. His method is to refer to them precisely in course of his narration. Since his characters use these roads, lanes, streets, spots, extensions, their existence becomes meaningful. Their descriptions are seldom superfluously made for their own sake. The most important among Malgudian roads is Market Road which is 'The lifeline of Malgudi.' (23) Market Road is connected with several roads, streets, lanes and bylanes which are woven in a sort of network behind the façade of this main road. It is here that Narayan, the hero of 'The Financial Expert' rises in his status and is able to have his independent office at Market Road.
"They reached 10 Market Road, and at once Margayya was enchanted. He had always visualised that he would get some such place. The Valgadi gutter ran below his shop with a mild rumble, and not as mild smell. But Margayya either did not notice it or did not mind it, being used to it in his own home."

Market Road is a crowded place. There is a row of offices and shops, insurance agencies, local representatives of newspapers, hair-cutting saloons, some film-distributors, a lawyer's chamber, and a hardware shop. Hundreds of people are to visit here everyday. It is here that Margayya is proud of calculating that if he can at least filter twenty out of that number for his own purposes, he would be more than well off. It has happened about an year that he has passed on to the grade of people who are wealthy and not merely rich. For him riches stand to be attained by any hard-working fool who has got some sense of watchfulness. But it is certainly an extraordinarily specialised job to acquire wealth. The meanings of money, riches, wealth and fortune have to be differentiated with subtlety and conviction. He is the real son of the soil of Market Road.

Market Road is connected with Vinayak Midhai Street, Grove Street, Lawley Extension, Fourth Cross Road, Elliman Street and Kabir Street. Elliman Street is the last street of the town. As early as in 'Swami & Friends' the unbreakable connection of Market Road with some streets is described at the disappearance of Swami. His father goes in search of him.
"Swamimathan's father felt ashamed of himself as he approached Allaman Street, the last street of the town, which turned into a rough track for about a hundred yards, and disappeared into the sand of Sarayu. He hesitated for a second at the end of Market Road, which was bright with the lights of a couple of late shops and a street gas-lamp before he turned to plunge into the darkness and silence of Allaman Street". (25)

There are thieves like Hari, (in The Dark Room) pickpockets like Raju (in 'An Astrologer's Day and other stories) who are ready to exploit the favourable situations. Bangle-seller (who appears in 'The Painter of Signs') has peculiar delight in watching the wrists of charming women who make fuss over the design of bangles.

Kabir Lane is connected with Market Road after some abruptive as well as disruptive turns. The Truth Printing Press is situated here. In 'Mr. Sampath, Kabir Lane is explor ed and connected with Market Road:

"Kabir Lane was such; if you took an inadvertent turn off the Market Road you entered it though you might not if you intended to reach it. Then it split into further into a first lane, second lane, and so on. If you kept turning left and right you were suddenly assailed by the groans of the treadle in the Truth Printing Works', "and from its top floor a stove enamelled blue board shot out over the street bearing the sign 'The Banner'." (26)

Narayya lives in 10 Vinayak Street. Vinayak Mudali Street is famous for its gutter into which the red account
book of Margayya is thrown by Jelu. (27)

Rajam's father lives in Lawley Extension, (in 'Swami & Friends') named after the mighty engineer, Sir Frederick Lawley. Lawley Extension, is the pride of Malgudi because here sophisticated people and officials live far from the streets and bylanes of common people. In 'The Guide' South Extension and New Extension are described. Raju lives in New Extension in a stylish house having at their disposal a large staff of servants, a driver for the car, two gardeners for the garden, a Gurkha sentry "at the gate with a dagger at his waist, and two cooks." (28)

Temples and shrines are also depicted with details as people of Malgudi have abiding faith in them. The temple is an embodiment of ancient culture and here people attain serenity and peace. In 'The Dark Room,' 'The English Teacher' and 'The Financial Expert' the worship of gods fulfills wishes and results into peace and prosperity.

Narayan, being a true Indian Novelist focuses his attention to village life. Savitri is taken to Sukkur village when Mari has saved her from drowning into Sarayu. Not only in 'The Dark Room' but also in 'The Financial Expert,' 'The Guide' & 'A Tiger For Malgudi' the countryside is described at length so as to evince how rural people depend on superstitious beliefs and indulge in quarrels and litigation. All such details form the framework of Malgudi town, and district which ever grows and changes and yet remains recognisably the same.
Several critics of Indo-Anglian fiction have tried to divulge the mystery of Malgudi region, identifying it with Mysore, Mavidas, Bengaluru and Coimbatore, Professor Iyengar suggests asking:

"Can it be that Malgudi, in Chinnagiri District, and fringing the river Cauvery, is the original of Malgudi?" (29)

But Narayan quietens this suggestion given by Professor Iyengar. Malgudi was an earth-shaking discovery for him because he

"... had no mind for facts and things like that, which would be necessary in writing about Malgudi or any real place. I first pictured not my own town but just the railway station, which was small platform with a banyan tree..."

On Vijayadasami I sat down and wrote the first sentence about my town. "-- The goddess of learning gave me the name." (30)

It is thus clear that the idea of the town of Malgudi swam into the author's imagination more by chance than by consecutive planning. In this way, Malgudi is a hypothetical place, full of possibilities in accordance with that Narayan himself points out.

"... because you can make anything of it, whereas if you set your own town you are bound by the geography and its structure. But in a place like Malgudi, though the heart of city may, be fixed, it can expand." (31)
what Narsayan states about the expansion of Malgudi can
be verified by his successive use of minor landmarks: roads,
sports, groves and culverts which appear in a series of novels,
and expand the heart of the town. In his earlier novels Malgudi
is a shabby town, but a considerable improvement occurs after
independence. Malgudi is compared with Switzerland in 'Wait-
ing for the Mahatama when the Chairman (Municipality) Natesh
delivers a speech at the arrival of Mahatama Gandhi in Malgudi.
In 'The painter of Lines' the town is compared with New York
ironically enough on account of its expansion and growing
population. Raman, the hero in the novel, surprisingly states:

"As if this were New York — Malgudi was changing in 1972.
It was the base for a hydroelectric project somewhere on the
Meppi Hills, and jeeps and lorries passed through the Market
Road all day." (32)

Narsayan's Malgudi, in spite of its imaginary character,
appears to be a real town situated in south India. It is
typical in the sense that it presents the life of common middle-
class people who in no way differ from their counterparts in
the real life. The world of Malgudi is a trouble free world
where the world-makers and world-savers never cease to
amuse the reader, mainly because Narsayan has kept away from
addressing himself directly, openly and candidly in his novels
to any social, political or economical problem of the age.
By and large he has confined himself to deal with the life of
ordinary people living in the 'ivory tower' of Malgudi and
having little sense of problems confronting the country.
Their personal problems in regard to the life, romances, marriag
sorrows and joys are greater than National, Political, Social and economic problems of the day. However, they are charged with reality in the sense that their involvement in personal problems provides the drama of human predicament. For example, Chandran in 'The Bachelor of Arts' is in face of the problem of educated employment. The tyranny of astrology baffles him considerably when his horoscope does not match with that of his sweetheart, Malethi. Eventually he has got no alternative except feeling satisfied with the marriage arranged by his parents. There is no doubt that such problems have nothing to do with the national problems. Yet they are problems faced by any romantic youth of Indian background, in a similar condition. Even in 'Waiting for the Maharani' the problem of romantic love and marriage is greater than that of the Nationalist's movement for freedom. Chandran is more concerned with his beloved, Bharati than with Gandhiji and his Nationalistic problem of attaining freedom. We learn a great deal of Chandran's movement and his philosophy in 'Waiting for the Maharani', but never beyond the framework of Malgudi region.

Narayan, in his novels, gives time to time mythological references. It is done in order to establish the oldness and the timeless quality of the town. Malgudi, having intermittent references to South India such as Thirupathi Hills, Madras, Bangalore, Mangalore, Coimbatore, provides a regional colour and indicates that life lived in this region may differ on the surface but in its essentials it is thoroughly Indian. For almost all the Protagonists of Narayan's novels at last come to realize that happiness lies in the silence of desire
extinction of ego, and the forgetfulness of the outer self. From time immemorial, India has been priding over this ideal. Dr. Keenakshi Mukherjee is right in her statement:

"Nothing could be more provincial and localized than the life of Malgudi town, yet M.K. Narayan achieves a universal vision through it." (33)

And this universal vision is achieved by means of broad outlook, artistic detachment and gentle irony. The reader one begins to enter into the world of Malgudi, he is enchanted by the scenic beauty of the place, its beautiful and widespread smell of sandalwood, camphor, jasmine, the flavour of coconut and the homely atmosphere of the place. The town grows in dimensions like any other town of India, rising much above the confines of the South.
References

(1) P.R. Mehta : Indo-English Fiction : P. 364
(2) K.R. Iyengar : Indian Writing in English : P. 360
(3) Ibid : P. 364
Shalabh Book Depot : P. 30
(5) Ibid : P. 32
(6) R.K Narayan : The Man-Eater of Malgudi : P. 78
(7) R.K Narayan : The Dark Room : P. 20
(8) Holstrom Lakshmi : The Novels of R.K Narayan : Writers
Workshop, Calcutta : P. 78
(9) R.K Narayan : The Man-Eater of Malgudi : P. 61
(10) R.K Narayan : Lawley Road : P. 8
(12) R.K Narayan : Mr. Sampath : P. 205
(13) R.K Narayan : Second Opinion : The Illustrated Weekly
of India (First Instalment : January 24-30, 1932) P. 40
(16) Ibid : P. 35
(18) R.K Narayan : The English Teacher : P. 31
(19) K.R. Iyengar : Indian Writing in English : P. 262
(21) R.K Narayan : Lawley Road : P. 9
(22) R.K Narayan : Mr. Sampath : P. 3
(25) R.K. Narayan ; Swami & Friends ; F.131
(26) R.K. Narayan ; Mr. Sampath ; F.5
(27) R.K. Narayan ; The Financial Expert ; F.32
(28) R.K. Narayan ; The Guide ; PP.183-87
(29) K.K. Subrahmanyam ; Indian Writing in English ; F.161
(30) Va. Satya ; John 15 Easy To Please ; P.156
(31) Susan E. Craft ; Interview with Narayan ;
     A Critical Spectrum ; Edited by Shagrat S. Goyal ; PP. 30-31
(32) R.K. Narayan ; The Painter of Signs ; F.12
(33) Neenadhi Mukherjee ; The Twice Born Fiction ;
     Arnold Heinman ; p.25