In the present critical study I have endeavoured to highlight a critical study of R.K. Narayan's fiction and the element of local colour featuring in his works. The world of Narayan's fiction is relatively free from the terrible privations and agonies, political conflicts and economic depression. Born and brought up in South India and settled as a writer of repute in Mysore Narayan is today a vanishing breed of Indo-Anglian fiction.

In the first chapter of this study I have given a brief account of Indo-Anglian fiction and pointed out how R.K. Narayan has been writing for the last fifty years with equal courage and vitality. Among his contemporary writers it is only Narayan who has remained a full time author having no ulterior motive.

In the Second Chapter I have emphasized his contributions and brought out his evolution as a writer of serenity. He is a traditional storyteller who has remained consistent in his vision and has never endeavoured to deal with the popular mode of fiction inclusive of sex, violence, racial animosity, communalism and parochialism.

In the third chapter I have brought to light his comic genius in respect of characterization and the texture of his prose.
The fourth and fifth chapters are the heart of this thesis as they deal with the element of local colour and the hypothetical region of Malgudi. In his thirteen novels Malgudi emerges as indomitable forces enlivened with enchanting myth & reality. It is on account of the creation of this hypothetical region of Malgudi that Narayan has been able to provide the glimpse of miniature India, on one hand rooted in ancient culture of the Vedas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharat, and on the other being immensely affected by the new culture of the West.

In the sixth chapter I have endeavoured to point out how R.K.Narayan has been narrating the stories of Hindu middle-class people of South India, reflecting a positive view of life and continuing Indian atmosphere in his works and descriptions.

The seventh chapter deals with his solid achievements in view of art and literature and also the national and international honours won by him. It presents a searching study of Narayan as a living author.

The eighth chapter has been devoted to the comparative study of R.K.Narayan as a regional novelist with Raja Rao, K. Nagarajan and V.S.Naipaul because Narayan's Malgudi, K.Nagarajan's Kedaram and V.S.Naipaul's Trinidad also reflect the diversified images of India side by side. Inspite of their regional and local dimensions at one level they appear to be particular places at another level they are undeniably miniature versions of a larger India. In assessment
R.K. Narayan comes out as a philosopher who has given a philosophical vision of India and has pointed out time and again that the best way for our country lies in blending the East and the West with discernment and understanding. Thus, Narayan spreads the message of synthetic philosophy like the great seers of the past who laid emphasis on unity in diversity.

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