ABSTRACT

This doctoral thesis attempts a study of the features of the language of R. K. Narayan's novels and short stories. Where relevant, his non-fictional works have also been referred to.

Chapter 1 contains a discussion of the use of language in the novel, and then a discussion of the use of English by Indo-English novelists. The last part of the chapter summarises the views of critics on Narayan's prose, and suggests lines of approach for a close study of his style.

Chapter 2 considers the syntax of Narayan's writing. The study shows that the structure of the simple sentence in his fiction is appropriate to his theme and tone. The relation between sentence structure and irony is demonstrated. Units larger than the sentence -- description and dialogue are discussed. The study of Narayan's use of 'free indirect speech' and 'erlebte Rede' is a new contribution to Narayan criticism. The syntactical features of these forms of indirect reporting are noticed.

Chapter 3 begins with a reference to the limited range of Narayan's vocabulary. The significance of Narayan's use of pronouns and proper nouns is noticed. The main part of the chapter is a discussion of Narayan's use of the concrete in preference to the abstract, and of his sensory awareness as revealed in his vocabulary. The chapter also alludes to
the 'catalogue descriptions' in Narayan's fiction, and applies the concept of 'collocation' to the study of the vocabulary.

Chapter 4 covers new ground in Narayan criticism by pointing to the significance of Narayan's use of imagery. The sources from which Narayan draws his images are investigated. The centres of attraction of imagery in the novels, namely, human relationships and money, are discussed. The chapter then mentions certain objects that have assumed symbolic significance in Narayan's works. It concludes with a brief discussion of the use of imagery in The Painter of

Chapter 5 traces the various strands of irony in Narayan's works. Some of the ironic situations in his fiction are mentioned, and grouped under these heads: irony of incongruity, irony of events, dramatic irony and irony of self-betrayal. The chapter ends with a discussion of ingénu irony in Waiting for the Mahatma.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by making a reference to Narayan's present reputation, and pointing to the harmonious alliance of matter and manner, theme and style, in his works.