The aim of this dissertation is to study the Comic Vision in the novels of R.K. Narayan. It proposes that Narayan is essentially a comic artist who has successfully transmuted the ordinary materials of life into significant forms of art embodying a philosophy of reconciliation and acceptance.

The study is divided into six chapters.

Chapter I examines the various concepts and definitions of comedy and endeavours to identify the characteristic features of comic vision. It is suggested that the comic vision is governed chiefly by the three features of laughter, celebration and satire. R.K. Narayan's fiction may be distinguished from that of other contemporary novelists in terms of his comic vision which is in sharp contrast to the sense of loss and alienation that pervades the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya and others.

Chapter II discusses the contribution of Malgudi towards the shaping of Narayan's comic vision. While Malgudi registers the socio-psychological changes in the wake of its transition from a small and tradition-ridden town to a modern metropolitan place, its spirit is still anchored in traditional beliefs, superstitions and values. Malgudi thus embodies a paradox and acts as an appropriate setting for Narayan's comic scenarios.
Chapter III is a study of Malgudi's men and women in terms of their actions, ambitions, achievements, follies and failures. Malgudi presents a large crowd of comic characters in a multiplicity of relationships. It has been suggested that Narayan's protagonists move from innocence to wisdom. Narayan's heroes seem to succeed in achieving their ambitions until their worlds of make-believe collapse by some strange turn of events. The heroes accept their failure with humility, and attain a state of wisdom in the process of their encounter with reality.

Chapter IV suggests that Narayan's comic vision encompasses multifarious facets of human life in all its aspects of glory and defeat, ambitions and frustrations, pleasures and sorrows. Narayan treats life in its totality with an affectionate understanding of its complexities. Narayan's fictional world embodies the paradox inherent in the very nature of human life—the existential encounters between the individual and the social reality, between the ideal and the actual, between the psychic reality of man and the external reality of the world. Such encounters reduce man to a comic status in terms of the incongruity that is inevitably manifested in all his actions, beliefs, ideas and programmes.
Chapter V attempts to show that Narayan's fictional world is informed by a sense of comic irony that suggests the ambivalent nature of man and the society. The dimension of irony in Narayan's novels reveals that the world in its essence is paradoxical and an ambivalent attitude alone can grasp its totality in all its complex pattern of opposing dualities.

Chapter VI relates Narayan's style and his vision. This chapter suggests that Narayan's style is characterized by simplicity, lucidity and genial humour, and is the anchor of his comic vision. His style while embodying his vision becomes an inalienable part of it.