CHAPTER-5

CONCLUSION

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5.1 Findings of the Study

The researcher has taken into consideration the background of the locale, Malgudi, the South Indian Town that is presented in R.K. Narayan’s novels from ‘Swami and Friends’ to ‘A Tiger fo Malgudi.’ The problem of the study, the objectives of the study and the important issues of the research work are stated. Hypotheses of the study are supported and validated. The study- ‘The Spirit of Place’ as Discovery: A Study of the Setting in the Novels of R.K.Narayan’ is justified.

The chosen location of Malgudi becomes a symbol of the world at large, a microcosm which includes the great world beyond. Like Hardy’s ‘Wessex’, Malgudi is the selected setting which forms the background of Narayan’s novels. It remains a metaphor for India. The location, Malgudi has been presented in Narayan’s work vividly and realistically. From novel to novel it changes, grows and becomes different. All the fictional corpus of Narayan is set in Malgudi.

The present search offers an opportunity to the researcher to study the major aspects of the novel as a form of literature such as plot, theme characterization, and the world view in the light of the use of the locale Malgudi. It consists of the spirit of place, in Narayan’s fiction and it has all the connotations spelt out by D.H. Lawrence. The reality is that Malgudi constitutes the real essence of all Narayan’s novels. Through the present study an attempt is made to study and analyse the original of this mythical town, development and changes in Malgudi, features and significance of Malgudi and the role of Malgudi in Narayan’s selected twelve novels.

It is interesting to note that Malgudi functions as the real hero of all the novels of Narayan. The changes and human drama in Malgudi constitutes the soul of the place. All the things pass and change, men and women try to live but they are called upon to die. The names streets, buildings, projects in Malgudi change, fashions change but Malgudi landmarks- the Sarayu, the Nallappa’s Gove and the Mempi Forest and the Gove Streets have remained the same and will continue to do so for ever.
* This research work highlights the statement of problem by providing some findings. What is spirit of place and how it can be discovered? The novelist can not imagine a novel without the setting which is real like Hardy’s Wessex or imaginary like Narayan’s Malgudi. R.K. Narayan sets his whole fictional corpus in the place, Malgudi and deals with the physical features, people, life, customs, habits, manners, traditions and language of a particular locality i.e. Malgudi.

* It is right to note that Malgudi is the real India because whatever happens in Malgudi, happens everywhere. The changes that take place in Malgudi are the changes that have been taking place in the country as a whole during the five decades, 1935-1985. An imaginary town, Malgudi is a true state of affairs, a living and mental vigour. The action of whole fictional corpus takes place in Malgudi and is controlled by it. Through the motif of journey the novelist focuses on illusory nature of life and return of the protagonist to the initial point of action suggests cyclical structure of the novel.

* The family relationships constitute the major theme in Narayan’s fiction. It is considered as the immediate context and the novels are notable for the delineation and precision of the family relations: son and parents, and brother and brother in ‘The Bachelor of Arts’ of husband and wife, and father and daughter in ‘The English Teacher’; of father and son in ‘The Financial Expert’; of grandmother and grandson in ‘Waiting for the Mahatma’. The themes like illusion versus reality, tradition and modernity, the return of the native and the dynamics of the average under the influence of Malgudi. Being loyal and devoted disciples of sancrosanct tradition, the protagonists accepts the norms and codes of the society. The deviants withdraw from their rebellion and return to the world of normalcy.

* The place, Malgudi and characters in Narayan’s fiction are one and indivisible. The growth and maturity of characters is parallel with the growth of Malgudi from a small agricultural town to a big industrial city. Consequently, Malgudi shapes Narayan’s characters. The world- view in Narayan’s novels shows novelist’s traditional views regarding human existence, life and the universe.
5.2 Conclusions of the Study

The fictional corpus of R.K. Narayan has its roots in the locale; Malgudi. Narayan no doubt, has been accepted as a Malgudi novelist who selects his material from Malgudi setting and writes with grace and humour, about a fictional town Malgudi, its inhabitants and their little lives.

‘The spirit of place’ as a discovery with reference to R.K. Narayan’s novels may certainly be read as a new approach extensively dealt within the context of Malgudi novels. A closer study of R.K. Narayan’s novels reveals that they have all the potentialities for such a study. In his novels the reader finds a multidimensional expression of the spirit of place. The spirit of place, thus, seems to reveal itself not merely as the locale, setting, background or socio-geographical features but also as the living presence embedded in the structure, themes, characters and the world view of the novelist.

Malgudi setting has been employed as a fixed or permanent locale depicted in novels from ‘Swami and Friends’ to ‘A Tiger for Malgudi.’ It becomes a character it is what is called the spirit of place. The parameters used remain valuable pointers and useful points of reference to deal with Narayan’s Malgudi as ‘spirit of place’ and as an influential force over the plot, theme, characterization and world-view.

5.2.1 The Objectives

5.2.1.1 * Through this study the researcher has tried to explore and analyse objectives of the research study. Narayan’s is the art of resolved limitation and conscientious exploration. Hence he frames his fictional imagination within the municipal limit of Malgudi. The Malgudi community is a small group of middle class characters. Malgudi as the spirit of place is realized revealing the customs and attitude of the community.

5.2.1.2 * There are typical Indian house wives Susila, Krishnan’s wife, and Ramani’s wife Savitri who are simple, loving and obedient. They are religious, traditional in their ways and are considered as supporters of the ancient Indian way of life. These women always think over the happiness of their husband and children. Many of the major characters in Narayan’s novels are devoted fathers. Chandran’s father (The
*Bachelor of Arts*) says nothing when Chandran ran away and returned after eight months. Ramani (*The Dark Room*) is genuinely concerned about his children. Krishnan’s love for his daughter Leela in ‘The English Teacher’ is not challenged. Sampath (*Mr. Sampath*) is a typical father who is proud of his children’s abilities. The paternal love of Margayya, the financial expert and Jagan the Sweet Vendor show their concern for the welfare of their sons.

5.2.1.3 * The setting represents the psychological, religious, moral, social and emotional milieu. Narayan’s knowledge of child psychology is best seen in his early novels ‘Swami and Friends’ and ‘The Bachelor of Arts’. Swami and his friends show, their hatred of Mondays, joys, sorrows and enjoyments. Members of the Malgudi surroundings are psychologically more active, in them consciousness is more vivid and harrowing. Knowledge of human psychology is a secret of Raju’s success in the journey from a stall-keeper to a tourist guide. He knows his customers by their faces, shows them places of their interest and is always ready with the answer that will suit the occasion or the person. Narayan’s heroes chosen from Malgudi have their independent existence.

5.2.1.4 * The Indian social scene has always abundance to offer. The family is the basic unit of the social structure of Malgudi. The joint family system and its disintegration on account of social changes treat the themes of ‘generation gap’ and juxtaposition of tradition and modernity. The conflicts between the two cultures have been presented by the ‘East-West encounter.

5.2.1.5 * The national struggle for freedom in ‘Waiting for the Mahatma’ appeals from the very beginning of the novel. The characteristic features of Indian life are presented in Narayan’s novels and their faith and spirituality is disclosed in ‘The Guide’.

5.2.1.6 * Setting as a spirit of place is realized as microcosm representing certain nation or a little world in which author confines his characters and their action to a very limited place. Malgudi is the microcosm of traditional Indian society. Malgudi is said to be microcosm of Hindu India encompassing the great world beyond. The protagonists in Narayan’s fiction, who are nourished in sancrosanct society, remain
conscious of the myths of their culture and find greatly influenced by them. Hence the myths of Rama, Sita and Satyavan influence the lives of Narayan’s characters.

5.2.1.7 * It has been noticed that the place plays a role of an active protagonist and antagonist influencing the course of events and destiny of the characters. Egdon Heath in Hardy’s novel ‘The Return of the Native’ dispenses poetic justice, punishes the deviators and they meet their fatal end. But more human Narayan’s Malgudi symbolizes protective and forgiving spirit of place. The locale, Malgudi allows deviators for their rehabilitation in Malgudi.

5.2.2 THE HYPOTHESES
The study of the setting of Malgudi offers a wider perspective on Narayan’s novels. Malgudi locale studies through the discussion the structure, theme, characterization and the world-view as the key features of Narayan’s novels. Thus, the present study deals with cyclical structure, presentation of the characters with their traditional trappings and the world view of Narayan as a novelist displayed through the thematic development.

5.2.2.1 The Structure
Narayan’s plot structure in his novels from ‘Swami and friends’ to ‘A Tiger for Malgudi’ is shaped by the setting, Malgudi. The plot construction is a chain of episodes which is shaped and controlled by a certain milieu. The development of plot begins with the typical traditional situation in Malgudi. The characters and plot in R. K. Narayan’s novels are knitly organized. Hence, characters determine the action and action changes the character. The plot of Narayan’s early experiment is set against the traditional agricultural Indian town which has simplicity. Return to the normal is taken as the traditional pattern of life in novels which discloses a cyclical pattern of plot construction. Due to their strong desire the characters deviate from traditional Malgudi. When their behaviour reaches the climax they realize their mistakes which bring them back to the world of Malgudi. It indicates protagonist’s journey at various levels.

Narayan’s story of the novel begins in the locale, Malgudi, has its middle in Malgudi and ends in Malgudi again. Even a brief departure from Malgudi may highten the
impact of the story. The climatic structure leads to climax and anticlimax in the progression of the story. In the anticlimax, the protagonist moves spiritually from the best situation of the starting point to the worst one at the closing moment. His act of acceptance of normal life indicates his return to the place from where he started. Malgudi; the river Sarayu and the temple have significant symbolic roles in the action of the novels.

Science and technology have brought tremendous changes in Malgudi and its environs. The traditional moorings and the social values have affected the structure of the plot which moves again to the circular movement. The Western influence is on the rise but the traditional strength of Malgudi has remained in tact. Indianness is noticed in Narayan’s art of simple and traditional mode of narration.

The legend of Santhanu in, ‘The Mahabharatha’, the myth of ‘Sura’ and ‘asura’ and the story of the Panchtantra’ are the Indian sources on which Narayan’s plot is deeply rooted. The action of Narayan’s novels flows from these forces and they mould the story. The growth of the protagonist suggests close intimacy between art and spirituality in India. The characters in Narayan novels symbolize Indian culture. Marco in ‘The Guide’ claims himself to be a cultural historian of the past, Rosie is the cultural ambassador of the present and Raju is the cultural prophet of the future.

5.2.2.2 Theme
After reading and re-reading Narayan’s novels, it is observed one may underline that he is a thorough Indian both in spirit and thought. Narayan has selected his themes from all that is taking place in India and he concentrates to address his Indian readers.

In Narayan’s novels tradition has a significant role in the organization of human relationship which constitutes a major theme. Its origins are in the traditional family set up. Hence the protagonist’s act of deviation leads him to the suffering in his life. The joint family system and its disintegration on account of social changes has become a recurrent theme. The conflicts and intersections between the two cultures ‘East-West’ and ways of life- Oriental-Occidental have always fascinated the Indian mind. Narayan renders Indian sensibility in a Western art form. The strategy of restoration of normalcy is applied in Narayan’s novels. The timelessness of traditional
codes and custom has been emphasized repeatedly in his novels. The relationship achieves normalcy at the closing of the novel because of the protagonist’s devotion to the traditional values and realization of reality. Emphasise put on the family relations shows Indianness. The theme of order, disorder has origin in the theme of relationship. The violation of traditional norms brings disorder and normalcy is restored when there is return to the normal. By accepting traditional norms, protagonists act in the way society expects them to act.

Narayan has treated the theme of tradition versus modernity in its various aspects. It develops into the basic theme of deviation from the normal in his work of fiction. The theme of rebellion seems to be projected through Narayan’s protagonist who deviates from the accepted norms: the socio-cultural codes. Illusion versus reality is another recurring theme which brings in the rebellion. It is presented through the role played by the central character against the background of the sacrosanct tradition. Rebellion is considered as the novelist’s strategy for a projection of his philosophy: acceptance through ‘rite de passage.’ The protagonists of Narayan are influenced and shaped by middle-class milieu, sacrosanct tradition and the myths. These components most prominently compel the rebels to withdraw from their act of deviation and accept normalcy in their life. It stands for the protagonist’s growth on the spiritual level which may be witnessed through the treatment of the theme ‘the return of the native’ in Narayan’s novels with Malgudi providing the location of action.

5.2.2.3 Characters
Narayan’s characters are from the middle class society in South India who are deeply rooted in Malgudi traditions and respect religion and rituals. They remain satisfied to live within the established frame-work of life. The characters in Narayan’s novels are clearly understood through their traditional trappings, different modes, the world-view and their character delineation.

The protagonists in Narayan’s Malgudi novels are loyal and devoted followers of the sacrosanct tradition and finally they accept the norms and the codes of the Indian society. The rebellion of the protagonist in the sacrosanct tradition is presented as a deviation from the traditional norms and the rebels, as the deviants, withdraw from their temporary rebellion and return to the world of the ordinary life of sanity in
Malgudi. The protagonists of Narayan’s novels obviously show growth on spiritual plane in their consciousness by apprehending the illusory nature of their existence and they return to the world of normal life at the final stage. Through a notion of journey the writer focuses on the illusory nature of life and the return of the protagonist to the initial point suggests cyclical structure of the novel. The maturity and growth of the protagonists in Narayan’s novels is disclosed through the use of the strategy ‘rite-de passage.’

Narayan’s typical Indian heroines show Indianness in the attitude of resignation. The middle class morality and traditional servility of Hindu wife makes them realize the importance of husband in the traditional Malgudi.

Narayan has drawn some of his mythic characters from the Indian mythology: Bhasmasura-Mohini in ‘The Man-Eater of Malgudi’ and ‘Shantanu-Ganga’ in ‘The Painter of Signs’. He has used popular stories likes the man with Midas touch in ‘The Financial Expert’ and David and Goliath in ‘The Man-Eater of Malgudi.’ The characters of Narayan have confined themselves to the established institutions of Malgudi which are characterised by traditional moderation.

The changes in Malgudi have been very slow during the pre-independence period. After independence speedy changes have brought on with materialistic goals, love for luxury and hunt for earning money. The material transformation has changed the attitude of the people towards value scale. The ordinary and traditionally restricted life of the Malgudi people is besieged by the evils like industrial growth, political activities, lust for money, status and luxury. The forces of modernity have caused the break down of traditional and conservative social order. This has led to the adoption of new values. Narayan’s characters realize change as meaningless, irrelevant and show intense dislike for it. After the novelist, the protagonists think that change brings calamitous end in the life. They are contented in the situation that surrounds them and familial affection causes their happy life. They do not desire to expose to the dangers of a world that is not controlled by traditional norms.

In the middle-class society the family system has stable foundation. The characters of Narayan are deeply established in the traditional world of family and the deviators of
the family norms and values suffer at the end. The traditional systems and values are replaced by the systems and values from the West. All the members in Narayan’s corpus of fiction tend to receive love, protection and affection in the Indian family system. The financial problems and family tensions bring an evitable aberration for a while but ultimately the family framework proves to be protective.

The traditionalism of Narayan is stretched out to his being pledged to religion. Inspite of searching out and testing the truth of religion and its helpful role, Narayan accepts religion. Narayan, as a whole does not show any uncertainty about the superstitions and even he does not pose a question about superstitions.

5.2.2.4 Narayan’s world-view
Narayan’s world-view has controlled the choice of material. He views nothing is right or wrong and human nature does not go through a huge change. Comedy has a changing feature and it upholds detachment. The comedy declines fate while comedy accepts active fate.

Narayan’s novels exhibit middle class culture and defend old values of life. The intention is to show that the tradition helps in solving problems of life in a changed social situation. Narayan, in exhibiting modernity, does not tend to give any new scale of values, or vision of life which can replace modernity of middle-class society. The Indian writers writing in English have experienced life before and after independence, middle-class consciousness in Narayan has offered situation of stability.

The novelist presents traditional views about human existence, life and the universe. Narayan’s world-view is outlined by him in his preface to ‘Gods, Demons and Others.’ Life is projected fundamentally as a game of shadows in Narayan’s world of ‘lila or ‘maya.’ Man has been considered as a mere role player by R.K.Narayan. According to him, human life in the Brahma-created and determinantly apprehended universe has to pursue absolute order of destiny and he remains static in its conclusive realization. The law of Karma has a strong dominance over the human existence.

Nature in Narayan’s novels seems to have inherent power of balancing disrupted order of the world and the good is shown ceaselessly victorious through the destruction
of evil by the interference of ‘avatar’ to bring death to the Rakshasa who disturbs peace and order of the world. The existence of tradition remains sacrosanct. Since decades Vedas and Shastras are seen supreme and are pursued with great respect.

The strategy of cyclical structure in the novels of Narayan starts with his peace-setter novel ‘Swami and Friends’ in which the child protagonist Swami arrives at home with the forest officer from the forest escapade. The circular structure stands for cosmic order, the four yugas pursued by the pralaya. The central figures such as an innocent rogue Swami in ‘Swami and Friends’ the graduate moron, Chandran in ‘The Bachelor of Arts’ and traditional wife Savitri in ‘The Dark Room’ illustrate the notion of circular journey. The circular structure projects the recurrent theme: the return of the native.

The world view has been presented in the fictional corpus of Narayan and he considers human spectacle with detachment. In the sacrosanct tradition rebellion seems to be viewed as deviation and the underlined change in the career of protagonist against the social norms and moral code is elucidated.

Narayan’s protagonists are aware of Karma consequence. The strategy of Karma implies punishment for evil doers. Karma referred by Krishanan in ‘The English Teacher’ and by the Master in ‘A Tiger for Malgudi’ has philosophical cantellation and Karma concept is an inexorable law of life.

The characters and the thematic development in the novels of Narayan are embodied by the ‘Vedas’ and ‘Shastras’ which may be treated as one of the recurring features of novels. Narayan’s world-view regarding the Hindu way of life is noticed to be an indivisible aspect of life.

5.2.3 SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS ABOUT MALGUDI
R.K. Narayan’s novels are known as the Malgudi novels because all the characters find their existence in Malgudi and human relationships are presented by Narayan within the limits of Malgudi. The locale, Malgudi in Narayan’s fictional corpus remains the element of great importance and it is the real force in the presentation of his characters.
Malgudi is ceaselessly presented in the novels by R.K. Narayan and becomes a real character of blood and flesh. The place, Malgudi, watches the sudden rise and fall of its heroes and heroines. Avoiding importance to natural landscapes and natural beauty, R.K. Narayan values the human emotions and passion.

Malgudi is not only a small South Indian Town of geographical existence but is portrayed by Narayan as the real hero in all his novels from ‘Swami and Friends’ to ‘A Tiger for Malgudi’. The development of Malgudi from novel to novel is progressively presented.

The important places in Malgudi town are linked with characters and action of the novel. In the early novels i.e. ‘the plantation’ the river Sarayu is on the local level just like the holy river Ganga because it is believed that the river is born of a scratch made by Rama’s arrow on his way to Lanka. The mythological story mentions that Goddess Parvati had jumped into the fire and water arose from the spot. On the banks of the sacred river Sarayu, friendships are made in ‘The Swami and Friends’, Chandran in ‘The Batchelor of Arts’ falls in love with Malathi, Savitri in ‘The Dark Room’ is saved by Mari and Ponni, who tries to drown herself in Sarayu, and in ‘The English Teacher’ Krishnan and Sushila always walk on the banks of Sarayu to enjoy happy life.

The society of Malgudi is traditional and the dwellers are the followers of customs and conventions. The temples in the works of Narayan present religious sentiments. The people in Malgudi visit the temple for worshipping to have peace and maintain harmony in the society. ‘In ‘The Guide’ Marco watches the paintings of the Iswara Temple and Raju engages Rosie in the same Temple. Ravi in ‘Mr. Sampath’ get the glimpses of beloved Shanti, in ‘The Financial Expert’, Margayya goes to Hanuman temple to seek the priest’s advice of propitiating Goddess Lakshmi for financial earnings.

The period of 1950s and 1960 is motivated by economic motives. The Market Road, the centre for economic and official activities plays an important role in shaping of so many characters. Jagan’s shop in ‘The Vendor of Sweets’ is situated at Market Road.
In the novel ‘*The Painter of Signs*’ Raman meets Daisy at Market Road. The Banks in Malgudi are symbolic of economic prosperity of the Malgudians. The descriptions of ‘Englandia Banking Corporation’ in ‘*Mr. Sampath*’ and the ‘Central Co-operative Bank’ in ‘*The Financial Expert*’ illustrate this.

The West wind blows through Malgudi and modern culture creeps in Malgudi and influences the people. Inspite of developments in the various fields, Malgudi has a strong sense of values. Malgudi values of life are intimately related to Narayan’s world of values. All the characters in Malgudi follow the Malgudi tradition.

The violators of the Malgudi tradition Swami in the ‘*The Swami and Friends*’, Chandran in ‘*The Bachelor of Arts*’, Balu in ‘*The Financial Expert*’ have to pass through sufferings in life. They ultimately return to the Malgudi and normalcy is restored again.

The lover-beloved relationship which emerged in Malgudi is not given any social sanction because social approval to such a relationship is necessary in Indian tradition. Consequently, the relationships between Chandran and Malati in ‘*The Bachelor of Arts*’, Ramani and Shantabai in ‘*The Dark Room*’, Raju and Rosie in ‘*The Guide*’, Sriram and Bharati in ‘*Waiting for Mahatma*’, Raman and Daisy in ‘*The Painter of Signs*’. Malgudi signifies the true and traditional Indian life and society.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 5.3.1
From this study it is observed that Narayan uses the locale Malgudi in all his novels. Malgudi develops and grows in size in successive novels. Hence the presentation of place in Narayan’s novels invites clear understanding and analysis of the spirit of the place. This aspect of Narayan’s complete corpus of novel needs to be given top priority.

#### 5.3.2
From research findings, it is observed that the vital elements of the novel form such as plot, theme and characterization, are influenced by the choice of the setting, Malgudi. It is suggested that the study of the setting in Narayan’s novels needs to be undertaken in order to make the study meaningful, relevant and fruitful.
5.3.3 The structural pattern of a novel is governed by the particular milieu, and the events of Narayan’s novels take place in Malgudi. Consequently, it is suggested that the study of cyclical and classical pattern with the beginning, the middle and the end will enable to understand Narayan’s episodic, plot construction.

5.3.4 The characters of Narayan are presented in the location in and around Malgudi. They are deeply rooted in the cultural traditions and customs of Malgudi. The characters of Narayan go away from Malgudi by denying the Malgudi morals, their deviation is temporary. Ultimately they return to Malgudi. It is suggested that the pattern of the return of the native to normalcy highlights the significance of Malgudi.

5.3.5 In the middle class society the family system has a stable foundation. Narayan’s middle-class characters scrupulously adhere to the social norms of the Malgudian society. They follow the family norms and values and receive protection and affection in the family background. Narayan’s characters suffer on account of their opposition to the family norms and values therefore it is suggested that these characters need to stick to the Malgudian norms and values.

5.4 AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH
The research topic related to the setting and ‘the spirit of place’ can be applied to the other Indian English as well as other English writers. The new researchers will find guidelines for further work from the present research study. Similar attempts of research by the researchers in future have an immense potential.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS
In the final analysis, these approaches to the handling of the setting will establish the fact that Malgudi is the only ‘character’ that grows, changes, reacts to time and circumstances and constitutes the real essence or the spirit of the novel as practiced by Narayan. The place, Malgudi in Narayan’s fiction is given a new dimension and significance and it has become necessary element of Narayan’s novels. The spirit of place, thus, seems to reveal itself not merely as the locale, setting, background or socio-geographical feature but also as the living presence in the milieu, the pattern of structure, the treatment of the themes, the presentation of characters and the expression of the world view of the novelist. The structure of Narayan’s novels is
governed by the particular milieu and background of South Indian community; middle class characters withdraw from their rebellion and return to the world of sanity. The thematic development of the novel is moulded by the ‘vedas’ and ‘shastras’. The novelist’s world view characterized by Narayan’s creative vision which has its roots in the cultural tradition and values of life as exhibited in the location of Malgudi and its surroundings.