CHAPTER V
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

Narayan portrays his characters according to a certain formula. Inflation in his characters is followed by deflation. Narayan’s characters remain captive of their circumstances even though they make a faint and feeble attempt at self-determination. The hand of destiny overtakes them in unpredictable ways. The Guide proves that pretensions to sainthood may recoil on a frivolous person and press him into real martyrdom as a face-saving device. One feels that Narayan in his anxiety to be true to his formula has bypassed realism.

is Characters are mostly drawn from the lower middle class of Malgudi: students, teachers, municipal committee members, tourist-guides, printers and taxidermists. As a realist, his tourist-guide is a rare specimen of humanity and knows well which side his bread is buttered. Narayan in The Guide writes, “I would not really decide how much to give or withhold (from the tourists) until I knew how much cash the man carried if he carried a cheque book, how good it was”. (Guide: 54).

reat literary value to the readers in that the author has endeavoured to relieve India’s hoary past to the contemporary reality. The myths selected and made use of in these novels reveal a remarkable insight on the part of the artist in perceiving and establishing links between the present situation
and its parallel situation of the epic time. It also brings out Narayan’s interest in folk wisdom, his faith in ancient Indian values, and his pride for the rich spiritual heritage of his country. Equally, it is to say as K.V. Surayanarayana Murti in “Monday and Hanuman: R.K. Narayan’s Novels” admits;

Using myth as the soul of his fiction apart, Narayan in his novels creates a new myth of the ‘ludicrous human dance’, of man behaving like a ‘damned monkey’ or ‘drunken buffoon’ in the modern context. Dance is an ‘expression in gestures and movements, forward, backward, sideward, upward, downward’ the dancer starts from the ‘ordinary’ performing ‘extraordinary’, and retreats to the ordinary. Similarly, the Narayan protagonist performs the ‘ordinary – extraordinary – ordinary’, : he starts from the ordinary, dances, extraordinary to over reach; and in to face of entrapment he becomes a schizophrenic and escapes physically, or psychologically into the past and the future from the present, trying to keep up his ambitious identity; and with the inevitable failure he vanishes into the ordinary. He keeps moving forward, backward, sideward, upward and downward. Narayan’s novels can therefore he labeled as ‘dancization of the ludicrous’ akin to E.M. Forster’s ‘rhythm’ of Mulk Raj Anand’s ‘nautchization’, for which these are internal clues.

In The Guide Rosie is a dancer who dances to the ludicrous tune of Raju. The formula is given as Ta-Ka-ta-ki-ta (Man Eater: 109). The comic
dancization appears at a lower key and gradually rises to a crescendo, through the expanding universe in The Guide and descends gradually to the lowest key projecting the semblance of the ideal conspicuously in A Tiger for Malgudi. Meenakshi Mukherjee in The Twice Born Fiction considering the life of Raju states:

In the second phase of his life Raju picks up enough jargon about dancing to pass for connoisseur of Bharat Natyam when actually his knowledge of this art goes no deeper than his historical knowledge of the relics around Malgudi. The same ready with helps him in the final role of his life as an ascetic. He soon learns that the essence of sainthood seems to lie in one’s ability to utter mystifying statements. Considering Raju’s avatar as a saint, when the villagers talk about the crocodile in the river, Narayan make him reply mystically “What can a crocodile do if your mind is clear and your conscience is untroubled……” It was a wonderful sentiment to express. He was surprised at the amount of wisdom welling from the depths of his being. (Guide: 41)

Narayan has used the myth not only as a myth but as an allegory of the conflict between good and evil, Sastra and Rajas, Suras (gods) and Asuras (demons). The drawn blue curtain of the room of the printer Nataraj stands for peace and order in Malgudi; which are completely upset the moment Vasu enters the room with the sole intention of exploiting the Mempi forest near Malgudi and exporting stuffed carcasses to the four
corners of the world. Considering the influence of Hindu mythology Lakshmi Holstrom in The Novels of R.K.Narayan says that the cyclic construction of Narayan’s novels is sparked off from his concept of cyclic time – a pervasive influence of the classical mythology. It is however, the dynamism of gods and demons that inspires Narayan to give the imaginative rendering of myths in a setting which is at once local, regional and universal. R.K.Narayan writes:

For an Indian training in the classics begins early in life ….

with the impact of modern literature we begin to look at our gods, demons……. Not at some remote connections, but as types and symbols possessing psychological validity even when seen against the contemporary background ….

passing inevitably through phases of symbolic, didactic, or overdramatic writing, on arrived at a stage of valuing realism, psychological explorations and technical virtuosity.

In The Guide, Narayan has freed him or realism on the critical and the socialist plane and has evolved a special bank of Malgudi realism which moves on the local, regional and universal planes – seeking to enliven it with the classical Hindu mythology, legend and folklore. Raju’s ‘death by water’ may not look like the crucifixion of Christ, but it certainly is a sort of Christian sacrament of baptism into a higher life. His last words are prophetic – ‘Velan, it is raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up …..’
(Man -Eater: 9). In the other novels of Narayan, characters end where they began; here Raju has been caught up into a whirlpool of his own making in a desperate bid for immortality.

The story is handled partly by the author, partly by Raju himself. This objective – subjective method of narration adds to the realism of the novel. Rosie cut for a dancer finds life difficult with Marco who is more interested in the epical and mythological paintings on the walls of the Mempi caves than in the dancing talent of his wife. Raju falls for her as quickly as she for him. There is a tiff between Rosie and Marco, who feels, he has been let down by Rosie. Rosie’s appeal for mercy falls on deaf ears: the parting comes at the railway platform where Marco asks the porter to take down Rosie’s luggage from the compartment as he has not purchased a ticket for her. True, Rosie wants to read Ramayana and Mahabharata with the pundits but it is only to glean ideas for her Bharat Natyam dance-numbers-not to be another Sita, who was a model of chastity. She has not been true to the vows of marriage (e.g. that she will not dance etc.) and therefore, invites in the paintings of the Mempi caves, gone out to study them with her husband (instead of staying on in a luxurious hotel, carrying on a clandestine love-affair with Raju.

Narayan is a master of realism and angst. His characters and situations, incidents and episodes, are real and true to daily life. Man appears, passes through self-made travails of life, and vanishes into life.
That is the central theme of Narayan’s fiction. He portrays life as a mighty force to which man has to bow, willingly or unwillingly, his head ultimately and accept it. The achievement of Narayan is that he effortlessly sustains below the selfish current of the clownish, an undercurrent of stainless splendour.

Narayan’s comic realism is so powerful that one has to delve deep into the ‘rippling waters of his tickling humour’ to pick up the philosophical. One who takes life too seriously for material identity can hardly fish out the hidden ideal; this is the epitome of the Indian scriptures, of righteousness. The scriptural references affirm his faith in life, scriptures, and God. In terms of the time-conditioned life dramatized in his novels in the context of timeless Malgudi, it is Narayan’s achievement that for the serious readers his fiction affords the semblance of the ‘cross of time with timeless’ (like the identity of living Krishna and dead Susila in The English Teacher). In Krishna and the Master in the recent novel, Narayan shows peak and perfection. In fact, Narayan has freed him of realism on the critical and the socialist planes and has evolved a special brand of Malgudi realism which moves on the local, regional and universal planes – seeking to enliven it with the classical Hindu mythology, legend and folklore.

**TOPOGRAPHY IN R.K.NARAYAN NOVELS**

Malgudi is a symbol of contemporary India, for the evolution of Malgudi parallels the evolution of the country as a whole. We can draw the
inference that Malgudi is possible everywhere in India, except for the geographical boundaries on the world map. Malgudi is the socio-cultural backbone of the powerful body of India.

Narayan transforms the actual world in which he lives into the imaginary world of Malgudi. Thus drawing attention to the topography of the Malgudi world – a world where human drama is enacted by various fictional characters, Malgudi represents the society or world at large, being a microcosm of the macrocosm. Malgudi becomes wider from novel to novel. People talk of a new bridge across the river Sarayu, a studio on the other side of the river and an aggressive weekly paper. The calm simple Malgudi of the thirties is seen no more. The new Malgudi of R.K. Narayan is uncontrollable and unpredictable. Malgudi stands as a link between the old tradition and modern civilization of the west.

Narayan makes the reader wander along Malgudi with his guidance. Arriving at the railway station, hand in hand he leads the readers through the hills and dales, through the thick and thin of its inhabitants. The gradual exposition of Malgudi to its entirety is fascinating. A visit to Malgudi is an enthralling experience. Narayan’s association with Malgudi is so intimate. He has caught the core of Malgudi and has interpreted as a true artist, the spirit of Malgudi through his novels.
Narayan prefers to work within the small compass of his fictional town of Malgudi. The important characteristics of his novels is that it gives its personages a local habitation and a name. Malgudi, the imaginary township of R.K. Narayan is compared to Thomas Hardy’s Wessex and Willam Faulkner’s Yoknapatwapha. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar comparing the locale of the three is of the opinion that:

Narayan’s Malgudi is a much smaller place – a mere town really – compared to the vague vastness of Hardy’s Wessex or the dark immensity of Faulkner’s Yoknapatwapha country where the blacks and whites are massed against one another involving the past, present and future, and participating violent action again and again. Moving from Wessex or Yoknapatwapha to Malgudi. We move from a tropical jungle to municipal park. (Iyengar. 384).

Narayan like Hardy and Faulkner is able to achieve the localization, the mastery of place, and Malgudi becomes the living persons.

R.K. Narayan is primarily preoccupied with man’s filling of life role entrusted to him by tradition and environment. The total fictional corpus of Narayan presents the panorama of men and women in different life role. Narayan in his own pronouncements about his art, has more than once stressed his pre-occupation with human character.
My concern is with human character – a central character from whose point of view the world is seen and who tries to get over a difficult situation or succumbs to it or fights it in his own setting. (Holmstrom. 124)

Narayan’s novels are peopled with all sorts of characters from all walks of life and bred in a climate which is essentially Indian. Narayan excels as a skillful delineator of character. He has created a richly varied portrait gallery.

…Students, teachers, parents, grandparents, half-hearted dreamers, journalists, artists financers, speculators, film – markers, adventurers eccentricities, cranks, movie stars, sannyasies and woman – pious and suffering, conquettish and seductive. (Goyal. 106).

This world of men and women is brought to life with uncommon dexterity. This is where the greatness of the writer lies. His characters are ordinary men and women with human eccentricities, incongruities, oddities, follies and foibles. Narayan depicts only the middle class people and fumbles when he goes out of this range. His typical men and women are caught up in the web of intensions. They attend to break – through them and they often succeed in their endeavors from to resolution and then on the self awareness. This seems to be the set pattern in most of Narayan’s novels. He seems to have a full knowledge and grasp of his character. They are taken
from real life and are not abstractions of good or evil, virtues or vices. Narayan has a keen eye, tolerant mind and the compassionate heart which constitute the basic equipment of a true novelist.

Politic, war, sex, crime, topical problems – the themes which any novelist generally exploits to keep pace with the moving times an changing vogue fail to attract Narayan. These themes seldom find a place in his novels. The only novel which has a political background in ‘Waiting for the Mahatma’, but this novel too turns out more to be a love story than a political one. The setting of the novels has a startling effectiveness of its own and Narayan’s artistic use of this backdrop is so perfect, so excellent and so skillful that his setting, one feels, tends to become a major theme of his fiction.

The style of R.K. Narayan is a style of a man who “has no axes of any kind, he is that rare thing in India today, a man of letters pure and simple”. (Iyengar. 358). His plots can be considered artful and well constructed. He has woven his plots around the town of Malgudi wherein one gets the feel of Bharath in its miniature. His writing can be termed gentle comedy because the reader does not tend to mock at his characters. Narayan could fuse both tears and smiles. He could bring out the most tragic element through his comic mode.
Malgudi thus provides an ideal setting to the human drama, which Narayan has developed and unfolded through his novels. Narayan is not interested in places for their own sake his abiding interest lies in peopled places. K.R.S. Iyengar surveys the scene of social context and finds Malgudi “a field of unpredictable forces a theatre where farces and tragic-comedies are played without end. The net result being the enthronement of the Absurd” (374).

In spite of the charm and grace of Narayan’s style, qualities that endear him to his western readers above all, the often-cited simplicity is deceptive. There is something very arch and elusive about Narayan’s treatment of India and Indians. The key to the Malgudi cycle appears to be in the complicated nature of Narayan’s conversation. Malgudi emerges as a comic amalgations of the old and the new of ancient temples and modern hotels and becomes an image in the congruities involved.

Malgudi is an Indian small town and stands at a nicely calculated comic distance between the East and the West. Just as the true tragedy of colonialism lay in the culturally untouched out economically ravaged Indian countryside, the true comedy of this same historical fact was to be observed – in the Indian small town (Kaul 51).
The unusual aspect of this mode of comic treatment lies in Narayan’s ability to expose the serious and the tragic life to a comic projection. The financial debacle of Margayya in *The Financial Expert* lends itself eminently to this universal comic art, as does the ruin of Sampath in *Mr. Sampath* or disenchantment of Raman in *The Painter of Signs*.

In terms of the action of the selected representatives of society, Narayan creates in the reader the impression that he is in the middle of Malgudi crowds participating in the action. He leads the readers through the different sections and centers of society – schools, colleges, offices, assemblies, meetings, lectures, film shooting, market, zoo, villages, railway station, studio, press, theatre, processions, festivals, national and quit – India movements etc., along with the main characters involved in or passing through these centers of human activity. And all the characters vanish into life and eternal ultimately.

Narayan is a writer with a full commitment to Hindu ideals is clear from his works. He remains fairly obscure and ventures to come out of the Malgudi circle largely known as traditional citadel. Once if he moves out of Malgudi, he is a little uncertain in his movements, and the old sureness of touch, the sense of utter exactitude ever so slightly. Narayan’s Malgudi is a much smaller place, compared to Hardy’s Wessex and Faulkner’s Yoknapatwapha. Moving from Wessex or Yoknapatwapha to Malgudi, we
move from a tropical jungle to a Municipal park. Thus it would appear that there is an insufficient correspondence between the actions in Narayan’s recent novels and the restricted Malgudi backgrounds.

Narayan is a master of comedy who is not unaware of the tragedy of the human situation, he is neither an intolerant critic of Indian ways and modes nor their fanatic defender, he is on the whole, content to snap Malgudi life’s little ironics, knots of satiric circumstance and tragic – comedies of mischance and misdirection. Into this Malgudi with its orthodox values, the modern civilization comes in all manifestations raising a flutter here and there, disturbing the quiet waters of Malgudi life. ‘Malgudi’, as H.M William points, “Gives Narayan the necessary fixity of background against which he can set a comedy of deviation and disturbance of the normal […], the comedy in the novels after 1946 depends very much on the normal outside influence with the placidity of the town.” (50)

Narayan has imparted to Malgudi a touch of universality. ‘Malgudi’ is Narayan’s ‘Caster Bridge’, “but the inhabitants of Malgudi although they may have their recognizable local trappings are essentially human, and hence have their kinship with all humanity. In this sense Malgudi is everywhere” (lyengar 360).

A study of *Mr.Sampath* makes it quite clear that Narayan has extended the range of his story from a small town of Malgudi to a larger
area that is district town of Malgudi. His period of experimentation is oral and the novelist is trying his best to tackle complex situations and characters.

The *Financial Expert* follows *Mr. Sampath*: this novel deals with the theme of man’s greed for novel to the other explains the narrative strategy of R.K. Narayan. His excessive love of money and immense fondness for his son gives the novel somewhat a tragic look. Usually Narayan’s novels are not tragic but at times some of them have on the borderline of tragedy. This Malgudi novel is an ample evidence of a comic sensibility, which has preserved its sense of wonder and amused detachment through over four decades of creative writing. Narayan’s Malgudi, as H.M. Willam rightly observes is “relatively free from the terrible privations ad agencies, political conflicts and economic depressions of Anand’s India” (49).

Most of Narayan’s critics have talked about the realistic roots of his fictional world in Malgudi. His fictional world indicates the richness and depth of his apprehension of reality. He is sure of himself while dealing with the innocent world of children and the youth as he is with the complex world of adult experience.
In spite of the generation gap, his characters are bound to one another with strong family ties. He is equally interested in human relations beyond family. In his expansive world, village folk find place among the city people. His tradition bound Malgudi world also records his consciousness of the contemporary political tensions. Narayan thus presents a panoramic view of the Indian life.

Thus the work of R.K.Narayan is set between the two world of values as his novels present the conflict of tradition and modernity in a natural and convincing way that spells out the realistic treatment imparted to the fictional world of Malgudi. The people are ** between two sets of values that run like parallel lines never merging into a linear progressive movement. The world of Malgudi is fundamentally a tradition bound Hindu society, which experiences a gradual and imperceptible change under the impact of scientific, technological and industrial progress. The change is not complete but it marks the beginning phase of the change with a slow and shaky, hesitant and uncertain start.

**HIGHER DIMENSIONAL CONCEPTS**

A novel or any piece of literary work is comprehended at its fullest only if the reader has complete knowledge about the background of the author. The author is the main force who speaks through every character
and every scene. It is therefore a necessity to understand in depth the mind waves of the author. R.K. Narayan is truly Indian in Spirit.

This Indian spirit has been charming for ages many a scholars in its pursuance. It constantly eludes them in cognition for the only reason that most of such scholars are not Indian born. The Psyche of a native Indian is alive with sensitivity and enlightenment. These features manifest naturally due to his acquaintance with his true self even in mere mundane situations. Here the self refers to the soul concept rationalized in the previous chapters. Obviously this Indian spirit can be perceived through exhaustive and through analysis with a mind which is definitely Indian. This feature would enable to empathize with the plot, characters and the emotions expressed in the novel to a great extent. Such an interpreter would appreciate R.K. Narayan’s work in a better view due to his own identification with the Indian spirit. For such a reader would by himself have good insight into the complex and intrinsic mosaic of the Indian psyche.

In the chapter entitled soul body concept as study was undertaken to analyze Narayan’s works in the view point of the Vedic injunction. I am a spirit soul. Even illiterate rustics in Indian have full conviction in this soul body concept. For them it is not an external or foreign theory to be introduced into their lives. In this angle, Narayan’s characters are analysed in this angle and an attempt is made to throw new light on the brilliance and mastery of their conceptualization.
In the chapter entitled “Reincarnation and Beyond” beyond the aim was to endeavour a deeper analysis of Narayan’s characters and tried to comprehend their philosophical quotients. A sagacious argument well grounded in the theory of Reincarnation and beyond is put forth in order to bring out the rationale behind the seemingly superstitious beliefs propounded by the characters of R.K.Narayan.

Stylistics is a necessary device which aids the author to put forth his line of thought precisely in an explicit and well defined manner. A review is made into the stylistics of Narayan’s novels in order to elucidate the dexterous application of stylistic devices to achieve his desired end. After going through this study a question may arise in the minds of the reader with regard to the authenticity of the Vedic literature themselves It is therefore a must to attempt to logically rationalize the Vedic study prior to this a requirement for the classification of the process of learning is needed. There are three ways of acquiring knowledge, they are,

a. Pratyaksa - (Direct sense perception)

b. Anumana - (Inductive Method)

c. Sabdha - (Knowledge received from authority.

The first process pratyaksa depend on corrections from outside sources. For example, to one’s eyes the sun may seem no larger than a coin,
But from Scientific calculation we learn, one that senses may mislead one’s the sun is many times larger than the earth.

The Second knowledge gaining process is, anumana theories based on evidence. The process cannot give knowledge of what is beyond the range of proof. Charles Darwin’s theory and much of archeology and anthropology rely upon such inductive conjecture. (It may have been like this or perhaps it was like that).

Sabdha the third process is the process of hearing from the Vedic literature. Vedic knowledge is sabdha, knowledge received through hearing from higher authority. To cite a traditional example, if a child wants to know who is father is he should ask his mother. He may make a survey of the male population, but much more simple way is to ask his mother the natural authority. The Vedas are the natural authority of all knowledge.

Acquiring knowledge through pratyaksha and anumana in both cases there is dependence on the senses. But the senses are defective. It has the following four defects.

i) To commit mistakes:- regardless of how bright or precise a person may be cannot escape from making mistakes –To err is human”.

ii) Subjected to illusion for instance the sastras mentioned that every materially conditioned being is under the illusion that
the body is the self. Whatever we position in the world, a person is under illusion if he thinks of himself in terms of nationality, religion, race or family. A person’s first step in transcendental knowledge, is realizing that his identity is beyond the temporary material body.

iii) Limited or imperfect senses: every person has limited or imperfect senses. For instance in a darkened room one cannot see his hands before his face.

iv) Tendency to cheat: Every one has a tendency to cheat. For example, a man who presumes to instruct others all through defective himself is actually cheating because his knowledge is imperfect, thus proving sabdha superior to both pratvaksha and anumana.

Vedic knowledge is sabdha, knowledge through hearing from higher authority, and it is therefore considered perfect. In other words, if a person can accept information from authority he does not have to take the trouble to research independently. The sabdha method, by which one may accept authority is imperative when one inquires about the subject matter beyond the preview of senses and reason. The term refers not to a dictator but to a deliverer of primary knowledge. For instance Shakespeare himself is naturally the authority par excellence on the works of William Shakespeare.
It is a matter not of faith, dogma, or feeling, but simply of hearing from one who knows.

The Vedic literatures delineate their own origin. The scripture describe themselves as apauruseya meaning that they do not come from any materially conditioned person but from the supreme (a source transcendental to mundane duality). The Vedic knowledge is considered eternal but because the material cosmos is constantly in flux, Vedic teachings need a reassertion. Consequently an attempt has been hereby made to logically rationalize the acceptance of Vedic literature in the Indian subconscious and that which are so often mouthed by the esoteric and impenetrable characters of R.K. Narayan in his novels.

The entirely of the higher dimensional concepts established by R.K. Narayan in his novels culminate in inducing the reader to ultimately question his own eternal existence and his relationship with the external world. In a subtle manner, Narayanan delineates an eternal unquestionable picture of every individual. Every human being if the zooms out of his day today mundane hustle and bustle and inspects his life with a bird’s eye view is surely in for a surprise. The true self being eternal is performing activities totally incompatible to his constitutional state. This is the awareness R.K. Narayan is trying to achieve and in turn deliver it to his readers. With regard to the Soul body concept one can come across many passages form Narayan’s novels which vehemently try to wake up the
readers to the truth about life. One may question about the necessity, for such an awakening. The answer is in the following anecdote.

There was a woman who brought a beautiful parrot; she liked the parrot, so much that she made a golden cage for its residence. But consequently she became protective towards the golden cage and ignored the bird. The bird died similarly the living beings thinking they to be the body perform activities only to take care of the body and maintain it ultimately the original being, the soul, is left uncared for. This is the cause of all mental and physical problems. When knowledge about the self is illuminated the radiance spreads and makes the person happy and content.

Similarly when one is in full cognition of the mysteries of Karma and its consequences, resulting in repeated birth and death, it would induce the living entity to surpass this repeated phenomenon and attain his eternal state which is full of knowledge, eternity and bliss (Sat-cit-ananda). This is the supreme goal of all Vedic teachings which ultimately promises eternal life which is without the four fold miseries, namely birth, death, old age and disease. R.K.Narayan tries to drive home this point to a sincere reader through his simple, lucid, yet, grave dialogues and genuine characterization. With the help of the most mundane incidents he is able to communicate the highest tenets of the ancient and alive Vedic teachings.