CONCLUSION
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It is never an easy task to draw a conclusion of my assessment of the distinguished writer R.K. Narayan. He is a multi-dimensional novelist sparkling in humour through simple tales told in the fictional town of Malgudi. His plots are constructed with simple to complex human relationships among southern Indians but they have become universal because of his themes of universal significance. Here Arthur Compton Rickett's remark is worth close attention:

"The novel provides such a facile and attractive means of popular appeal and is so adaptable to literary fashions, that its continued vitality will surprise no one."1

Hence, R.K. Narayan and a few other Indian novelists are able to provide a new genre of fiction for the fiction-lovers all over the world. It may also be remembered that the novelists in England and America were accepted as literary giants in fiction writing. Even though he was an Indian, R.K. Narayan was able to make his mark by producing some remarkable novels. He has been recognised and esteemed for his professional skill by internationally famous writers like E.M. Forster, Graham Greene, etc. American writers like John Updike and commonwealth critics like William Walsh have honoured him by presenting reviews and evaluating on his works.

It is said that R.K. Narayan has been influenced by Sir Walter Scott, and Charles Dickens to choose English as his medium. He knew that to make his works universally acceptable he had to write in a particular way of his own. Supporting the truth of his opinion he confesses:

"The pure delight of watching a novel grow can never be duplicated by any other experience".

He really enjoyed in his literary compositions but he was very careful to make necessary corrections, revisions, and tightening of sentences. After such careful craftsmanship he was able to produce novels, which have 'a grasp of the social structure of his society, and an extraordinary fluency of communication.'

R.K. Narayan has produced about fifteen novels with readers from different parts of the world from New York to Mosco. Though the location of his novels is the South Indian town of Malgudi, his readers are familiar with different parts of Malgudi – Lawley Extension, New Extension, Truth Printing works, Bombay Anand Bhawan Restaurant, South Extension, Krishna Medical Hall etc. Like Thomas Moore's Utopia, his English and Indian readers have a vision of Malgudi with its people, caves, archaeological sites, markets, etc. His first novel Swami and Friends deals with an universal theme which every young boy of Swami's age all over the world can understand. It is true that Swami's friendships, his quarrels, his teachers, his idleness, his examinations, his running away (from home), etc. make up what seems to be a school boy story. We are reminded of Tom and Huck in

Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, Maisie in Henry James' *What Maisie Knew* and Ursula in Lawrence's *The Rainbow*. Swami's connection with these characters may be thin but he is an acceptable character which the readers love to learn about.

In his autobiography *My Days* Narayan admits his debt to writers like Dickens, Conan Doyle W.W. Jacobs, Arnold Bennett, etc. There may be images of Dickens' sentimentality in *The Guide* which may have been the image of his favourite novelist Dickens. He also read *The Spectator*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Manchester Guardian*, etc. regularly as he was the son of the headmaster. Such type of reading helped him to make his mind fertile. Thus we find a number of topics defined in his novels. There may be themes related to childhood period, a young graduate, an English teacher, the suffering of a wife (woman) in the hands of her oppressive husband, downfall of man caused by money and sex, a helpful man who brings his own downfall or rising to the status of a sanyasi, generation gap, perverse love relationship, etc. in his novels. All these are the products of this multi-dimensional writer who had close friendship with Graham Greene, one of the greatest 20th century writers.

With such background and experience it is natural that R.K. Narayan makes his novels interesting products of unique human relationship. He introduces the town of Malgudi through his young characters in the novel *Swami and Friends*. In it his humour, art of characterisation, and vivid description are all displayed. In giving the description of Swami's teacher, he satirises the attempts of some teachers to become exactly like Europeans. The simple comment that such good English speakers speak like Europeans but few in the school could make what he said really, satirises the situation of English language among the people. In *The Bachelor of Arts* Narayan
depicts Chandran's relationship with different characters like Ramu, Mohan, Malathi, Sushila, etc. Through his relationship with these people one can have a glimpse of man-woman relationship, friend to friend relationship, and man's relationship with his wife and with his parents. In *The Dark Room* one may see Savitri's powerlessness and helplessness in the grip of her tyrannic husband. One is reminded of the character of Nancy who suffers in the hands of Bill Sikes in Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*. In *The English Teacher* Narayan gives the English teachers a chance to re-evaluate and criticise themselves through his relationship with his wife, Sushila. Through the flashback of his past happy life, Krishna's personality as an English teacher fades and he is seen as a specimen of humanity reminiscent of every persons' joyful past life.

R.K. Narayan's writings after Indian Independence are more mature and writing technique has been also improved a lot in them. In the treatment of the theme and the development of the characters there is some apparent progress. Mr. Sampath who appears only in Chapter IV has different relationships with his editor-cum-friend Srinivas, his mistress Santi and his wife. In *The Guide* Narayan's genius is flowered. This universally acclaimed novel depicts Railway Raju's transformation from a shop owner to the guide of the people. Slowly but steadily through flashback technique of narration and through his complex relationship with Rosie this transformation is exposed. Technically, his next novel, *The Vendor of Sweets* seems to be superior to *The Guide*. There are images of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce in many parts of the novel. When Jagan is introduced to Grace by Mali, Jagan's thought moves like Bloom's mind in Joyce's *Ulysses*. The similarity is shown by the following dialogue between Mali and Jagan:
“This is Grace. We are married. Grace, ‘my dad’. Complete confusion. Married? When are you married? You didn't tell me. Don't you have to tell your father? Who is she? Anyway she looks like a Chinese? Don't you know that one can't marry a Chinese nowadays? They have invaded our borders......Or perhaps she is a Japanese. How was one ‘to find out’?  

Through Jagan's relationship with Mali, the old man's tragedy, when his eastern religious concepts come into clash with the western culture brought by Mali, is beautifully displayed. In The Painter of Signs, another complex human relationship is employed to illustrate Raman-Daisy relationship based on carnal relationship without cardinal emotions.

Through such novels R.K. Narayan has achieved many goals which a common novelist can never dream of. His novels have been responsible for introducing Indian landscape, Indian custom, Indian tradition and Indian characters to the readers all over the world. He has combined the traditional method of narrating a story with modern techniques. This synthesis of two techniques has given room for the modern Indian writers to write with more scope and a new dimension. He has also widened the horizon of the English vocabulary by introducing many new words based on Indian languages. Like Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, he has also made Indo-Angian Literature an important branch of English literature like American literature, Irish literature, Australian literature, etc. In fact, in the Indo-Anglian literature his name shines like the Pole star guiding the new generation of writers all over the globe.

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