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**Importance of Places in Malgudi Town in the Novels of R.K. Narayan**

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**Abstract**

*The present study deals with study of R. K. Narayan's novels in the context of the family relationships. The family relationship in depend upon time, situation, circumstances and the temperament of the characters and are sometimes happy or at other unpleasant, but show the vivacity and vitality of full blooded life. the humour of situation and character represent the higher forms of humour. R. K. Narayan depicts with equal ease both the genders male and female. If varieties of male characters please him with their peculiarities, his female characters are never inferior to any.*

**Introduction**

R.K. Narayan has been much loved by his modern readers than any other writers. He deserves both praise and appraisal in larger and more discerning terms than he seems to have received so far, for he has produced a sizeable body of novels and collections of short stories. He also presents various shades of humour from gentle irony to parody. This comic vision, which is his strength, also makes his art limited. Narayan is not the novelist who conceives the whole novel in advance. But he weaves his incidents and so presents his plot before us, that under the magic influence of his imagination it becomes highly interesting and captures the attention of the readers.

**Importance of Fictional Town Malgudi and Its Places**

Malgudi is the fictional setting of R.K. Narayan's novels and stories. This place has comparable standard to the other writers of English Literature. It is compared to 'boarder countries' of Sir Walter Scott, 'Lake District' of William Wordsworth, 'The Wessex' of Thomas Hardy, or 'five Towns' of Arnold Bennet. Malgudi is an imaginary South Indian town round which Narayan has woven the complex pattern of the lives of his characters. The readers are taken to this imaginary land to laugh, sympathise, and share the vicissitudes of its inhabitants. This imaginary setting came to Narayan's mind instantly:

I remember waking up with the name Malgudi on

Vijayadashami ,the day on which the goddess of learning is

Celebrated..... Malgudi was an shaking discovery for me,

because I had no mind for facts and things like that,  
which would be necessary in writing about Lalgudi or  
Any real place.

R. K. Narayan is the creator of the Malgudi universe. The world of Malgudi is characterized by Mempi Hills, Sarayu River, Nallapa's grove and laundry Extension. Vinayak Mudali Street, Market Road, the town Hall fountain, kabir lane, Bombay Anand Bhavan and the New Extension are the famous land marks of the grooving town. The people of Malgudi are the printers Natraj and Sampath, editor Srinivas new paper agent Chandran, insurance Company branch manager Ramani, the painter Raman, the financial wizard Margayya, the tourist, guide Railway Raju and outsiders like taxi demonists. Vasu, the family planning clinic in charge daisy and the artist Rosie. The interlinking of these distinct personalities, their interaction and the network of human relationships fascinates the reader. An entry in R. K. Narayan's unique fictional world knows no exit because there is god's plenty to entertain and enlighten generations of readers as long as men can read eyes can see, hearts can absorb and brains can understand.

Malgudi does not exist on any map of India. It is a geopsychic invention of his literary imagination. It is Lalgudi in Trichinapaly District, fringing The River Cauvery which is taken for the original of Malgudi. It is neither a village nor a city but a town of modest size. It lives in the imagination more distinctly than any other region described by any Indian writer. R.K. Narayan's Malgudi is a reality charged with all that is intimate and poignant in human life. It is linked again and again with the rise and fall of heroes and heroines and the place of Malgudi is everywhere as it is the surrounding of R.K. Narayan's novels and short stories.

There is Nataraj's printing press which has no name in the novel, The Man-Eater of Malgudi but in The Vendor of Sweets it is mentioned as Truth Printing Works. In The Financial Expert one hears about a new printing press, Gordon Printery. The printer of this press is Madan Lal and every type of forms, billbook, and letter-pad are published in this press. Margayya's book Domestic Harmony which becomes the turning point of his career is also published in this press. Nataraj's neighbour has a printing press named, Star Press and has complete staff which one could dream of and has an original Heidelberg of which Nataraj with his characteristic altruism is so proud. In Waiting for the Mahatma one also hears about Star Press, which groans away all the day and it is the next door to Sriram's house.

Malgudians are religious minded and their spiritual needs are well served by about a half a dozen temples- Iswara Temple, Krishna Temple, Hanuman Temple, Ganesha Temple, Srinivasa Temple, Subramanya Temple and Mangala Temple. In those temples the most notable temple is Iswara Temple situated in North Extension. Its walls are painted with the depicting pictures of the Ramayana.

The portrayal of life is the main objective Narayan and it is adequate for the setting of Malgudi. There are characters that give meaning to the places of Malgudi and make them

real and life –like. There is a sense of familiarity of the place and streets of Malgudi. It is homebred. It helps the readers to be intimate. It creates a deeper and better understanding of its people and places establishing a close intimacy. There is no separate identity of Malgudi without its financial expert, Margayya, its printer, Sampath, its editor, Srinivas, and its holy man, Raju. Malgudi is the comic projection of Narayan. It is an imaginary town in which nationalists and nationalism are treated with the same comic irony. This comic irony is deployed against cheats, bohemians, bossy wives and indulgent grandparents.

### **Conclusion**

It is a fact that Narayan does not model or name Malgudi after any real place. As Malgudi forms the setting for one novel after another, it is elastic enough to expand with the needs of times and characters. Starting with *Swami and Friends*, the topography of Malgudi expands with the subsequent novels with some certain places which remain the centre of action. New extensions are added to the Malgudi town and become integral parts of the town. Narayan considers Malgudi the supreme creation, for it is as dynamic as a character that “grows, changes, reacts to time and circumstance, has a spirit and a soul.

It lives in the imagination more distinctly than any other region described by any Indian writer. Narayan’s Malgudi is a reality charged with all that is intimate and poignant in human life. It is associated with the rise and fall of heroes and heroines. Narayan’s first novel ‘*Swami and Friends*’ introduces us to this town called Malgudi on the border of the states of Mysore and Madras. Malgudi has a municipality, a town Hall, a club and two schools –The Albert Mission School, and the Board High School. The principal landmarks of Malgudi – Malgudi station, the central co-operative Land Mortgage Bank, The Bombay Anand Bhawan, Kabir Street, Lawley Extension, the Regal Hair-cutting Saloon, the statue of Sir Frederic Lawley, the Sarayu River, Nallapa’s Groves, Mempi Hills, Hotels, cinemas make a social framework of the novel. Malgudi passes through many changes with the passage of time. The characters in various novels pass through various stages of development. In ‘*Swami and Friends*’, Malgudi is neither a village nor a city, but a town of modest size, but in successive novel it grows in time and place.

R. K. Narayan’s Malgudi also deals with India and Indian people, especially the Southerners. Malgudi has its own municipality, a Town Hall, a Town Hall Public Library and a reading room. There is a clock tower called Taluk office, the big gong which keeps the people of Malgudi conscious of the passage of time. One hears of its striking the hours in the novels again and again. When it sounds ten, Swami’s parents get worried for Swami and go to his friends and teachers to find him.

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