
Malgudi world in the Novels of R.K Narayan

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Abstract

In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the imaginary world of Malgudi, which is too familiar to us, and it is like the state of India, a world of slow transition. On the one hand, they worship God Vishnu and believe in it; on the other hand, they also believe in the westernized Lawley Extension area. It is a world of confusion. The people of Malgudi are living in a world of confusion; neither they are able to fully accept modern ideas, nor are they able to reject them. The writer has presented the world in which we are truly familiar with the world, and it seems that such incidents occur day to day life. R.K Narayan was a novelist who had a deep understanding of Indian culture and tradition as well as a deep understanding of life. He had a deep understanding of Western philosophy as well as language, but he is called the native talent of Indian society. The world of the writer, the world of our cities and villages, and one who sees the world of the writer will not be able to say that this is not our world. It seems that the writer has a very deep understanding of life. Narayan's people are deeply attached to the tradition, but they are no less affected by Western

ideas. Neither do they willingly accept or reject the Western ways of life. This way of life takes them in a state of confusion and indecision. This is the life we are living here is depicted by the writer, and this is the reality of life. This is the question of the research on how we should convert people's lives from a state of confusion to a progressive one. This can only be done through scientific learning and progressive thinking and not by believing in religious propaganda.

Keywords: Progressive thinking, scientific learning, Confusion, Indecision, Tradition, and Western Ideas.

R.K Narayan's novels show the world that India is not only a land of Elephants, Cobras, and Snake charmers but also has impressive culture traditions and many more. He has depicted the rich culture and tradition of Indian society. Very few writers have made contributions like Narayan. Through his contribution, he has

brought Indian literature to the topmost position. Rasipuram Krishna swami Narayan, as he was known, got his early education from the Maharaja College, Mysore, where his father was headmaster of a school. He graduated in 1930 and, after four years, got married, and his wife died in 1939, which was a great shock for him. His daughter Hema was the only cause for him to live in Mysore with his mother and brothers.

R.K. Narayan's novels, as well as short stories, have an imaginary town, Malgudi, for their locale. This town represents the real condition of Indian villages and towns of our country. Malgudi is an old, shabby, and peaceful town far from politics, and people are simple, sincere, absurd, and scheming. Most of them have a common quality, which is seen in our daily lives. They have pride in their caste, social status, and their pretty quarrels. R.K. Narayan has presented such men and women in his works that are as real as in actual life. Neither do they disregard Indian customs and rituals, nor do they completely accept them. They are living a life of confusion and indecision. They welcome both the opposite ideas. They also welcome modern and progressive ideas in their life. This is the uncomfortable life we are living here. The real circus of life can be seen in the novels of the writer. Malgudi is a mirror of Indian life.

R.K. Narayan is not a true modernist nor a true traditionalist. He

was the moderate writer of the life. He wrote the novels to change people's attitudes towards life. He was also not affected by the outside winds, unlike some contemporary novelists, i.e., Mulk Raj Anand. He was far away from isms and did not belong to any particular philosophical idea. He was completely free from the contemporary politics. The world of Malgudi is changing unwillingly. It is a mixture of both east and west. On the one hand, they believe in God Vishnu; on the other hand, they are too attractive to the westernized Lawley Extension area. Malgudi is real India, a state of slow transition. Neither do they accept modern ideas, nor do they reject them. They worship God God, Vishnu, along with modern ideas. In the novel *Guide*, Raju worships God God God, and he also enjoys the luxury of life. The Malgudi town is not able to break itself with the age-old tradition. Marriages are arranged by the parents of the respective girl and boy. People match horoscopes before their marriages. If they don't match, marriages can't take place, but Chandran gets married to the girl of his own choice and also throws milk on goddess Laxmi, the goddess of wealth, with the intention of insulting her.

Malgudi, an imaginary town, has characters like Sampath and Margaya, Swami and Rajan, Chandran and Krishna. These are different characters who depict different aspects of life. Malgudi is the center of the fictional world of the writer.

Everything in this town is very familiar; the street lanes and its background appear like our own town, warm and real. It is something more than a mere background. After reading about Malgudi, we realize a sense of intimacy that creates a better understanding of its people. Mahatma Gandhi says in *Waiting for Mahatma*; this is Malgudi town; God is everywhere, one beautiful river flowing nearby the town; what a beautiful picture one can feel. But this is not a complete picture of Malgudi. There is also a darker aspect of the town where untouchables live there. Probably, this was the worst area of the town. The description of the untouchables makes us feel the reality of the Indian society. On the one hand, we have beautiful Malgudi, and on the other hand, ugly aspects of the beautiful town. In the same way, in our town, or in the people's mind, there is always bad and good aspects of life. If we focus on the good aspects of life, on the other, we must focus on the bad aspects of life. We should try to convert bad aspects of life into good ones. The same human being is called untouchable; what is this? This is a question for all of us. Why are these evils present in our society? Who are the people responsible for creating such kinds of social evils in our minds? This is a question of debate and discussion. We would live a life of complete human beings if we tried to avoid the concept of caste and class from our minds and motivate others to

do so; then we can imagine a complete Malgudi town where everywhere is God and everywhere is happiness and there is no room for caste and class politics.

Sarayu River is one of the most distinguishable features of Malgudi town, and this river is a pride for the people of the town. Its sand banks are crowded by the people in every morning and evening. Most of the people of the town take baths in the Sarayu River and perform puja as part of their daily life. It's very surprising to know the importance of a river in the cultural life of the people. There is nothing more charming than having a bath in the river before the sun rises and offering water and flowers to Surya Devata. But for the younger generation of Krishna and Chandran, these activities are nothing. They are not interested in following age-old tradition, but rather, they are interested in modernity. A group of boys is discussing college activities, and these conversations are often interrupted by jasmine flowers in the hair of girls. It is on the bank of the Sarayu River; Mani, a naughty boy of *Swami and Friends*, waits for his friend Rajam and throws him away into the river. Chandran is a character of *Bachelor of Arts* who falls in love with Malathi on the bank of the Sarayu River.

Another significant quality of Malgudi town is Market Road, and it is known as the lifeline of the town. Margaya starts his business here. On the one side of the town at the Lawley

Extension, professors, doctors, advocates, government officers, etc., live there. Rajam's father, who is the Superintendent of Police, and Chandran's father, who is an advocate, etc., live at Lawley Extension. Malgudi is the place of old and new values. Apart from this, the role of religion in the individual's life can't be ignored, even in the present time. The people believe more in God than themselves. The religion of Krishna is different from the religion of Margaya. Margaya is interested in money and the goddess Laxmi. Krishna does not worship any goddess, but still, he is a Hindu. Margaya's son Balu is not interested in all these. The novelists have presented the issues of castes, classes, poverty, and the patriarchy of Indian society. He has criticized all these indirectly through his novels. There were castes, but finally, they were the Hindus.

Another significant aspect regarding the Malgudi town is that it is totally unruffled by the outside world. It is a slow-moving town, and the easy pattern of life can be seen here. Swami's father and others like him used to go to their offices in a relaxed mood, chewing betel leaves after a meal. Women of the town get up early in the morning and then go to worship the God God and goddess. After that, they cook rice and Sambhar for their husbands and children, and when they leave for their offices as well as schools, they go to neighbor chit chat that can high-level discussion on marriages, jewelry, and some other

matters, waiting for their husbands and children to come back and then cooking food and etc. for them and this was the life of Malgudi, or we can say the life simple Indian family was like the life depicted by the novelists.

In *The Bachelor of Arts*, he presented a realistic picture of the Malgudi town along with autobiographical elements. He has depicted his personal life throughout the novel. Chandran is a bachelor doing a B.A., falls in love with the girl Malathi, would like to get married to her but is not allowed to caste and class issues, frustrated by this thinking that life has no meaning but understand the problem and got married to Sushila who was searched by his parents. He got happiness in Sushila after some time and started to love her too much, as in our society can be seen. Maximum arranged marriages are done in our country, and most of them are successful due to faith and love for each other and due to our Indian culture and tradition. We compromise and arrange, and this is the quality of Indian culture.

Another novel named *The Dark Room* depicts the sorrows of a typical Indian woman, Savitri, who is exploited a lot due to the patriarchal system of Indian society where a woman is beaten by her husband daily because a woman is seen as a cow and an object of cooking food and bearing and rearing children and if a husband wants, he can beat his wife for any reason and without sharing the reason

with the wife. In spite of this, the husband remains 'Pati Parmeshwar; whether he is a drunkard or not, this does not matter. The same thing happens in the novel. Savitri is always abused and beaten by her husband Ramani, but still, she loves her husband too much. She comes to know about an affair of her husband with an office girl. She thinks that perhaps I am not so beautiful and charming, and this is the reason my husband has been engaged to someone else. She does everything to look beautiful and to attract her husband, but that goes in vain; instead of loving her, he beats her, and this is intolerable. She leaves her home and decides to commit suicide, but she is saved by a person suggested by them to serve in a temple, but the priest of the temple does not want her to stay there. She struggles a lot, and in the end, she decides to return home and thinks that the family is all in all for her and the husband is God-God for her; either he beats her or loves her.

In his significant novel, *The Guide*, the writer has depicted the true picture of Indian society in which he presents the people of Malgudi as too gullible to believe in anything easily. The transformation of Raju's Guide to a spiritual guide is an example of it. The writer has also presented that in Indian society, women have low value. Rosie is married to Marco forcefully in order to live a wealthy and respectable life, but her mother does not care for Rosie's feelings. She does not think

this aged man will be able to satisfy Rosie's sexual desire and her desire for dancing. Marco is unable to fulfill both, and as a result, Rosie runs away from Raju; this brings frustration in life when the desire is unfulfilled and who is responsible for it, perhaps our customs and traditions. It must be noticed in our society that customs and traditions are more important than an individual's feelings. This must be done within castes with dowry and with the men of the upper class. He must have lots of wealth; whether he has a big heart for others does not matter, and this is the main cause of people's suffering. The other aspect of Indian society is that anyone who had a long beard at that time could be understood as a Saint Mahatma without any questioning. Still, we can't question the religion. This is the quality of an Indian society, which we can call the quality of an innocent people. We believe too much in God, and this is good, but blind faith is injurious to the mind, and then the owner of the temple will start looting you.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Malgudi town is the microcosm of Indian society. The Malgudi world depicts the true picture of Indian society. Suppose anyone who is interested to know about Indian society must read the fiction of the writer. The people we meet in his fictions no one can say I am not familiar with the people I met. The true Indian village life has been depicted by

the novelists, the villagers of that time living life without any tension, unruffled by the outside world, busy in the daily routine of worshipping the God and goddess and going to work chewing betel leaves, enjoying their own world and women are busy worshipping the God and goddess, cooking food for their husbands and children; chit chat with their neighbor and nothing to do with this outside world. The picture of Malgudi is the picture of present Indian society with a little bit of change. The novelist is still relevant because we see the true picture of Indian society through his imaginary Malgudi World.

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