



## A study of R.K. Narayan's Malgudi ki kahania

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### Abstract

R.K. Narayan has compiled a number of his short tales into a volume titled Malgudi Days: A Study in Abstraction. The short tales all take place in the fictitious town of Malgudi and provide a look into the lives of the people who live there. They examine many aspects of human character, as well as social dynamics and the difficulties of day-to-day living. The way in which Narayan depicts Malgudi might be seen as a little version of the larger universe. The town is a microcosm of the greater civilization, complete with its own distinct set of norms, rituals, and social orders. Through the use of his narrative, Narayan is able to convey the essence of human life. He does this by using the common setting of a tiny village in India to reflect on events and feelings that are shared by all people.

**Keywords:** R.K. Narayan, television adaptation, Indian writing in English, refraction, translation studies, literary fame, post-colonial India

### Introduction

R. K. Narayan is one of the well-known Indian writers who wrote in English and came to fame in the English-speaking world in the years after Rabindranath Tagore's death. His collection of short stories is named Malgudi Days, and he is one of the authors who wrote these stories. He became the first Indian author to have their work published in English after receiving the Sahitya Akademi Award from the Indian government in the year 1960. This award was given to him as a recognition of his achievements as a writer. In addition to all of that, in the year 1996, he was a potential candidate for the Nobel Prize. His collection of works includes things like novels, novellas, short stories, retold epics, travelogues, essays, chronicles, and memoirs, among other types of literature. He established his own publishing organisation, which he dubbed Indian Thought Publication, and used it to distribute his own works to the public. Bachelor of Arts, The Guide, The Man-Eater of Malgudi, Swami and Friends, and Malgudi Days are some of his most well-known works. This is partly because to the fact that The Guide was adapted into a motion picture in the year 1965, as well as the fact that both Malgudi Days and Swami and Friends were adapted into television series in the year 1986. Malgudi Days is a collection of thirty-two short tales that had its first publication by Indian Thought Publication in the year 1943. The book is titled Malgudi Days. Every one of these stories takes place in the made-up town of Malgudi, and although they all depict Indian culture in their own unique way, they all have a common setting. Malgudi Days is the name of the source material in its entirety. Narayan focuses on everyday situations that innocent people in his country experience, such as sorrow, agony, love, surprise, despair, desire, grief, fear, hate, panic, dejection, anxiety, and other sociopsychological issues. However, he also suggests some different strategies that might be used to deal with these problems. His stories are illustrative of humanity in its whole and have the ability to connect with a diverse audience. In the end, each and every storey has the same profound effect on individuals all over the world, despite the fact that each one has its own unique traits. He cannot resist depicting the inherently Indian principles that are ingrained in the people as well as the tenacity of the traditions. He does this in a number of ways. He illustrates indigenous traditional culture and the ideals that support it, demonstrating how these values are capable of contending with current standards. However, despite the fact that Narayan displays an openness to

the modern world, it is quite probable that he regards rural regions as locations where culture is conserved. In this regard, he is similar to Gandhi, who was of the belief that true India can only be found in rural areas. As a consequence of this, he makes an attempt to construct a link between the history that has been lost and the sociocultural achievements that have been influenced by the west. On the other hand, there are certain individuals who are steadfast in their support of either the former or the later of the two options. Narayan and the persons responsible for adapting the storey for television very certainly shared some of the same ideas at some point. It was published in 1984 in the Penguin Classics edition, and it's possible that one of the reasons TV producers took attention to this specific work in the first place was because it was reissued in the Penguin Classics edition. The television version of Malgudi Days that was shown on Doordarshan in 1986 was given the same name as the original book or novel and attracted a significant number of loyal viewers. During the course of Malgudi Days, each of the stories that were recounted were broken up into their own individual episodes. The television series had works adapted from not only Malgudi Days but also Swami and Friends, A Horse and Two Goats, Dodo, Lawley Road, and The Vendor of Sweets, making it a thirty-nine episode series directed by Shankar Nag, an eminent actor-director from Mysore, Karnataka. Malgudi Days was only one of the works that was adapted for the series. The series is based on a number of different works, and Malgudi Days was only one of them. Door darshan and T.S. Narasimhan were both involved for the creation of it. It was shown several times on television, and the fact that it was so uncomplicated contributed to the show's popularity among the ordinary viewer. The good reception it received throughout the whole of the nation. Doordarshan adapted eleven of the short stories that were contained in Malgudi Days for television in the year 1986; the other twenty-eight episodes of Malgudi Days were drawn from other works written by Narayan. Malgudi Days was first shown in India on Doordarshan. The Missing Mail, The Gateman's Gift, Eswaran, Engine Trouble, Forty-five a Month, Trail of the Green Blazer, A Willing Slave, Leela's Friend, Naga, Cat Within, and The Edge are only few of the short stories that were featured in this collection. If you read one storey each day for thirty-two weeks in a row, by the time you reach the end of the book, you will have experienced Malgudi Days as a Malgudi month, more or less. This may be accomplished by reading the book in this manner. This is one approach, and I strongly advise that you read the accompanying book. I would like to suggest that you read this book in the following method. From beginning to end, the daily reading should take around ten minutes of your time. There should be very few deviations to this rule. The vast majority of these brief stories are less than ten pages long, and a few of them are even shorter than five pages; the one that is more than twenty pages is the exception, not the rule. It's possible that you're pondering to yourself, What a fantastic idea! And 10 minutes a day is something I'm perfectly capable of managing. And if you are the kind of morally upright person who is satisfied after eating just one piece of chocolate from a box of chocolates and is never tempted, until the following day, by a second piece of chocolate, then perhaps you will be able to appreciate Malgudi Days in a similarly self-controlled manner throughout the entirety of the month. If, on the other hand, you are anything like me, you may find that, after the first ten minutes of reading, you keep going for twenty, then thirty, devouring one storey after the next, until you finally look up and realise that a significant portion of your day has already passed. If this describes you, you may find that you have lost a significant portion of your day to reading. If this describes you, then you should be aware of the potential consequences. When I first came across this book, my days were, in a way, quite similar to the ones that are depicted in these stories; specifically, they were both extremely long and very short. I had just given birth to my daughter, and I also had a son who was two years old at the time. "My mornings were so chaotic that I scarcely had time to comb my hair, much alone relax with a nice book and a cup of tea. In fact, I didn't even have time to brush my teeth. When I initially



cracked open the front cover of *Malgudi Days*, the first thing I did was glance at the table of contents and count the number of unique stories as if they were a long list of varying quantities. After doing this, I went on to the next step. This was the very first thing I did, although I have no idea why I did it. After I had finished computing the total number, I had a Aha! moment. That works out well, and in a month I'll have everything finished. 32 individuals constituted the total count. An infant was sitting on my lap, and a little child was perched on my knee while I read the first storey, which was titled *An Astrologer's Day*. I flicked the page over once, and then only one more; the empty space on the page was already signalling that we were very close to being finished. How in the world is it even a possibility? I wondered; we're just getting started. I was hoping for at best a vignette, but more than likely I would get a sketch instead. However, in spite of the fact that Narayan's stories are notoriously brief, reading them does not leave one with the impression that they are lacking in any way. This is in contrast to the experience that passengers get on airlines these days, when they are served small portions of food under the guise of supper. It takes the short storey *An Astrologer's Day* just four and a half pages to develop, complicate, and modify a life; this is the difference between simply explaining something and creating a dramatic scenario. We are initially exposed to a faceless and nameless stranger in the opening phrase of the storey. By the time we reach the last line, the titular character has evolved into a man who is guilty of attempted murder but with whom we empathise. The stressful incident functions as the core of the narrative. We are squeezing our eyes shut out of fear that the news we are about to receive may be much, much worse. The effect that is achieved is what authors all over the globe attempt to achieve throughout the course of their whole life and while they are in the process of producing hundreds of pages of their work. R. is familiar with this topic. Throughout the whole of this book, K. Narayan makes a brief reference to thirty-two different topics. An image that may be discovered in the book *An Astrologer's Day* serves as a wonderful metaphor for the creativeness of Narayan. The astrologer locates his store in close proximity to a number of other merchants who are in the business of peddling their wares in dimly lit environments. According to what Narayan has to say about it, the astrologer carried out his work by the light of a flare that crackled and smoked up above the peanut mound that was nearby. The lack of city lights added a substantial amount to the allure of the place, which already had its own allure and was rather engaging on its own. The lights from the stores provided illumination for the surrounding neighbourhood. Some were illuminated by naked flares put on poles, some were illuminated by antiquated bike lights, and one or two, such as the astrologer's, were able to work without any lights of their own. After the neighbouring flame has been extinguished, the main character makes his way over to the astrologer and wants to know what will happen to him. As a consequence of this, the astrologer is compelled to carry out his duties under even more precarious circumstances, and as a result, he is only able to get a glimpse of his client's face in the same length of time as it takes to light a cheroot. The glimpse provides the astrologer with an enough amount of information for him to be able to proceed with his duty. It is this sudden outburst of intense light upon a character's world that Narayan provides again and again. These are narratives that die down almost as soon as they begin, but in the course of which entire lives are powerfully illuminated. Narayan provides these narratives in a manner that makes it appear as though they are ending almost as soon as they begin. The use of quick, strong flashes of light is one of the many techniques that Narayan employs to brilliantly illuminate the environments in which his characters live. Putting aside his numerous acclaimed and critically acclaimed works, R. K. Narayan is firmly ensconced in the pantheon of masters of the short storey who were active during and to a certain extent before his lifetime. The tightly wound tales written by Narayan, much like those written by Maupassant, share with his work a mastery of compression. This refers to the author's ability to convey the rapid progression of events and the profound transformation

of lives in the span of a few paragraphs that can be counted on the fingers of two hands. Narayan was a contemporary of the French author Guy de Maupassant, who was known for his short stories. The writing of Narayan has the same straightforwardness and self-control as that of Maupassant, in addition to the same unadulterated tone of voice that Maupassant did. Both look at the annoyances that people who belong to the middle class have to deal with, as well as the unpredictability of fate and the inescapable yearnings that almost always end in disappointment. Both of these painters represent scenes from everyday life, and both of them adhere to a rigid worldview that is devoid of any sympathy for the people portrayed in their artwork. The stories included in *Malgudi Days* start out strong, quickly capturing the attention of the reader and demonstrating why they should care about what they have to say. It is incredible how much information Narayan manages to include in each and every phrase of his writing. Narayan makes use of each phrase to its maximum potential, in contrast to other writers who rely on paragraphs and pages to convey their meaning. In point of fact, he achieves this to such an extreme degree that it gives the impression that his tales are constrained by an unseen but necessary mechanism. This is comparable to the metrical and quantitative limits that are placed on poetry. The *Hindu*, a daily newspaper in Madras, with which Narayan had a contract for a weekly contribution beginning in 1939, demanded that Narayan meet stringent word count and column length requirements for several of these articles, and Narayan was required to do so under the pressure of a strict deadline. In addition, *The Hindu* required Narayan to meet these requirements in a timely manner. On the other hand, there is nothing mechanical or repetitious about them; on the contrary, it seems as if they were developed in an impromptu fashion with relative ease. Even if it is not normal practise to link things in current parlance, the fact that they are fundamentally intertwined despite the fact that they continue to work independently of one another does not change the fact that each one may stand on its own. They are held together by their common attachment to the town of Malgudi. We are able to deduce with a level of confidence that it is located in the southern part of India, namely in close vicinity to the cities of Madras, where Narayan was born, and Mysore, where he lived the most of his adult life. When one takes a step back from the individual tales, they are able to take in the fictitious equivalent of something that resembles a village landscape painting by Pieter Brueghel the Elder. The hamlet is densely populated with residents who are found in close proximity to one another. Although it is presented in a comical fashion, the village is shown in a manner that is brutally genuine. While we are introduced to specific personalities and given an appreciation of the issues they confront, we are also kept aware of the greater community to which the characters belong. This allows us to fully appreciate both aspects of the storey. Malgudi is found on that fantastic map of locations in the literary world, either actual or fictitious, that not only serve as a backdrop but also have a personality of their own. These locations can be either real or imagined. To cite just three examples, Yoknapatawpha County, which was written about by Faulkner, Macondo, which was created by Garcia Márquez, and Dublin, which was written about by Joyce are examples of how certain authors stubbornly adhere to a single territory, entering its countless doors, and describing the people who live there. Narayan is able to do this with the attention to detail of a census taker while retaining the compassion and sensitivity of an artist. Not just for the stories that are featured in this collection, but also for nearly everything else that Narayan has written, the setting is the town of Malgudi. In spite of its relatively small size, the town has a thriving culture and a character that may be described as neither totally cosmopolitan nor wholly agrarian. In addition to a college, a railroad station, a tourist bureau, and a bureau of tourism, there is also a movie studio in the area. It is the type of town that fairs and expositions visit while they are in town. As suburban expansion continues to take more and more land, this sort of dynamic and distinctive neighbourhood is becoming more rare not just in the United States but also everywhere else in the world. Dr. James M.

Fennelly, a researcher of the author's work, designed the stunning map that is now included in this version. This was done since the fictional core of Narayan's work is so vivid. Dr. Fennelly was the one who created the map in the first place, and it details the many geographical qualities of the town. Narayan doesn't just give the town a made-up name; he also names the town's streets, buildings, temples, and cafes, imbuing the city with an authentic sense of place at every turn. The Magadi bazaar is maybe the most well-known and often visited location in the whole city. It is packed with fruit merchants and cobblers, in addition to snake charmers and knife grinders, all of whom are expertly and sometimes frantically attempting to persuade people to purchase their products. He, and by extension his reader, constantly see something fresh, much like the person who walks into the centre of his or her town each day for daily needs. The descriptions of the market that Narayan provides are never stale and are almost always fascinating. The impersonal and significant environment is used as the scene for the vast bulk of the book's adventures and misadventures, which are dispersed across its pages. An illustration of this can be found in the book *Trail of the Green Blazer*, which reads as follows: Over everything boomed the voice of a bible-preacher, and when he paused for breath, from another corner the loudspeaker of a health van amplified on malaria and tuberculosis, the author writes. Over everything boomed the voice of a bible-preacher. People were haranguing one another, disputing pricing, haggling with one another, or just greeting one another, so there was a lot of chatter and noise at the market. The type of commercial noise that Narayan is describing is the kind of thing that millions of people encounter each and every day of their life. This is a timeless phenomenon of civic life that links places as disparate as New York's Times Square, Calcutta's Howrah Station, and London's Piccadilly Circus. Pickpocketing is a prevalent behaviour in the world that *Trail of the Green Blazer* is situated in, and the main character of the narrative is not an exception to this rule. According to Narayan, whenever he viewed a large crowd, he did it with a focused concentration. It was what he did for a living as a professional in the field. When Narayan states that a writer must draw from life for their work, it is probable that he is referring to the profession that he himself has as a writer. Narayan is also bringing to our attention a proverb that states writers are required to watch the world around them with a keen and insatiable eye.

### **Conclusion**

The fact that the creation of *Malgudi Days* for television entailed the conceptualization of nationalist emotion and Indian culture in connection to modernization processes is supported by the historical and political context of the literary techniques that were used as proof of this fact. The results of a comprehensive investigation of the literary devices provide credence to this assertion. It should go without saying that political events and historical periods required an acceptance of the reasons that were established on philosophy, poetics, and language. However, it is important to note that this acceptance was not always easy to achieve. The contextual evidences of the adaptation of *Malgudi Days* from 1986 could be able to provide some light on this particular point. The fact that the adaptation of *Malgudi Days* took into account all of the constraints that were imposed by the people who were participating in its creation demonstrates that it was a reflection. This is highly evident. The television show *Malgudi Days* was a manifestation of the post-colonial decolonizing ideology. This philosophy attempted to demolish the colonial facade and brought Indian cultural history to the forefront of attention. It was an outstanding answer to the issue of decolonizing the Indian mind and restoring the grandeur of Indian culture, language, values, myths, writers, and literature. The problem needed to be solved by decolonizing the Indian mentality. The Doordarshan channel eventually helped to develop a national platform for Indian literature and the textuality of such literature via the adaptation of such programming. And the literary adaptations eventually came to dominate the creative arts of filmmaking

for television, which resisted the effects of colonialism in India by being able to reach each and every area of the nation.

Not only did it play a vital part in the spread of the government's aim of decolonizing, but it also honoured the child-centered philosophy of the film's director, T.S. Narasimhan. In other words, it was a success all around. The adaptation, motivated by ideological constraints, distorted equivalence in such a manner that R.K. Narayan is never considered of as a children's writer, despite the fact that Malgudi Days is often remembered because of its children's characters, notably Swami and Leela". The philosophy, poetics, and language of the audience that the television adaptation of Malgudi Days was made for were properly taken into consideration throughout the adaptation's development process. Additionally, it was one of the television series that contributed to the development of a culture of television viewing with the dual goals of fostering modernity and achieving a sense of national identity. This culture of television viewing was one of the factors that led to the growth of the nation. By depicting common identity as the route that leads to united nationality, it was effective in fulfilling these aims on the level of the fictitious medium that is television. The adaptation of Malgudi Days was especially important in establishing R. K. Narayan's literary fame since it allowed the storey to be communicated to a large portion of the Indian population that was unable to read or understand English at the time. This was an essential part of the procedure that needed to be completed. It was able to influence the society it was intended for and also serve as a source of motivation for the literary creation of the country. It was eventually one of the factors that helped to the preservation of the work Malgudi Days, and as a direct consequence of that, it is now regarded as one of the literary masterpieces that originated in India. In addition to this, it was crucial in getting the Indian audience in front of television sets, which contributed to a degree of social cohesiveness via the expression of sentiments that are shared by many different sections of the community. The study of such limits for refraction of a text for a distinct medium vis-à-vis socio-historical context might represent a certain ideology and poetics in a society at a particular point in time over the course of history. In the end, this research sheds light on the connections that may be drawn between various adaptations and historical events.

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