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Essay on the appropriateness on of the titles of the short stories by R.K. Narayan

R. K. Narayan, who was born on October 10, 1906, and passed away on May 13, 2001, stated that because English was a very adaptable language, he found it to be the most rewarding medium for his writing. Additionally, due to its transparency, it can be tinted in any nation. Narayan's unaffected standard English, with which he captures the Indian sensibility, particularly the South Indian atmosphere, is frequently praised by critics. His writing has an elegant, unforced simplicity that is perfectly suited to the portrayal of ordinary life, of all classes and segments of Indian society, including household servants, herdsmen, saints, crooks, merchants, beggars, thieves, and hapless students. His unpretentious style, his deliberate avoidance of convoluted expressions and complicated grammatical constructions, and his gentle, subtle humor all contribute to this elegant, unforced simplicity. Narayan was primarily a traditional storyteller. He depicted everyday events and moments of insight with Addisonian wit, Twainian irony, and Chekhovian irony. While some of his stories are essentially sketches that are not very dramatic, others feature the ironic reversals that are associated with O. Henry. Even though Narayan's characters have Indian values, their problems are the same for everyone. *Old Bones* and *Neighbours Help* are two of the 19 stories in Narayan's first collection, *Malgudi Days*, that contain supernatural elements. *The Gold Belt*, *The White Flower*, *An End to Trouble*, and *Under the Banyan Tree* are among the memorable tales in this collection. It's possible that some of the stories amount to social criticism; Narayan satirizes a number of aspects of traditional South Indian society, particularly the dowry system, the power of astrology, and other superstitions. One of the best stories in *The Mute Companions* is about the ubiquitous Indian monkey, which provides a meager source of income for the poor and delights children. Narayan depicts the life of Sami, the dumb beggar whose very existence was dependent on the monkey's actions, using an omniscient perspective without moralizing or judging. Sami is able to temporarily subsist on the profits of the clever monkey, his only companion, after teaching it a few tricks. This short story is a great example of Narayan's art because it shows how he can show a side of society that is often overlooked. The poor Indian's passiveness and acceptance of his Karma, or fate, are emphasized in the narrative. Also revealed is Narayan's gentle critique of society. Typically, Sami kept formidable dogs and

servants and avoided big places where people were arrogant, distant, and hard to reach. In *The Mute Companions*, Narayan, like in many of his stories, combines humor and sadness. It is important to note that the title of a subsequent collection, which was published in the United States in 1982, is also *Malgudi Days*. The remaining stories were selected from Narayan's two previous volumes, *An Astrologer's Day* and *Lawley Road*. Eight of the thirty-two stories in this collection, *Naga Selvi*, *Second Opinion*, *Cat Within The Edge*, *God and the Cobbler*, *Hungry Child*, and "Emden," were previously uncollected. Narayan centered the themes in his second collection, *Dodu, and Other Stories*, on motherly love, South Indian marriages, the financial and economic difficulties of the middle class, and childhood. *The One-Armed Giant* and *Dodu Gandhi's Appeal* are two of the best pieces in this collection of seventeen stories. *The One-Armed Giant* was Narayan's first story, and like the majority of his works, it was first published in *The Hindu*.) The title story, *Dodu*, is a satire on how adults treat children. *Dodu*, then eight years old, was desperate for money. Since he was only eight years old, no one took his worries about money seriously. *Dodu* had no doubts about his parents' generosity. They were known for not responding to requests. Narayan's remarkable ability to portray children's dreams, mischief, and psychology is one of his major contributions. *Ranga* is a moving tale about how a child without a mother grows up to be a disillusioned young man. The story of a father's and son's relationship in "Forty-five a Month" is simple and touching. His family, including his wife and infant daughter. Indeed, this depiction of a white-collar worker eking out his dreary existence reflects the experience of an entire generation in modern India. The conflict between economic security and the little pleasures of life is evocatively and movingly delineated. Narayan's focus in *Lawley Road*, as in the majority of his works, is more on the characters than the story. He says that he finds a story when a person goes through a crisis of spirit or a set of circumstances, but some stories show flashes of significant moments in the lives of the characters even though there aren't any dramatic events; Some simply display "a pattern of existence brought to view." There are sketches and vignettes, character studies, and anecdotes in many of the pieces in this collection that have a reportorial quality. Fourteen of the twenty-eight stories collected here have been previously published. The tale of the title is delightful. The story tells how Kabir Lane becomes Lawley Road, after a common street in the fictional city of Malgudi. *The Talkative Man*, or TM for short, the narrator—one of Narayan's most

engaging recurring characters—provides the story with historical context and distance. In another strong story, "The Martyr's Corner," rather than the violent action, the focus is on a humble seller of bondas, dosais, and chappatis (wheat-flour pancakes). The reader is most interested in the vendor's character because of his melancholy existence and outlook on life. Five stories from *Horse and Two Goats, and Other Stories* are illustrated by Narayan's brother R. K. Laxman. The village peasant Muni meets a white man from the United States in the title story. The language barrier results in hilarious confusion regarding a statue and a pair of goats. Uncle, the second tale, is a masterpiece; the mystery surrounding a young boy's benevolent but inexplicably sinister uncle slowly comes to light. In *Annamalai* and *A Breath of Lucifer*, two humble, devoted servants are the focus. Annamalai is an eccentric gardener who has a hard-to-please master as his partner. Sam is a Christian male nurse in the autobiographical preface to *A Breath of Lucifer*. Annamalai and Sam both end up leaving their masters unceremoniously, guided by their own impulses. *Seventh House*, which deals with astrology and superstitions and may be a continuation of *The White Flower in Lawley Road*, examines the touching devotion of a husband to his ill wife. The characters in each of the five stories are examined; beautiful native practices are used to enhance each story. The collection's predominant style is unpretentious and casual. A superb retrospective collection of 28 tales, published specifically for American readers, *Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories* The majority of the stories come from earlier volumes. Numerous highly favorable reviews were published in the leading weeklies and periodicals when the collection first hit the American scene. This collection adds to the evidence that Malgudi is a great imaginary landscape. Narayan's first collection's title story reaffirms storytelling as a fundamental human activity. Somal's residents lived in a state of perpetual enchantment. Nambi, the storyteller, was the enchanter. Nambi, on the other hand, remains utterly silent for the rest of his life, despite having entertained his audience for a number of years with tales. The first collection of Narayan's fiction, *The Grandmother's Tale and Selected Stories* (also known as *The Grandmother's Tale, and Other Stories* in the paperback edition), attempted to provide a comprehensive overview of his more than fifty years of output. *Lawley Road* and *A Horse and Two Goats* are two of the stories that have been extensively anthologized for a number of years. Others, like the title story and *Salt and Sawdust*, make their North American debuts in this collection. The characters in many of the stories are simple

but interesting people who live their daily lives in India. They show the richness of Indian life as a collection, which combines Western technological modernity with ancient traditions, but Narayan's stories do not draw your focus to the setting. Instead, they focus on the characters, demonstrating with wry wit the wonderful absurdity that makes people human and the ironic turns that shape their lives. Narayan, for instance, depicts a housewife without children who cannot cook because her taste buds are so bad that she cannot distinguish between salt and sawdust. While his wife concentrates on writing a novel, her poor husband is forced to take over the cooking. However, when the novel is finally finished, the wife receives advice from the publisher to publish it as a cookbook. Narayan was an expert in the minute details that give domestic scenes the air of authenticity and significance. In spite of the fact that the wife is mocked in *Salt and Sawdust*, she is a fully developed character. Narayan never loses his sense of humor and admiration for humans despite their flaws. The story Narayan's mother told him about his own great-grandmother served as the inspiration for *The Grandmother's Tale*. A young boy who is sent to live with his strict grandmother tells the story in a winding way. He initially resents his new situation, but the story she tells him, in bits and pieces, about her own grandmother's life gradually seduces him. The grandmother's story has a strong Indian setting. At the age of seven, the heroine gets married in a traditional way, but her husband leaves her for a new woman. She clearly traverses the Indian subcontinent in order to reclaim her husband. In a strange twist, getting her husband back costs her independence. In contrast to many of Narayan's works, *The Grandmother's Tale* features a strong and admirable central female character. The boy narrator's framing device emphasizes the story's timeless and universality, making it equally effective for a young Indian boy in a small village as it is for adult readers worldwide. Narayan, a traditional storyteller, sought to convey the vitality of his native India, a land brimming with eccentricity, poverty, tradition, and inherited culture. Narayan came to the realization that the short story is the best format for utilizing the wide range of topics that are available. A novel is a completely different proposition because it is centered on a major theme and leaves out a lot of the other material that is available. On the other hand, concentrated miniatures of human experience in all its opulence in short stories can cover a larger scope. Narayan was concerned about the ordinary Indian's heroic qualities. John Updike asserts that everyone is complex, surprising, and deserving of a break. I believe this to be Narayan's moral, which is difficult to improve. His

social range and his successful attempt to portray the entire population dishonor the majority of American authors, who may also be accused of ignoring too much of what is visible. Narayan's narrative voice guides the reader through his comic and ironic world with an unobtrusive wit, all while maintaining a dignified simplicity, honesty, and sincerity. Thirty pieces, all of which had previously appeared in the Madras Hindu, are included in the first of R.K. Narayan's three volumes of short stories, *An Astrologer's Day and Stories*, published in 1947. As a result, they had been written for one of India's best English-language newspapers, which means that the readers must have read them and enjoyed them. Even though most of the British, American, and Anglo Indians living in South India would read this, the majority of them would be Indians. It's a crucial point. Narayan is an Indian author who writes for Indian readers of English. He is not speaking to Westerners about India. Naturally, Narayan's reputation in Europe and America is based on his book. An Indian journalist was adored by his fellow Indians when he published *Astrologer's Day* in London after Narayan. Despite the fact that Narayan's short stories have been well-received in the Hindu for more than three decades, paradoxically, his novels have not been as well-received in India. In fact, I have discovered that three of them are only available with the greatest difficulty. Another book hunter reports that the top Bangladeshi bookshop in Narayan's hometown, Mysore, had no Narayan books for sale, and when a clerk was asked why, he said there was no demand for his works. Narayan has stated that only 200 of the 275,000 residents of the city of Mysore, where he has spent the majority of his life, have ever read any of his books, despite the fact that Mysore being regarded as an important cultural and educational hub. The fact of the matter is that Narayan's books were first published in England, then in the United States, and then in India in paperback editions that were unappealing.