

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53032/tcl.2017.2.2.02>

A Complex Transition of Adolescent Mind to Adulthood in R.K Narayana's *Swami and Friends* and *The Bachelor of Arts*

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Abstract

The life stages such as infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age are developmental phases, each with its own biological, psychological, and social characteristics, through which individuals pass over the course of their lives. The most complex stages which we find difficult to understand is *Adolescence* because, this stage is a critical mixture of unique needs and problems. Adolescence is the period of developmental transition between childhood and adulthood, involving multiple physical, intellectual, personality, and social developmental changes. Adulthood is a state or condition of being fully grown or mature. The aim of writing this research paper is to highlight the theme of complexities of Transition from Adolescent Mind to Adulthood. R.K. Narayan is among the best known and most widely read Indian Novelist who wrote in English. His novels help us to understand children and their psychological problems in a very good and organized manner.

Keywords: Transition, Colonial problem, Adolescence, Realism, Regionalism

R.K. Narayan full name was Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Iyer Narayanaswamy, was an Indian writer, best known for his works set in the fictional south Indian town of *Malgudi*. He was leading author of early Indian literature in English, along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. He is the most artistic of the Indian writers, his soul aim being to give aesthetic satisfaction. Most of his novels depict the condition of colonial India, childhood period, familial relationship etc. He witnessed nearly a century of change in his native India and captures it in fiction of uncommon warmth and vibrancy. In a review of Narayan's work published in *The New Yorker*, Updike called him a writer of vanishing breed – the writer as a citizen; one who identifies completely with his subjects and with a belief in the significance of humanity. The two novels collected here named *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts* were written during

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British rule, bring colonial India into intimate focus through the narrative gifts of this master of literary realism.

In both of the novels the place *Malgudi* had been mentioned prominently. It is a typical a South Indian town and it has been presented in his work vividly and realistically. Both the novels have same theme regarding a transition of adolescent mind to adulthood. In the very first novel *Swami and Friends* the story is about a boy named Swaminathan who lived in the village of *Malgudi*. In the story Swami suffers a lot of harsh experiences which have a great impact on his innocent mind. There are some circumstances which changed his adolescent mind to adulthood. The maturity in his character is due to his friends, family, teachers etc. In the second novel *The Bachelor of Arts* the protagonist Chandran faces same circumstances as Swaminathan has in *Swami and Friends*. Chandran is a college going student living in *Malgudi* and friendship play a considerable role at various points of his life. His friendship provides him in leeway for sharing his emotions, feelings, his success and failures on an equal footing. His family bonds play a significant role in his growing up from adolescent to adulthood. So in the both novels the protagonist ends up as a mature person from his life experiences. R.K. Narayan's most of the novels also deal with the same concept. The novelist has not merely looked at the boy world from the boy point of view.

First of all i will discuss about theme of the growth of emotional maturity in human mind. R.K. Narayan's novel *The Bachelor of Arts* best depicts this theme. In the novel the protagonist Chandran's mind has a lot of growth in emotional maturity. Step by step he has become a much matured person. All his dreams and aspirations have changed in the story. Human mind has many stages but when we are going to cross the particular stage, then have to face many difficulties. Same is the case with Chandran who has a different mind in college and when he is a wanderer in *Madras*. He is greatly influenced by his History Professor when he appreciates him for his success in declamation. There is a sense of maturity in his character when he has ordered his younger brother to concentrate in his own studies. Then there is another incident when he feels upset after get to know not matching of stars with the girl. He gets angry with the brothers question when he asks him

These conversations show how he is disturbed psychological with the present conditions. There is a sense of maturity when he starts to participate in the debate and accept the proposal of secretary of the society. The behavior of his English teacher also disturbs his mind. There is an impact of colonial rule in India over his thinking. Family and familial values also helps him in molding his mind. In the present story step by step his psychology has changed according to the changing conditions and has made him a emotionally matured person. When he gets to know about his rejection in a marriage proposal with Malathi then he runs away from the house and goes to

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Madras. This is due to his adolescent mind but after sometimes his psychology takes a more matured turning point and he comes back to his home. All these incidents make a great change or a growth in his emotional maturity

Second novel *Swami and friends* is related with the circumstances and causes, which changes the psychology of the human life. The psychology of every person changes due to the ever-changing circumstances and causes. It is aptly said that the behavior of the person is the mirror of his own psychology. In the *Swami and Friends* Swaminathan has faced many circumstances which were helpful to made him a matured person. The novel tells us how Swaminathan suffer a lot of problems in his life and while facing these difficulties his mind turns more mature. He is an innocent boy who has many friends like Mani and Rajam. The character of Rajam impresses him a lot in the whole story. Swaminathan is greatly influence by him due to one dialogue of Rajam when he invites Mani for a fight and then Rajam says to Mani

“Meet me at the river, near Nallappa’s grove,
tomorrow evening” Swami And Friendship P. 90

In the novel Swami’s mother plays very significant role to change the life of Swami. She is kind and affectionate mother who loves her son, but also sees to it that her love does not spoil the son. That is why she tells her husband that Swami goes out in the afternoon and loaf about with his friends. The impression created by Narayan in his novels is that of an ordinary living his humdrum day to day life, struggling with circumstances and growing wiser and more matured through this struggle.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that R.K. Narayan’s novels always depict universality. The present two novels which I have taken are the best examples of his opinion about complex transition from adolescent mind to adulthood. The role of circumstances is very essential and powerful to build emotional maturity and complexity in human nature in the characters of both the novels. Psychological growth and complexities of human mind help to understand the theme of the novels. These are written, in simple but in dignified language. It is an ideal work for study in the school and colleges of the English speaking world. In his both novels, there is a vivid description of children’s world, through school and colleges.

Both themes are correlated to each other. Firstly, we deal with the growth of human mind in R.K. Narayan’s novel *The Bachelor of Art* Chandran, after facing a lot of difficulties in his life, turns into a much matured person. Family, friends and society have been the essential parts in molding Chandran’s psychology as a grown up person. Secondly we deal with the circumstances, causes, complexities in changing human psychology. The story of *Swami And Friends* has been discussed in second chapter. The present circumstance in Swaminathan’s life also changed his psychology. In the novel he is greatly influenced by the

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character of Rajam. Understanding the meaning of adolescence is important because adolescents are the future of any society. The impression created by Narayan in his novels is that of an ordinary living his humdrum day to day life, struggling with circumstances and growing wiser and more matured through this struggle.

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