CHAPTER-II

THE CHILD’S EYE-VIEW OF LIFE
Chapter II

The Child's Eye-view of Life

A. Narayan's Childlike Attitude Towards Life

One of the most important features of Narayan is profound creative insights for an increased understanding of children. R.K. Narayan's child characters take their growth and development in language. Here the categorical distinctions between mother tongue and English language do not operate as restraining features of each other. What all that is required is a matter of insights into the infant fantasy in the role of the development of personality. This insight into fantasy is an absolute necessity. In creating his Malgudi, R.K. Narayan successfully demonstrates that he creates a possible localised ethnic culture in which the infant fantasy ultimately works as the greatest creative purpose for the author. It is in this context that the expression 'child's eye-view of life' becomes very important.

The cultural modalities of Malgudi as created by R.K. Narayan, whether it deals with the child characters or the grown-ups, invariably envisages a rare childlike potentiality and pre-occupation of childlike performances, decision makings and execution of the decision, in one form or the other. While a grown-up executes their decisions and performances in accordance with a programmed blueprint of his actions, in the course of his achievement, a child always performs himself, quite instinctively, with a glaring defect or short-coming. This out and out defective manner of performing himself in a child, is his unique way of seeking the concerns and compassion of the world of people around him.

The Malgudi culture, with its own childlike and child visioned characters has a dual aspect. While it enchantingly unites us with all those who inhabit Malgudi, it also enables us to distinguish ourselves and realise that we are substantially different in our times.
resources from the primitivist faulty people of Malgudi. This is the child's style of thinking. Even the grown-up characters of R.K. Narayan abounds fictional fascination in it.

Raju, the protagonist of The Guide is introduced to the reading public, as an enthusiastic adolescent, performing himself as a parable purveyor all unfounded, inauthentic information about the tourist importance of this place. It is just possible that he might be telling an attractive story of the place, and the factual information that he gives has no historical validity and truth in itself. Precisely speaking, Raju is more an enthusiastic teller of stories than a real guide, giving the historical validity of truth. Raju himself is conscious of the fact that he is under the forced necessity to tell the enchanting stories about Malgudi and its historical past.

The tourist themselves are more fascinated by the manner in which he tells the story (for he exactly adopts for himself the enthusing methods of the traditional granny telling the stories), than with the veritable historical stories of the real historical nature of what all he tells. In this context, he is like a child that tells out and out files of lies to his elders, with an intention of exciting their sympathy and affection on instances. Raju's real purpose, as we all know, is in his immediate necessity to win the minds of the tourist and extract from them all the favours, including money.

The manner in which Rosie gets attracted to Raju is exactly in the nature of a fabricated fantasy and fairytale, wherein the hero and heroine are invariably mend for each other. But, Rosie is a dancer-wife of Marco, who in his own turn is a relentless gravity-filled, serious scholar. Right from the beginning, it is obvious that Rosie is not in adjacent with her scholarly husband, Marco. That again is probably a child like defect in her
child like defect in the character of Raju is in his excessive verbal enthusiasm and in the manner in which he uses it in his personal favour. Whatever it is, the enthusiastic manner of Raju awokes the attractive crisps in the mind of Rosie, as a result of which she even goes to the extent of deserting her husband, Marco and running away with Raju.

Children, when they are not in amity and comfort in the company of their elders, they often prefer to, specially distance themselves and seek a protective asylum in the places and hide-outs of their choice, may be it is sometimes hiding under the cot in the corner. Rosie’s manner of running away from Marco is comparable to that of a suffocated and smothered child, distancing herself from her own husband. One should not forget here that Rosie was trained in classic dance. Her innate and intimate verse for dance does not find a dignified place of recognition in her scholarly husband, whose life interest is in making a archaeological studies of historical monuments. Marco, himself may be having a possible defects in his personality (Narayan suggests it quite vibrantly) in over looking the live presence of an artistic model in his wife Rosie and diverting his all embracing attention to the dead rock pillars and monuments, quite ironically all in the name of art appreciation.

In fact, almost all the characters of R.K Narayan suffer from this kind of anxiety, born of a practical need to dehome themselves from their surroundings. In the story of Jagan, the protagonist of The Vendor of Sweets, the child like enthusiasm towards the monkey-god, Hanuman, becomes another streak of childishness and child like manner of playing hide and seek with the practical realities of life. The following words of Norman N Holland, in the context of child’s style of thinking are worth quoting here. Says Holland
"For the, as is well-known, a child’s style of thinking differs from an adolescent’s or a adult’s. Young children can often propose brilliant concepts, but they cannot take them further, they cannot concentrate for long, they day-dream, perhaps... because too many neural connections interfere with sustained logical thoughts possibly the adolescent changes in the brain explain why well-adjusted children can become schizophrenic in adolescence, or why children between four and ten can learn language or musical instrument more easily than adults, but... it is only in adolescence that we can learn to solve complex, abstract problems at all" (7)

It is evident from the manner in which R K Narayan’s characters executed their lives in somewhat a haphazard manner or in the easy-come manner of what all they desire to have. In this easy-come properties of life entranced in their personality is what it conforms them to the child like faulty ways of living their lives. At every turn and mutation of their life, there is either a tragic flaw or a comic error that ultimately revolve them into confused human entities, again in a child like form of relating themselves with the outside world of their own culture.

B. Primary Activity of A Child

R.K.Narayan upholds the delightful and playful manner of upholding and demonstrating these critical discerning qualities in the characters of Swami and Friends. The psychological primeval manner in which they react to the grown-up man’s world around them is in itself an act of criticism and opposition. The modern psychologist confirm that the primal mode of child’s activity, even when it is naively destructive according to the sophisticated manners of discrimination of the elders, as transparently
honest and instinctively critical and as David Holbrooke in his "Creativity in Children's
Writings and Contemporary Culture", rightly remarks "Psycho-analysis, in its post-
Freudian development, has gradually ceased to see culture as mere sublimated instinct, and
now sees it rather as a primary activity" (344-364)

Needless to say, that this 'primary activity' in itself is a typical child's mode of
insight into the relative manners of life as lived by the elders and the children. These
relative distinctions, as implemented by R K Narayan in his novels, offers a wide range of
criticism of life. On reading his Swami and Friends the automatic reaction of all the
readers belonging to different age groups confirms the fact that there is plenty of freedom
and joy, which the elders always miss because of the constrains imposed by the
sophisticated measures of life. The enthusiastic manner of Swami in wilfully transposing all
sophistication of civilised life vindicates that freedom play, and dreaming are the real
substantial modes of 'primary activity'.

It all demonstrates that R K Narayan's art is invariably characterised by a great
respect for child's existence. The state of innocence struggles in its own way for a true
apprehension of life. The manner of Swami conducting his life is an education. Here his
innocence becomes a true mode of insight when it is not particularly attended by adult
knowhow and all such sophistication, it automatically descends and connects itself with
the fond memories of childhood. Inspite of abundant achievements, both on the instinctive
and 'primary activity' components, S. Krishnan in his editorial note complementary states
"His (Swami) life is full of incidents without accomplishments" (17)
C. The Mythic Approach

As a matter of fact, the very theme of *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* has its source in the ancient pre-historic lore as perfected by Aesoph's fables of the ancient Greece, in Vishnusharma's, Kathas and Sagar, animals and creatures take upon themselves all the human dispositions and behave themselves as human beings in a given imaginary situation.

The very expression 'cock and bull stories' that is altogether unbelievable stories takes its origin in the fables of the sort mentioned above. In *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, somehow, a circus tiger slips out of the cage and starts moving freely in the streets. While everyone else was scared of the open movements of the tiger, it is Babu alone, probably out of his intuition that all species in the world, inspite of their mutual discordances and antagonism, are likely to become good friends and amicable partners of each other. Quite fearlessly Babu befriends the tiger and moves alone with it in the streets with a great gleam of victory in his eyes, in the street. Here, Narayan gives a kind of mythic touch to this story.

D. Escape From The Grown-ups World.

A child always prefers to slip out of the monotony of the house and the continual manner of tautness of life in the house. In ganging up with other children, they secure for themselves a lazy and free time for play as well as aimlessly wandering in the streets. They make fun, child-chat and purposelessly discuss among themselves all sort of things which they find to be inconqueros and unnecessary in accordance with their own vision of life. They even go to the extent of mimicking their own elders without intending any great harm. We have an age-old saying that the lazy man's brain is a devil's workshop.

Children usually prefer to be a lazy stock so much so that they may avoid the rigours of practical life of serious work in the house. Very often as it happens in the
Swami and Friends, Swami slips out in a secret and filthy manner from the house. Whenever he finds his father or mother cohering him to study or do some useful work, Swami runs away and seeks asylum in the lap of his grand mother. He knows that his grand mother invariably pampers and fiddles him to his best satisfaction. The manner in which the children pre-occupy themselves with un-motivated free and frank mischief, is available in the way that they exchange slips of paper silently to each other with writings like "Are you a man?" and "you are the son of a dog. If you dont answer this" (20).

The modern psychologists confirm that, in addition to the atmospheric surroundings of their own day-to-day practical life, they nurture in themselves a parallel imaginative world view of their own, which in all probability is comparatively more comforting and more soothing for themselves. This separate world view of a child is invariably born of his own brilliant conception, but then children, because of the innumerable conflicting neurons interfering with their brilliant concepts, usually leave out the concept for themselves. But then, viewed objectively, the child's conceptions are quite often more sophisticated and brilliant, without the child himself conceiving them as such.

E. Malgudi Children

Modern psychologists admit that children are virtually capable of prevailing themselves simultaneously in two or more different worlds. That is to say that children are capable of living in the practical world, as well as in the autistically imagined world. Simultaneously we have innumerable examples of such child like operations in the novels of R K Narayan (Raju (The Guide), Jagan (The Vendor of Sweets), Swami (Swami and Friends) and the boy in "Naga" are some such examples who practically survived in multiple worlds simultaneously. The boy in "Naga" literally believes in the myth that the
“Naga” would develop wings in course of time and behaves himself accordingly. In the case of Jagan of The Vendor of Sweets, the imaginary world vision that he compounded in himself as a possible course of life for Mali, his son, always remains, suppressed and unexpressed in him. The dream-vision that he nurtured in himself for his son becomes available in the half-hearted manner in which Jagan accepts what all Mali does, even when he resents and hates the ways of life that Mali adopted for himself. Jagan’s affection for his son is the potential force in him to agree for what all Mali does. In his hearts of hearts, Jagan never reconciled with Mali and his ways As a result he suffers in himself a typical pain, getting hotter and hotter as a never exploding volcano. His is a typical case of transposing the childlike manner of surviving in different worlds simultaneously, into a bitter truth of reality in life.

Raju’s (The Guide) case also falls into some such double personalities contending for supremacy in his authentic self. To start with, Raju is a sinner, deprived of all ethical norms of life. In his dreamy constrainious enthusiasm, he distances Rosie from her husband Marco, by way of playing the role of a paramour. In his case, the dual personality complex comes to the forefront in the latter part of his life, after serving the prison for forging the signature of Rosie on the cheque. Raju, in the second half of the novel, functions himself as automaton, without any will of his own in the decision he makes. Such is the phenomenal complexity in the character of Raman (The Hungry Child).

The most important aspect of R K Narayan’s novels concerns with the absolute possibility of promoting sympathy and understanding between human beings. In his Hard-times, Charles Dickens introduces the profound phrase “the childhood of mine,” as a matter
of fact or our moral sense of being emerges out of a rich imaginative life’ Even without our conscious awareness of the fact we apprehend the richness of the life thought.

F. The Ambitious Child

Referring to The Guide, R K Narayan makes the following misplaced judgement. Says M K Naik

“The Guide does not manifestly have the limited aim of the exposure of comic absurdity in the lives of its characters. It seems to aim much higher to deal with a moral dilemma in the life of its protagonist. A dilemma which illustrates the all-pervading irony of life itself, by raising overwhelming questions about all human motives and thereby highlighting the essential ambiguities of human conditions” (86)

At the outset, to arrive at the problem of ‘essential ambiguities of human conditions’, leave aside ‘a moral dilemma of the life of the protagonist’, is in itself more or less a hasty judgement. R K Narayan, in The Guide, as well as in all his novels and short stories, neither proposes nor aims to resolve any big ‘moral dilemma’ or ‘ambiguities of human conditions’. Narayan’s highest commitment is in telling a story, a story that has an immediate perceptual experience on the readers mind. The story of Raju, after his release from the jail, certainly takes a serious narrative tone. But the seriousness in the narration is obviously concerned with conscious urgent manner of making a truthful, honest and transparent confession of the whole of his life. This kind of urgency on the part of Raju is more like a child’s manner of sincerely telling out his minds concerns about what all that happened overtly through his actions. A child never falls into any great moral dilemma’ as he does not have any serious conceptual understanding of life. Raju right from his childhood is an exquisite personality, who puts his own personal insight into the matters of
everybody and anybody. This is what he learnt automatically as a tourist guide. As a tourist guide, it had been Raju's immediate business concern to solve his clients' problems, then and there, almost instantly. This needful trait in Raju as a tourist guide came to him in the manner of a child instantly and instantaneously characterising a world around him for his exclusive perceptual experience. In this act of perceptual anxiousness, an average child never enters into the moral dilemmas. He simply has a complex to take Puck (The Midsummer Nights Dreams) like mischievous peep into others. Thus, "It was his (Raju's) nature to get involved in other people's interest and activities" (8).

The expression 'other people's interest and activities' is very important in the context of Raju's child-like manner of approach to life. A grown-up man takes a wishful peep into the affairs and businesses of others. To become curious of 'interest and activities' of people is a major paragative of children. It is the sheer force of habit that ultimately forced him to take a personal interest into the interests and activities of Rosie. In fact, he had contributed for extracting and distancing Rosie from her dogmatic, authoritarian and unfeeling husband Marco. Rosie had her personal ambition to be a great dancer, and Raju helped her to become one. To that extent, the plot has all the material of a fairytale, in the context of which the hero rescues the heroine from the vampirish clutches of the giant. The fairytale fabric of the initial stages of the life of Raju, starts taking a diabolic transformation into an insolvable problem of life. Both, Rosie and Raju come into a close knit togetherness. When Rosie became a great dancer, with fame and name, Raju becomes her private secretary, looking after all her dance engagements, as well as her monetary affairs. It is at this stage that Marco makes a spacious gesture of entering into the life of Rosie, by way of presenting a cheque in her name. It is the same
Marco, the committed antiquarian, who studies the ancient pillars and rocks with a great personal passion after absolutely overlooking and blindfolding himself to the living greatness of his wife, Rosie as an aspiring dancer.

It is at this stage that Raju comes to his rescue, and in making her a famous dancer. Raju's contribution is not less. He stood by her in her difficult days, as well as on her days of eminence and prominence. From Raju's point of view, there is a sort of unwritten human bondage between himself and Rosie. Here starts the childlike fixation of Raju in craving for the exclusive possession of Rosie for himself. He certainly encourages her in the furtherance of her artistic faculty, but he cannot even stand the passing idea of Rosie being distanced away from him, even when it was Marco, her old husband. Here, the relation of Raju and Rosie is profound in its intensity. In Marco, offering a big cheque to Rosie was perceived by Raju as Marco's initial gesture to take away Rosie from Raju. It is in this troubled state of mind that he childishly, even foolishly, forged the cheque; and the later consequences are obvious. He was sent to prison and was required to serve a term.

But from his own point of view, the manner in which Rosie, not only coldshouldered him but also resentfully distanced him becomes, altogether unw withstandable to Raju and his childlike mind. He certainly represented and regretted for what all that happened. But then, for the childlike curiosity of the author himself, as well as that of the reader, Raju's story should not end up with a mere penal survitude in the prison itself. There should be some more things that must have happened to Raju, and it is in these inevitable corollaries of his life that his childlike innocent suffering manner of disposition comes to the forefront. M. K. Naik considers this latter portion of the life of Raju as an 'ironic vision' in the sense that the whole extension of the story of Raju...
prison itself. There should be some things more that must have happened to Raju, and it is in these inevitable corollaries of his life that his child-like innocent suffering manner of disposition comes to the forefront.

M.K. Naik considers this latter portion of the life of Raju as an 'ironic vision' in the sense that the whole extension of the story of Raju is a sort of mock heroic parallel, which is in accordance with the imaginary demands of poetic truth and poetic justice. Naik again arrives at the morbid conclusion that chief 'motive' in the latter extension of The Guide is 'sainthood thrust upon an undeserving protagonist'. Naik, like any other critics of R.K. Narayan, arrived at an argonious conclusion that this sainthood somehow was not only desired but also craved by Raju, the protagonist. As a matter of fact, from what all its perspires in the latter part of the novel, there is a constant and continual desire that Raju always wanted to unburden heavy weight of the self, by way of making a clear confession and also of what really he was.

There is a way of understanding this sainthood thrust on Raju. As a matter of fact, Raju being forced in a situation like in the context of metaphysical evil that it is the essential ambiguity of the human condition. A child, so long he subsits in the perceptual manner of subsitting in life, no conceptual ambiguities of human conditions touch him. As a matter of fact, Raju does not have any conceptual idea of this sainthood that is being thrust upon him, just like a growing child never has an understanding of the moral dilemmas and the 'essential ambiguities of human conditions' in the process of his growing up into manhood.

This way of understanding Raju's transformation in the latter half of the novel, as a symbolic gesture of Raju, quite unintentionally but quite instinctively trying to acquire for...
himself a sort of oblivious rigours into a state of innocence and naivety, the prime characteristic features of childhood. After his release from jail, there are two psychological alternatives open for him. He could have nurtured in himself a hatred towards Rosie and a desire to seek revenge on the person, who played the principal role of bringing his variable downfall. Incidentally, she came into his life quite innocously and innocently, and after having acquired for herself all the fame and money, started cold shouldering him.

As a matter of fact, Rosie should not have resorted to such severe and callous treatment towards her erstwhile benefactor. But, the inevitable happened, and the other course open for him is in his repentent desire to take back upon himself his original childlike inquisitive manner of involving himself “in other peoples interest and activities”. (The Guide, 8) This trait of Raju is highly satisfying for him as a manner of showing honest interest in guiding the people as a tourist guide.

But the very title The Guide is ironic in the sense that Raju, who presumptuously takes to the vocation of guiding the tourist, does not know who to guide himself in his own life. It is this incapacity to guide himself in a worldly wise manner that ultimately renders him into a unfortunate patient, instead of being an agent, who is susceptible for all suggestions and ideas even when they are detrimental to his own safety and preservation. The second force of consistently and continually regressing into a kind of child animity is adopted by him after he comes back from the jail.

During the second phase The Guide, dramatically opens up with the meeting between Raju and Velan. Raju is freshly released from the jail and Velan is a simple villager. They both are strangers for each other. It is this meeting with Velan that paves a
new way of life for Raju. It is in this encounter with Velan, the simple minded villager, that Raju regains for himself his original faculties of enjoying all sorts of personal freedoms in guiding the tourist.

At the outset Velan, in his own innocent villager’s manner takes Raju to be, the only wise and well-informed person Velan seeks Raju’s advise on his own domestic problem of his ignorant half-sister, who refuses to marry the youth choosen by Velan. Somehow, Raju advices her to consider Velan’s choice positively, the girl suddenly becomes transformed, and she attributes the change of her heart to the benevolent look which Raju gave her. She even speaks of him as her saviour. It is all just possible that Raju had regained for himself that childlike attractive glare in his looks, particularly when he sensibly advised Velan’s sister to marry the boy choosen by Velan. This is the first instance that started elevating Raju into the stature of a saint into the innocuous minds of the villagers.

At the same time, it is also a fact that Raju never wanted to be a saint or a spiritual guide. He is always conscious of the fact that he was only a tourist guide. As a tourist guide, it had been Raju’s vocation to solve the problems of his clients, rightly or wrongly quite instantly, by way of imparting upon them all the enthusiastic informations they liked. In the present context, Raju agrees to advise Velan, when he gratefully tries to touch Raju’s feet. It is in this context, that the author’s comment underlines the specific import of the psychological change and development that was coming to him. R K Narayan ironically states here “He felt he was attaining a stature of a saint” (59).

But as a matter of reality, Raju felt in himself the child like charitable manner of involving himself in other peoples interests and activities. From this angle of Raju’s
thought, nothing that Raju does hereafter become harmful to anybody else. But, then with the same old charitable and gladly manner of standing in the eminence and good looks of others, Raju gradually entraps himself, by way of gaining for himself a false reputation of being a saintly personality. All the villagers and others, impose upon him a grand design of sainthood, which ultimately becomes complete in his child like voluntary manner of presumptuously attaining a saint’s matrydom. For the whole world it is just saint’s matrydom of Raju, but for himself it is only a gesture of recovering for himself his original child like stands and personality, even when it is the utmost painful process of completely annihilating him.

Raju is being looked upon by the villagers as a saviour. The irony of the fact lies that when he was meditating with closed eyes, concerning a speculation as to where he would go next, the villagers unfortunately thought that he was lost in a deep saintly meditation. There are many more coincidences that endeowed upon him the widespread rumour of Raju been a great saint. An unexpected return of a promisary note by a cousin in a village, is regarded by the villagers as due to Raju’s holy influence. In the overall estimates of the people of the world, Raju is a ‘Sadhu’. But it is a fact that Raju himself never made any conscious efforts in this directions. He also does not have a mind to deceive the people.

But at the sametime, he does not have any idea about what he should do next. Since the villagers are pretty generous in supplying his food, unasked, he confirms in himself that he has no where to go. In quite an involuntary manner, even when it is against his will and desire, he decides to play seriously the sainthood role thrust upon him.
But at the same time, he does not have any idea about what he should do next. Since the villagers are pretty generous in supplying his food, unasked, he confirms in himself that he has no where to go. In quite an involuntary manner, even when it is against his will and desire, he decides to play seriously the saintliness role thrust upon him. He decides “to look as brilliant as he could manage, let drop germs of thoughts from his lips, assume all the radiance available” (30).

All this is not something new for him. This was what he was always doing to the tourists in his early stages of life. In the present context, he even delivered lectures to the village boys. Here, the authorial voice informs that he is “hypnotised by his own voice... he felt himself growing in stature... no one was more impressed by the grandeur of the whole thing than Raju himself” (42).

The author wants to suggest that Raju’s condition here is that of a flattered child, pampered to the extent of invoking upon himself, even a self-inflicted destruction. It is in everybody’s knowledge that a little bit of flattery, elevates and extents a child to unimaginable heights of comprehending himself as all important, in been a coveted protagonist. But, however this child like weakness in Raju puts him into difficulties, particularly when the villagers invite him for a discourse.

There are only two things in the world on which he can speak with due authority, one is his elopement of Rosie and the other is his jail life. So, any amount of discourse or discussion is not at all possible for him. But, there is that original trait of Raju as a tourist guide in chattering with the tourist in all sorts of misguiding gibber. But, however, he was certainly a very ever circumlocutor. As a tourist guide, in his earlier incarnation, whenever he felt short of proper and convincing expositions about the old relics, he used to tell the
tourist to gaze at the monument from various angles in order to appreciate the mystical allure and grandeur of the relics. This is only a psychological technique that he used to play upon the tourist. And this deceptive trait of Raju's verbal deception and speaking lies, is a matter of self-satisfying fun for children. Raju seriously advises the villagers to go into meditation. All these tricks worked well in providing food for him and the most desired place of height and honour in the village.

In the meantime, number of times he tried to speak out his deceitful past to Velan and all others. But, however, the child-like innocent manner categorically always eluded him. Despite of his keen desire to speak out everything about himself in order to unburden his overburdened self of the past, the villagers never allowed him this opportunity. They always glorified him, and again like a self-satisfied child on instances, Raju started enjoying the comforts and privileges extended by the villagers, quite freely, and that too with great devotions. It is in this context that Raju virtually gained back the initial child-like charity, of continually spending his life through pleasant perceptions of affections leaving altogether aside the heavy, burdensome concept of life. R K Narayan is extending the story of Raju in this pleasant manner only to revert the whole process in its final analysis.

The inevitable happened after three years. A severe draught struck the village. The villagers, in their own ignorant manner thought that Raju could emancipate them after bringing rain through his supernatural power. Raju knows for certain that he does not have any supernatural powers. But he cannot willingly run away from the situation. And the final apocalypse comes to Raju in the form of self-destruction, voluntarily assumed upon himself.
There is a profound authorial suggestion here, that one day or the other, the primal felicities of childhood are bound to be destroyed in the process of growing into adulthood from childhood. This total destruction of childhood happens usually in a very casual manner in everybody’s life. But then, the very destruction of childlikeness, however eradic, simple, controversial and callous it might be, it passes itself and its ominous disappearance from life is always a matter of great tragedy. It is this tragedy or the inevitable loss of the bliss of childhood and all its controversial complexities that gets represented in the life story of Raju (The Guide).

If Raju’s death at the end of the novel suggestively comes as a self-invoked rigour into the primieval innocence and naivety, both born of a profound vaxation on painfully experiencing the irrational pageant of the world around him, Raju’s moments of life and his childlike desire have nothing to do with the mundane world around him. Until he forged the cheque given by Marco in favour of Rosie, Raju was mischievously active not even taking seriously the civic loss of the world in which he has to survive. Moral lapse in his character already took place quite some years before, when he unwillingly eloped Rosie. When he forged Rosie’s cheque, he had shown again a blind childish trait of transgressing the laws of the land, quite deliberately and without any fear. Until that time he is an active agent, conforming his activity more or less in irrational manner.

The straddling irrational bravado of Raju in being active to the extent of committing an illegal act, he acts like a self-appointed agent. When he was brought to books through imprisonment, he becomes a passive patient. Number of times, Raju wanted to gain for himself a relief and freedom from the so-called sainthood thrust upon him by the village folks. But it could not be easily possible for him. Everyday he made an
attempt to make a neat and clean confession of the simple life of the past, quite ironically, he was thought to be too modest to be believed. In a way, he self-endowed upon himself a way of life of a saint forcefully thrust upon him, again out of a childlike innocence and naivety of the villagers born of the ignorance and illiteracy cojinate with pure infantile imagination. Raju’s predicament as a saint has a saddling and telling effect on the child and childlike readers.

G. The Motherly Child

In the “Hungry Child”, we have absolutely a different story. Here we have a mischievous child who quite innocously and unintendendingly exposes the world of elders. In general, the world of elders is replete with some false sentiment, unfounded belief and impossible dreams. As a matter of fact, the point of view in the Hungry child immediately goes on shifting from Gopu, the hungry child and Raman, a signboard painter. Gopu as a mischievous child is slightly a fictional extension of Balu, of The Financial Expert.

While Balu is the case of the spoiled child because of excessive pampering by the parents, Gopu is the case of the child who simply does not bother about parents, or for that matter any elders. Usually children are fondly attached to the parents. When they are set aside from their parents, or the elder members in their family, they become insconsolably restless. But Gopu’s case is altogether different. Here the author’s idea is of a naughty and fearless child, who would not resent from his naughtiness. Infact he was lost in the ‘mela’ and he was collected by the sponsors of the ‘mela’. The sponsors were making frequent announcements about the lost child. They were asking the parents to come to their central office and collect the child.
Raman, the painter of signs is restless gentleman because of his personal reasons. In fact he is a guilted lover. The marriage of Raman and Daisy was fixed, but about the time the marriage was to be performed, Daisy preferred to run away with somebody else. From that time onwards, he became awfully restless like a child. Daisy’s act of deserting him was seriously, even painstakingly, disturbed and shattered his inner psychic. His romantic love towards Daisy psychologically turned into a sort of revenge passion in him.

On the occasion of the story, he is partaking himself from the ‘mela’. But he is not able to enjoy the ‘mela’ as such. The frequent announcements about the missed child in the ‘mela’ became an occasion for seriously reflecting upon the extent of carelessness of parents towards their children. He goes on thinking about his lady-love, Daisy and the possible imaginative manner in which they both could have made themselves ideal parents. If only she had not taken to the extremity of deserting him and opting to marry somebody else, Raman could never excuse Daisy for her callousness. The memory of her had always been haunting his inner memory. As a consequence, he developed a psychological hatred towards all men and women, as parents of little children. It is important to note here that in his earlier moments of love with Daisy, he was always dreaming about the possible children that would be born of their romantic love. But then, Daisy quite mercilessly shattered his dreams.

On hearing about the lost child in the ‘mela’ over the microphone, Raman was very curiously reminded of his erstwhile lady-love, in the company of whom he wanted to adopt himself into an ideal parent. With a sudden stroke of this idea further disturbing his inner imaginative contours, he becomes quite unprepared and unintendingly, a
compassionate male parent. He reflected upon possible cruelty on the part of the parent who did not come to collect the child in spite of incessant and continual announcement in the microphone. In a sort of eccentric and extra-authentic manner, he emulated upon himself quite imaginatively the possible role of a concerned male parent thinking wildly and revengefully about his Daisy. He marched quite casually towards the central office of the ‘mela’ where the child was kept. On seeing him the ‘mela’ owners presumed that he was the probable parent of the lost child. After due remonstrance and appraisals of the nature of good parents, the ‘mela’-sponsors handed over the child to Raman. In a sudden impulse Raman said “Yes”, when the manager asked him “Are you taking him away?”.

This sudden abnormal manner of Raman is difficult to understand. If Raman is conceived as a normal human being, there is something psychologically quite abnormal about him. He is probably a psycho-romantic dreamer, who takes the incidents and things around him in an extraordinary manner as though they concern him in a personal way, even when they are not. This trait in Raman, psychologically speaking, is the usual property of the child. Children quite inconsistently take the matters happening around them, somehow concern them in one way or the other, and react and reciprocate accordingly. This trait is quite meaningless. But then it is a phenomenal reality with children.

Thus, Narayan is fictionally tackling here, not one but two meaningless children. In their coming together, there is fun and profit, condensing to black comedy. Raman automatically accepting the child, is in itself an absurd predicament that is born of his inner psychological disturbances. In fact, the child here, as V. Nityanand Bhatt suggest “Attacks the pretension of the world of adults” (123)
Quite contrary to the normal rational properties of an average child, the lost child, when Raman first saw him, inspite of the fact that he was lost in the fair, Gopu remains quite unperturbed. He was sitting on a bench “vigorously swinging his legs and amusing himself by hoisting and bending and noisily rocking the bench much to the annoyance of the clerk” (79)

It is quite interesting, and even absurd to note that the child readily volunteered to accompany Raman, even when Raman is an absolute stranger for him. When he “held up to him the half-eaten candy, at which the boy shot forward as if from a catapulted, snatched it and buried his face on its pink mark” (225) Raman instinctively appreciated the wild gesture of the boy, or even he readily transposed himself, even without his knowledge, into a strange automatic and mesmerised character, quite involuntarily acting in accordance with the suggestions given by the “gumpy of his clerk” (225)

From what all it perspired of the dramatic interacting moment of the Raman and the child, convinced the clerk that Raman was the parent of the boy. When the clerk asked, “Are you taking him away?” (225) Raman showed no hesitation. When the office clerk asked, “Where is his mother?” (225), Raman as it happens in an absurd drama, quite involuntarily uttered, “Over there, waiting outside” (225). What exactly that prevailed in the mind of Raman is the manner in which he literally transposed himself into altogether an imaginary world, wherein he complexially compounded in himself that in his imaginary world, Daisy was his wife and the child on hand is the dream child of his, with Daisy as its mother. What exactly attracted him towards the boy is in his persumption that the boy was hungry, and in his own sympathetic reactionary manner became sentimentally drawn towards the child.
But the child is a virtual devil. He is not at all sorry or disturbed in the mind for having been deserted from his parents. On the contrary, he was quite mischievous and was ready to accompany Raman, as Raman was perceived by him as a fellow who would appease all his demands for eating and entertainment. The child was not wrong in his perception.

Raman was a strange abnormal character, simultaneously living in two worlds. The real world of his habitation and the hot and revengeful world of imaginations, in which he grudingly and nutinly, practically abuses and shows his hatred and revenge towards Daisy, who quite inhumanly, mercilessly and callously ditched him, by way of marrying somebody else. Psychologically speaking, Raman is an abnormal varital dual in whom his two personalities are cognitively co-released and Raman's practical action are taking their origin in the common ground of the two co-released characters. His is not a case of alternating personality. He is a quaint imaginary fictional creation of R.K. Narayan. The owner for such characterisation is available for him in the world of children.

Raman in the “Hungry child,” in an automatic manner resorts to the symbolism and react in accordance with his ‘childhood of mind’. The moment he heard about the missing child in the ‘mela’ on the microphone, Raman, the painter, paints for himself in his interiority about the suffering of a child distanced from its parents. In a strange anomalous manner and in a symbolic way, he co-relates his own pain of being callously distanced and savoured by his erstwhile beloved Daisy. He is a desuade lover. He could never extricate himself from the trauma of been deserted by his beloved. It is again the ‘childhood of his mind’ that overpowers his conscious self, and quite automatically, he walks towards the office of the ‘mela’. To his great surprise, he finds the child behaving himself quite
mischievously and even unconcernedly towards his desertion by the parents. "He noticed a boy sitting on a bench vigorously swinging his legs and amusing himself by twisting and bending and noisely rocking the bench on its rickety, uneven legs much to the annoyance of a clerk at a table." (225)

Here is a pertinent lesson for Raman. Here onwards just like a selfish personality, Raman goes on making an interior monologue for himself by way of bitterly cursing his beloved, who deceived him. At the same time, the boy's unfeeling stubborness, even when his parents seemingly forgot (inspite of the innumerable announcements on the mike, the parents did not turned up to collect him), at once creates two passionate strains of autistic imagination in Raman, one concerned with his hatred and revenge towards the estranged beloved, and the other concerns with his sympathetic reaction towards the child.

The child is a lost child and he is a lost lover. There is a strange similarity of emotional context between the both. Quite unassumingly, and even unintendingly, Raman volunteered to impersonate the parent of the child. He offers the child a candy, just casually out of sympathy. The child to his great surprise, jumps to take it and thereafter he was ready to go along with Raman, inspite of the fact that Raman he is stranger for him.

A child's interior vision of his own life for himself is altogether different. He is capable of eclipsing and encapsulating himself into his immediate inner reality from the unsituational objective realism. This is a great gift of God for children. The grown-ups are invariably informed by the historical sense of past, present and future. But a child can seek resort of exclusive inversion into himself and react in accordance with his exclusive inner reality.
In the "Hungry Child," the child's inner reality is gluttoning, coupled with moving around in the 'mela.' Raman is ready to serve both his demands intact. Raman was imaginatively transporting himself quite frequently, and even revengefully towards wild thoughts of revenge on his wicked beloved. The companionship of the child, constantly and continually brings him back from his imaginative cast of mind towards the reality of 'mela' and the enjoyment offered by it.

Narayan gives a very nice point here, the literal 'mela' in the story is to be taken as a 'mela' metaphor for the life itself in this world. In the 'mela' we just rumble enjoying all the immediate stuns and randomness offered on instance. Narayan means to imply that life too has to be lived in such an objective delectable manner without ever been involved in serious attachments and entanglements. It is the child that offers this fair and felicitious lesson to Raman through his emerged behavioural reaction for every movement of life in the 'mela.' This is in contrast to Raman's frequent sojourns into the pathetic context to his past.

Ultimately towards the end of the day, the moment the child spots his parents at a distance, he runs towards them, even without showing any courtesy and civility for all the gifts and comforts that he provided to the child. There ends the story, and there beings the fundamental lesson of life for Raman. They have to take upon themselves what Dickens called the 'childhood of mind' and live their life in the 'here and now' on 'as is where is' basis.

II. The Innocent and Submissive Child

The story of the novel surrounds around innumerable incidence in the life of Swammarthan, a school-going child. Taking the sanction from Hucks, the mischievous hero
of Mark Twain in his *The Huckleberry Finn*, Swaminathan vehemently dislikes his school environment. The mechanical routine in the school coupled with the overpowering and dictating teachers, becomes highly insufferable for him. But then what gives him the necessary zest of life is in the enthusiastic manner in which he makes friends. Play, friends and occasional dreaming, provide him with the most needful relief from the imposed discipline of the school and far reaching discipline insisted upon by the elders in his house.

Swaminathan is a typical average middle class child intending to live his own life in his own enthusiastic manner. He always finds it necessary to struggle to free himself from the oppressive world of the grown-ups around him. In all his moods and movements, Swami executes himself in his own unique ingenious manner. Whenever he finds the world around him insufferable, he instantly invents a verbal caricarist manner of showing his resentment.

Vedanayavam, is the name of the teacher who taught him arithematic in the school. Somehow he could never understand his arithematic lessons as taught by him. The simple reason is that the mathematic teachers assume upon himself a great frown in his face. Swaminathan mischievously calls him 'Fire-eyed Vedanayanam'. This is the nake name that he had to given him, and the mathematic teacher was notoriously called and geared by all students as 'Fire-eyed Vedanayavam'.
Like wise in that famous cycle-wheel episode of his life, when he failed to "convert the two pebbles into two, three pasha coins", even after performing a very sincere and devoted ritual of placing the two pebbles in the card board box and prayed the Gods in the Puja room for the most needful conversion of the pebbles in coins. And when his prayer was not accepted by the God, he rushed into the house of Mani to borrow the necessary amount from him. On seeing a imposing stranger in the house of Mani, is readily calls him 'bushy eye-brows'.

Pillai is the history teacher. His method of teaching history is absolutely quixotic. History is a matter of providing information and insight into the past of the nation. His method of teaching has no serious information, nor there is anything specific in the past. As such there is no specific historical sense. But then it is not very easy for children to put an insight into the historical sense, unless and until the past events are co-related with human urgencies and interest. Pillai lays history as a self-dramatised demonstration of innumerable wars in the past. The reactions of the young students are presented in the following words "When he (Pillai) described the various fights... one heared the clash of arms and the groans of the Slain" (5). It is quite natural that excessive dramatised enactment of the 'clash of arms' and the 'groans of the Slain' scares the children instead of installing into their young minds a human interest in the history lessons. As a consequence the history lessons are causative of a sort of aversion instead of interest.

A greater aversion is catered by the scripture masters. He always delighted in abusing the Hindu Gods and their idolators worshipper. Almost all the students in the class are Hindu, and the humiliating manner in which the Scripture master exposes the Hindu
Gods and their worshippers has a negative psychological effects on the young minds.

Infact Swami once challenged and inflates the emotions of the Scripture master in the following retort:

"If he was a God, why did he eat flesh and fish and drink wine?" As a brahmin boy it was inconceivable to him that God should be a non-vegetarian. In answer to this Ebenzer left his seat, advanced slowly towards Swaminathan, and tried to wrench his left ear off. (6)

The Head Master himself, with his 'thin long cane' is a matter of dread for the students. With all such imposing atmosphere in the school, the young students are very often driven to run away from the school. But then they cannot resort to this practice as often as they want. Therefore they invent for themselves the usual ingenious method of children not paying any attention to the presence of their teachers and their lessons.

Even when they are sitting in the class rooms, their inner modalities of imagination transport themselves to the inwardly memorised pleasant incidence of their lives, so far as they become interesting and invovlable for themselves. This tendency, particularly in Swami, creates a great potential for day-dreaming as a convenient vehicle of escape from the rigours of the class room context. Infact he learns nothing practically in the school.

Moreover, the excessive discipline of the Missionary education system literally subverts the young man's sense of freedom.

Play, friends and dreaming become potential pre-occupations in the mind of Swami. He had a funny group of friends around him: Mani, Shankar, Samuel and Rajam constitute for the themselves into a friendly group, always involving themselves into warm personal rapport and appraisals of each others, by way of resorting to idle, but
engrossing, conversation amongst themselves. Swami himself characterises Mani as the 'Mighty good for nothing', intending to overpower all others in his class with his robust and towering physique. Shankar, however, is the most brilliant boy of the class. Being highly conscious of his brilliance, Shankar always behaves like a unique boy, with excessive importance of his own. But then, making friends is always a matter of establishing sweet and charming relations. Such sweet and charming relations emerge out of mutual appreciations of the friends amongst themselves.

Swami always shows a great admiration for Shankar; and Shankar reciprocates the same with a sort of patternising warmth and felicity. Samuel, of course, was very short in size. He is therefore, nick-named as 'Pea'. The fresh arrival of Rajam, the son of the Superintendent of Police, creates a little imbalance and alteration in the relational aspects of the friends. Mani, who was enjoying a sort of superior status in the class, receives a set-back with the arrival of Rajam. More importantly, Swaminathan alters his inward devotion from Mani to Rajam, simply because of the importance of Rajam as the son of the superintendent of Police.

The school is a great uncomfortable place for Swami as well as his friends. The strict discipline of the Missionary school and its curriculum, together with the dogmatic religious fanaticism of the teachers, makes the entire atmosphere quite unfriendly, and even painful to the lovely little sense of freedom of the children. Therefore, they always try to escape literally and imaginatively. But such a literal escape is not possible. In the holidays particularly, they prefer to wander here and there aimlessly. Loafting, dreaming, chit-chatting and playing cricket are the prominent preoccupations. Infact all these
activities offer them a wide scope of freedom as against the atmospheric discomforts and constraints in the school and in the home.

However, Swami finds a sympathetic friend in his grand mother. His father is always busy with his own affairs. He is a very strict discipliner. His mother is always busy in the domestic affairs. His father insists upon his studying and doing sums in the vacations also. But the vacations are the very good opportunity for Swami and friends for seeking asides from the stringent domestic atmospheres. His mother pays more attention to her new born younger baby. This too becomes a unbearable point in the domestic environs for Swami.

Therefore, Swami always engages himself in serious conversations with his grand mother. But the grand mother is an old timer. Inspite of the fact that she is a loving character, who always pampers and pets Swami, she does not really understand many things that Swami seriously discusses with her. For example, she does not understand anything of cricket and all the chatter he makes about the game. Even then she takes him in confidence and hears him patiently. Whenever Swami has any fear or problem of the surrounding atmosphere, he readily runs to his grand mother and takes a comfortable asylum, by way of enrolling himself in her lap. Thus, for Swami the grand mother in the house and friends in the school are the only sources of happy engagements. Otherwise life is a serious rigour and ordeal for his innocent self.

Swami and his friends starts the cricket club. They call it MCC. The initials do not stand for the universally famous Melbourne Cricket Club of England. They stand for M:lignadi Cricket Club, of which they are the proud pioneers. It is not always easy to spare time for the cricket club even in the evening hours because the school extends uptos 6 p.m.
Swami very often escapes and runs away from the last periods which are usually detained for drill classes. He was taking serious training for the ensuing cricket match. Whenever his head master finds him absent from the drill classes, he cautions him severely on the next day.

On anchoring the severe displeasure of the school authorities, he ran away from the school. As a consequence of this disturbing school, he could not take proper training under his cricket coach for his cricket match. Finally because of his absence on the day of the cricket match, his club loses the match to the rival team called YMU (Young Mens Union). Because of this defeat in the cricket match, he anchored more or less a loss of pace amongst his friends, and an equal permanent loss of the warmth and love of his dearest friend, Rajam. With all such playful incidents, Swami’s childhood comes to a close. In an ultimate analyses, it is a inevitable loss of childhood’s fun and play that becomes the real fictional bone of contention in R.K Narayan’s Swami And Friends. When he sensed that the treatment of the head master became intolerable he runs away from his second school also.

Swami was originally admitted to the Albert Mission School, whose discipline very often becomes a matter of adverse concerns for Swami as well as his friends. But the school curriculum is quite unavoidable. His elders would not allow him any choice in this matter. As a matter of fact, except for the presence of his fondling grand mother, his own house is quite constraints for his temperamental choice of moving freely, dreaming unendingly and spending time with friends. His mother had always being busy either with the domestic duties or in exclusive attending to his little brother. His father’s presence is
not comfortable because of the fact that he always insists upon studying in the house also

In comparison to his own house, the school offers just a deviation, but not the requisite satisfaction of a free mind. Moreover, the humiliating manner in which the Missionary school teachers look down upon the Hindu Gods and myths, produces a typical retaliatory tendency in Swami.

As an alternative, imaginative distinction, he likes friends with a huge of his classmates, in whose company it is possible for him to have a free, frank and transparent atmosphere of engagement. Psychologically speaking, the overall discipline of the school is quite monotonous and unbearable. The overall general disturbed atmosphere of the freedom fighters in the country also had its adverse affects in the general school life.

Indeed, the arrest of a national hero brought a strike in the school. Swami took a very active agitational role in breaking some of the window panes of the school. For this delinquent act severe corporal punishments were inflicted upon him by the headmaster. The proud retrieval temper of Swami made him brave enough to reach out of the head master’s room, grudgingly muttering, “I don’t care for your dirty school” (36).

But his father immediately admits him in a boarding school, which is slightly inferior in standards, but equally bad in so far as Swami’s intentions of asserting his child
like freedoms and choices are concerned. It is in fact, as a matter of change from the school curriculum, that Swami and his friends started the Malgudi Cricket club. Since it is not possible to come early for the cricket practice, Swami was always cutting a few drill classes in order to take cricket training. Since the discipline of the school does not allow him do so, he preferred to run away from this school also permanently.

Swaminathan's story, in so far as the novel covers, abruptly ends here. In a way there is an implied suggestion that Swaminathan's young and uninformed temper is not fit for the rigours of discipline in any manner whatsoever, particularly when it is imposed upon him by the elders in the house or the teachers in the school. The story of Swami, with all its instances upon the child-like assertions of freedoms and choices, readily acquires a universal touch. Children anywhere in the world are alike in demanding for all sorts of forbidden freedoms. They like to live their lives in the 'here and now', in accordance with the visions and dreams that they nurture in their absolute freedom bound imaginations. At the same time, Narayan pertinently gives an ideal example of an average middle class Indian child, whose concerns with life are absolutely associated with exuberant 'primary activities'.

The uniqueness of R.K. Narayan's fictional devise in this novel concerns with the manner in which he attributes a universal appeal, to the average middle class children of India, who are prominently involving themselves in the rigours of the British educational system. As he observed, the child-like innocence and the sense of freedoms are the prominent casualties in the British educational system, which was being imposed in India during the British rule. At the same time, symbolically speaking, life anywhere in the world is bound to loose the childhood charms of existence through the inevitable growth and
maturity into adolescence, and into manhood thereafter. What all that remains as a sweet

treasure is the contingent reminiscences of the freedoms and joys stored up in the memory.

Most of the novels of R K Narayan are self-evident, self-reflective and self-fulfilling

characteristics narrative appraisals for the painful loss of the childhood and its exuberant

joys and happiness. In almost all the novels of R K Narayan, the central theme is this

relative loss of childhood and its joys through worldly entanglements. If so, it can be

arrived at a conclusion that R K Narayan makes a sort of painful narrative and

representative appeal of the various manners in which the child like innocence gets

evaporated and lost in the life course of man. The relative manner of importance that he

gives to childhood and its freedoms and joys as compared to the stress-filled

commitments and incidence of life, becomes the central appeal of his novels.

I. The Ineffectual Parents

We have in The Dark Room an awfully mind-blinded elder called Ramani, as the

main protagonist. Inspite of the fact that he is a dashing executive in his public life, he

resorts to “many tantrums of a temperamental husband”. In the domestic context of the

life of Ramani, he behaves himself as an insufferable, cruel type of a character.

The unbashed manner in which is tortures his wife and children, makes almost a

terrorizing phenomenon of the novel. But, however the mute and silent manner in which

his wife suffers his antics and the profound understanding manner in which his children

respond to the cruelty of their father, compound in the novel a typical Indian situation of

an autocratic husband, dictatorially controlling the moods and movements of his own wife.
and children. S. Krishnan in his Malgudi Landscapes, rightly points out that this novel "has a touch of social consciousness for its back ground." (1a)

Certain amount of sadsms, coupled with out and out authoritative tantrums is not new for the middle class and lower class families in India. Somehow these traits have become intolerable for Savitri and her children. Whenever there is something wrong in between the parents, it is small children of the house who suffer a lot. Whenever Ramani becomes meaninglessly irrational in his fury, Savitri suffers herself by way of relapsing herself to a dark room. This kind of Ramani becoming irrationally furious and Savitri entering the dark room silently, is quite a common phenomenon of Ramani's domestic environment. It is all a matter of big trauma for children. But children themselves, particularly to Babu, the elder son along with his sister Kamla, have to bear the intolerable tensions in their minds.

The horrible nature of the domestic environment of the Ramani is brought out from the vantage point of view as a common and usual matter in the middle class families of the South India. The novel itself has some social purpose, as a convex and concave mirror image of the family institution itself. Since the whole strain falls on the children, it is understandable that children in such strained environment grow tremorously, always failing to take proper decisions for themselves. But both, Babu and Kamla, are quite understanding children. Their emotions are always sympathetically tilted towards their mother, who suffers the reckless fury of her husband, by way of hiding herself in the dark room. Since there is no way of solving the problem of the temperamental nature of Ramani, Babu very often silently goes into the dark room in order to console his mother.

Once on the New Year Eve, Babu tried to connect the electric wires, in order to
provide illumination to the Doll's show, when suddenly the house turned dark due to the wrong connections of the electric wires. When his father, Ramani came home he found the house dark and was furious. Following conversations readily explain the horrible nature of Ramani.

"As soon as he sighted Babu he asked, "You blackguard, who asked you to tamper with the electric lights?" Babu stood stunned. "Don’t try to escape by being silent. Are you following your mother’s example?"

"No, Father."

"Who asked you to tamper with the electric lights?"

"I didn’t touch anything. I brought in Chandru. He knows all about electricity."

His father moved towards him and twisted his ear, saying, "How often have I asked you to keep to your books and mind your business?"

"I’ll try to set it right, Father, as soon as Chandru comes home."

"Who asked you to go near the dolls’ business? Are you a girl? Tell me, are you a girl?"

(46-47).

Then his father slapped him on the cheek. When Babu requested him not to slap him, Ramani gave him a few more slaps. There onwards, Savitri became inconsolably sorry and went into the dark room. The final termination of the incident is quite human and interesting. Next morning, Babu himself went into the dark room, since he was troubled about his mother. Probably it was his tears that made his mother stricken with
sorrow. He went to her and said: 'Why do you go on lying there? It was only a slight slap that he gave me after all. You make too much of it. I am going to school now' (50)

It is this kind of readiness to take the blame upon himself and share the pathos along with the mother that becomes very moving. The whole novel is full of such events, where Babu and Kamla show a great maturity and understanding, inspite of the fact that they are very small children. This understanding and sympathizing nature is quite common in the child's character of R K Narayan. But, the structure of the novel itself is centered around Ramani and his antic behaviors. It is really a matter of surprise that how such a terrorising parents where tolerated by the children in the house. It is just possible that R K Narayan wants to expose the autocratic macho behaviours of the heads of the families, particularly in the Indian context. The streak of barbarism and evil had somehow became a prominent characteristic features in the Indian families. R.K.Narayan is quite realistic in upraising the most conspicuous evil contents of the Indian family life and their shattering fall out on the growing children.

J. The Petulant child

Children anchoring after the impossible miracles is universally acknowledged in the mischievous brains of children. But then, as Ramesh K Shrivastava pertinently suggests, to say that all the children are mischievous is to falsify the infantile rays. In a short story "Naga", R K Narayan gives us a moving life of a snake-charmer's little son, who is a universal emblem of magnificent affections, serious concerns and a profound sense of compassion and love towards all the creatures in the world. Referring to R K Narayan's technique of handling children and their affairs, Ramesh K Shrivastava pertinently states that 'To say that all the children are mischievous is to falsify the infantile rays' (57-72).
Usually children are in general attributed with a whole-hearted concern for the primary essences of life like, 'life is better than death', ‘Happiness is better than misery', ‘Freedom is better than bondage', and ‘Play is better than school’ But however, all the children are not fortunate in having the loving parents like Swami and excessively pampering parents like Balu (The Financial Expert)

The boy in the short story “Naga” is a quite unfortunate child. His mother died when he was a small boy, and his father, a snake-charmer, like the father of Huck in Mark Twain’s Huckleberry Finn, is quite selfish. He holds no responsibility towards his small son. Instead of providing amenities of life, like protecting home and good education, the snake-charmer exploits his own son, by way of involving him in his street-shows and demonstrations. Consequently, the boy grows into an absolute innocent child. At the same time, he prominently establishes a loving bondage with the serpent itself. In order to make his street-shows more attractive, he also trains a small monkey, Rama. Both, the serpent and the monkey are the source of joy for both, the father and the son.

But something terrible happens to the boy one day. When he woke up in the morning, he found that his father was not there. Also, the child monkey, Rama was not to be found. The boy was completely puzzled. He does not know what to do. At the outset, he determines to wait for his father. In the meantime, the government authorities started evacuating the people from the encroachment huts, in order to honour a big political personality, who is supposed to pass by the huts. All were vacating their huts. The boy does not know what to do. It is at this juncture that he comes to know that his father has permanently deserted him. The following conversation clarifies the situation.
“All the efforts of the Municipality to dislodge these citizens has proved futile; the huts sprang up as often as they were destroyed, and when the municipal councillors realized the concentration of writing power in this colony, they let the squatters alone, except when some VIP from Delhi passed that way, and then they were asked to stay out of sight, behind the park wall, till the eminent man had flashed past in his car.

“Why are you not out yet?” asked a woman.

“My father is not here,” the boy said pathetically, “I do not know where he is gone.” He sobbed a little. The woman put down her basket, sat by his side and asked, “Are you hungry?”

“I have money,” he said.

She gently patted his head and said, “Ah, poor child! I knew your mother. She was a good girl. That she should have left you adrift like this and gone heavenward!” Although he had no memory of his mother, at the mention of her, tears rolled down his cheeks, and he licked them off with relish at the corner of his mouth. The woman suddenly said, “What are you going to do now?”

“I don’t know”, he said, “Wait till my father comes.”

“Foolish and unfortunate child. Your father is gone.”

“Where?” asked the boy.

“Don’t ask me”, the woman said, “I talked to a man who saw him go. He saw him get into the early morning bus, which goes up the mountains, and that strumpet in the blue sari was with him.”
"What about the monkey?" the boy asked, "Would it come back?"

The boy then purchased a few idlies from the street-vendor and after eating the same, he "felt more at ease with the world now, and able to face his problems" (151).

The boy got ready now to play the pipe and handle the snake and feed it also in the manner as his father used to. Thereby, the boy started learning the primary lessons of self-independence. It is interesting to note that this boy, with his in given passion for decency and moral, does not stoop to falsehood or any immoral act like thieving or cheating, etc. This in itself, is an evidence that this boy is different. Neither poverty nor helplessness windel his courage to survive. The only hope for him is the old Naga, who had almost become irresponsive to the music of the world. But then the boy’s compassion towards Naga has become an affectionate bondage. At the same time, he is under a necessity to show his play on the road-sides in order to survive. The following words of the boy confirm his love-hate tangle towards Naga. Says the boy:

"You have become too lazy even to open your hood. You are no cobra. You are an earthworm. I am a snake charmer attempting to show you off and make a living. No wonder so often I have to stand at the bus stop pretending to be blind and beg. The trouble is, no one wants to see you, no one has any respect for you and no one is afraid of you, and do you know what that means? I starve, that is all!" (145)

The fear of starvation on the one hand and Naga’s incapacity to play on the road-side makes him terribly sad. Even if the Naga is not in a position to dance to the tune of the gourd, he has to be fed regularly. Presently the boy thinks of taking to some honourable profession, say for instance, to become a coolie on the railway station and earn a honourable livelihood.
At the outset he has to free himself from the Naga. His father quite unconcernedly left him alone and ran away with a wench. He also deprived the boy of his little monkey, which could have successfully earned sufficient money for him on the street-shows. The boy could not be as merciless and unconcerned as his own father was. He could not afford to think of leaving Naga in a circular wricker basket to starve and die. His conscious does not allow him to step to this inhuman act of having no concern for Naga.

Naga becomes an unaffordable burden on him. He seriously meditate upon the idea of taking away the Naga to the nearby forest in order to leave him there in the original habitat of the serpents. Accordingly, he takes him to the nearby jungle and tries to leave Naga into the mounts, crevices and ant-hill! The boy thought that the serpent would be received by the cousins of the serpent into their fold. As he heard it, in unfounded folklore that Naga in the course of many years to come would grow wings on himself and would fly. But anyway, he is not in a position to distance himself from Naga.

Somehow, he took out the Naga from the wricker basket and left him near the ant-hills. The snake first tried to find a hole in the ant-hill in order to glide himself into it. But then, the Naga turned back and started moving towards the wricker basket. At this moment, the boy noticed a brahmin kite sailing in the blue sky. Serpents are supposed to be the food for kites. Suddenly the boy becomes terribly agitated in his mind. He runs towards Naga and falls over it, in order to save it from the kite. He started praying towards the bird with the following address towards the Garuda, the kite. "You are a God, but I know you eat snakes. Please leave Naga alone" (117).

The Naga himself turned back and started crawling towards the boy with a near lethargy, born of old age and hunger. The boy felt him, took him and brought him back to the home.
searched wricker basket, he let him into it. Naga too appears to have learned to stay in the basket. It cannot probably survive in its natural habitat in the forest. The boy becomes restless but then he cannot separate his bondage with Naga. He brings Naga back home. But he would not show him on the streets in order to earn money. He prefers to go for an honourable profession of a coolie on the railway station. In his own child like innocence, he speaks to Naga as follows,

"If you don't grow wings soon enough, I hope you will be hit on the head with a bamboo staff, as it normally happens to any cobra. Know this, I will not be guarding you forever. I'll be away at the railway station, and if you come out of the basket and adventure about, it will be your end. No one can blame me afterward." (147)

K. The Mischievous Child

Mischief making is one of the important trait in a child, so as to attract the attentions of elders towards them. One day Swami was awarded a punishment of standing on the bench. Even on the point of repetition, the episode is worth mentioning here. Swami, instead of feeling the humiliation of standing on the bench, starts counting the heads of the other students sitting in the class room, from the vantage point of his physically elevated position on the bench, he is capable of making a overall view of all the heads of the other students in the class room.

"Swaminathan paid no attention to the rest of the lessons. His mind began to wander. Standing on the bench, he stood well over the whole class. He could see so many heads, and he classified them according to the caps - there were four red caps, twenty-five Gandhi caps, ten fur caps, and so on." (17)
The manner in which is typically categorious them, is full of fun. He distinguishes them in himself as ‘four red caps’, and ‘twenty-five Gandhi caps’. Swami, certainly does not want to draw our attention to the freedom fight that were raging high and dry during those times. Most of the people in India are fighting for India’s freedom under the leadership of Gandhiji. The strategical distinction of four red caps to twenty-five Gandhi caps speaks for itself the intensity of the freedom fight, where in, the freedom fighters and their opponents are divided in the ratio of twenty-five to four.

Swaminathan resorts to this kind of activity exclusively in his autistic personal imagination, even without intending to suggest at the gravity of the Non-cooperation Movement. This kind of intention is in the narrator’s mind; and R.K Narayan uses the brilliant concept of Swami in this context for the purpose of giving vent to his own intensity of perception concerning the Non-cooperation Movement. From the point of view of Swami himself, it is not only a harmless, mischievous enumeration but also expressive of his characteristic manner of comprehending, that the meagre number of Gandhi caps is not really a great power in itself. They are probably wearing the Gandhi caps just like unthinking sheeps following their leaders.

There are many other such sarcastic intentions of the author expressed through the unassuming innocence of Swaminathan and his friends. One should not forget here that
Swami was supposed to read in Missionary school, and the Christian Missionaries are ruthlessly against the freedom fighters. They are conscious supporters of imperialism and colonialism, as the most civilised social and cultural programmes, offering 'progress and enlightenment.' Moreover they are supposed to be strict implementors of discipline in their schools. Narayan has his own authentic inner satisfaction of assiduously suggesting that the Missionaries, inspite of their rigorous disciplinarian manner, would not forbid the Gandhi caps in the campus. This is another serious deduction available for the readers. But all this is done in a seemingly harmless mischievous act of Swaminathan. This does not mean that children are always harmless in being in mischievous.

There are many instances, in almost all the novels, about the manner in which the mischievous children, practically contribute for real harms. Raju, in The Guide, as a child was quite mischievous. As a child he was never serious about his school. He was always absent from the school. He was in the habit of chit-chatting, about all the unfounded cock and bull stories to his companions. This personal streak of telling unfounded stories ultimately turns into a formula of telling pleasant lies to the tourists about the historical monuments and their historical backgrounds. The manner in which he vociferously imparts blated unfounded lies, however pleasant they are to hear, explains the purpose serving mischievous nature of Raju. It is with this purpose serving mischievous intentions only, he could successfully wean out and distance Rosie from her otherwise scholarly and serious husband, Marco.

Again out of his mischievous conceit towards life itself, Raju was quite non-serious, even callous, about the moral values. His incapacity to comprehend the importance of moral values in life ultimately turns him into a mass of empty, blated lies.
different matter that in quite an ironic manner, he ultimately falls prey to the unfounded and irrational promotings of his followers, that he ultimately succumbs to His followers that is, the villagers, seriously and sincerely believes that he was a God man Like all the other tourist who heard him seriously and enjoyed all the mischievous lies that he told to them as a tourist guide, finally becomes a crises for him, when his devotees reverted his own trick of mischievous lies against him.

Here, Narayan as the author implies a very important lesson for life Mischief and mischievous doing, which are quite casual and common during childhood, should never become serious projects and programmes, after adolescent. As a seasoned psychologist of humanity, Narayan is well aware of the fact that the real projects, programmes and visions of life start taking concrete shapes and projects of life during adolescence and after. Mischief making should never become a habit of life.

Unfortunately this is what it happened to Raju, an uncared orphan from his father’s side, while yet he was a small boy His mother, with all her serious and good intention, could not really impart the serious lesson of morality in Raju. As a tourist guide, in spite of the fact that he was telling all pleasant lies, he was bringing the necessary support money for the survival of the family. That is probably a trap, because of which mother could not be a real guiding force for Raju, about the importance of evenly coordinating morals and life styles. The case of Raju, as a mischievous mocking is a pitiable one His is a case of mischief turning into a streak of fraud, which ultimately becomes a habit for him. This is an intense of mischief playing the role of tragic error and turning the whole life into an insufferable tragedy. It is just possible that Raju being orphaned from the father’s side, might have contributed forcornering him to make mischief turn fraud as habits of life.
The Rebellious Child

The case of Balu in The Financial Expert, tells altogether a different story about the mischievous nature of exclusively pampered children. Balu, in The Financial Expert is the only child of Margayya. He was born very late in Margayya's married life. In all transactions concerning his comfort, Balu would insist on having his own way usually going to the extremities. His penchant for doing nonsense things is evident from here.

"He usually insists on having the peppermints and tiny play things. Every play thing, including an elephant is a tiny thing for Balu. Margayya is also very fond of his son usually. When he came home he could not bear to be kept away from him for a moment."

One day when Margayya came back home, and called for his little man fondly, the child did not reply. Margayya waited at the door and had been secretly observing as to what the mischievous master was doing.

"The child throws a piece of paper into a lamp, and when it burned brightly he recoiled at the sudden sprut of fire. But when it blackened and burnt out he drew near the lamp again, gingerly putting his finger near the metal plate on the top. Before Margayya could stop him, he had touched it. He let out a streak." (90)

Margayya's wife became highly disturbed in her mind on hearing the cries of the child. Margayya too felt quite embarrassed and after a big row between Margayya and his wife, the affair temporarily got quiet. In the night she finally asked never, never to go near fire again. It is then that Balu's strategy of all this mischief discloses. His cheeks still with tears, the child asked, "Will you buy me a little elephant tomorrow?" It is this kind of scene-making, born out of his pampered nature that becomes quite disgusting. But then
Balu is Balu. He knows weakness of his parents. Everytime when he wants a peppermints
of an elephant, he resorts to such dangerous activities that might cause a whole panic and
quarrel in between Margayya and his wife.

Sometimes, Balu's mischief reaches to abnormal extensions. In order to insist upon
having an elephant or a peppermint. One day, he kicked the ink-pot and spilled the ink
over the red register, the ledger in which Margayya keeps all his financial deals. As if
spilling the ink on the ledger is not sufficient, Balu danced over it callously. In the very
presence of his father, the boy ran away with the ledger.

"The boy dashed down the front steps, with his father following him, Margayya
was blind to all his surroundings— all he could see was the little boy with his curly hair and
the small red bound book which was in his hand. Some passers-by in Vinayak Mudali
Street stopped to watch the scene. Margayya cried shamelessly: "Hold Him!" at which
they tried to encircle the boy. It was evident that by now he had become completely
intoxicated with the chase. Suddenly he found that he was outnumbered and cornered. As
the circle of hunters hummed him, he did an entirely unexpected thing. He turned back, as
if he was coming into his father's arms and as he was about to grasp him, drifted sideways
to the edge of the gutters and flung the red book into it." (32).

The mischief of Balu in this context is certainly intolerable. But Margayya is
helpless. The irony is in the fact that such a crooked financial expert as he is, Margayya
could not have a control on his little son. Yet on another day, the little devil found it
occasional to splash about a bucket of water in the backyard, purely out of mischief.
When the water was exhausted, he looked all around and let out such an angry shout for
his father that the people on the other side of the wall remarked to each other: "This is the
worst of biguetting sons late in life! They pet them and spoil them and make them little
monsters" (93)

Indeed, Narayan wants to give a pretty nice example of a spoiled child. It is this
kind of excessive pampering of children that ultimately turns them into pity rogues.
Narayan’s message is simple. Margayya, as the financial expert, was awfully exploiting the
ignorance of the villagers and extracting money from them for getting loans from the co-
operative bank. In a way, he is resorting to exploit the ignorance and illiteracy of the
villagers, in order to fatten his financial prospects. As a crook as he is, Margayya gets the
proper lessons from his little son.

M. The Simple and Desperate Child

Narayan deals with innumerable varieties of mischiefs in his novels, just to show
that there is something wrong with the social and domestic situations of life in Malgudi. In
addition to mischief, the other great pre-occupation with children is play. Children as often
as possible, would prefer to stay outdoors playing along with his friends.

All children are not mischievous in R. K. Narayan. Some children “Are simple to
the point of being stupid” (41), to borrow the expressions of Ramesh K. Shrivastava
(Portrayal of Children in R. K. Narayan) even Swami, the hero of Swami and Friends,
inspite of his brilliant and original ideas, sometimes appears to be stupid in his behaviour.
His “one consuming passion to get a hoop” In his vigorous trial to get a hoop, is itself
a streak of utter stupidity. Indeed the ‘hoop’ episode in Swami and Friends opens up a
significant aspect of child’s behavioural pattern. A child usually seeks asides the
dictatorial form from his own elders and teachers. Fear of the elders and teachers, simply,
because of their overbearing size and imposing dictatorial manners provides a child to run away from the elders.

Getting seriously involved into a game or play, either alone or along with friends, is a most convincing manner in which a child distances himself from his parents, as in the case of hoop or a cycle-ring without spokes and tyres offers an opportunity for Swami to totally withdraw himself into his own autistic world with a great ecstacy and bang. The revolving wheel with its accelerated speed driven by a stick in the grove of the ring is in itself, typical and the imaginable speed in running after the hoop Swami dreamt for the hoop days and nights. Referring to the childish passion for the hoop, the following passage is important:

"He feasted on visions of an ex-cycle wheel without spokes or tyre. You had only to press a stick into the groove and the thing would fly. Oh, what joy to see it climb small obstacles, and how gently it took curves! When running it made a steady hum, which was music to the ear. Swaminathan thought that anybody in Malgudi would understand that he was coming, even a mile away, by that hum. He sometimes kept awake till ten-thirty in the night, thinking of this hoop."

In so far as developing quaint dreams for a hoop, there is nothing unnatural. It is not at all an act of stupidity. Every child, sometime or other gets passionately endowed to such silly ideas. Swami’s further trials in order to secure a hoop constitute a mock heroic narrative formula. At the outset, he begged everyone with whom he came across, from his father’s friends to a municipal sweeper. He requested them to give a cycle wheel. He started seeing every bicycle on the road with an added concentration on the wheels and their movement. To have a wheel is really fantastic according to Swami. His ever...
consuming passion for the cycle wheel turned him mad. In his passionate quest for the wheel, he comes across a coachman, who appeared to be very sympathetic towards Swami and his desired hoop. The coachman readily agree with Swami that “existence was difficult without a hoop” (18).

The coachman was very funny and lighthearted in responding to Swami with an abnormal pretended sincerity towards Swami. The coachman gives a practical solution. If Swami would get five rupees, the coachman promised to get a wheel for him. That was certainly a huge sum which Swaminathan can never procure. When he said the same thing to the coachman, he gives an alternative proposal. If only Swami gets him just six pies, the coachman assured that after resorting to a mysterious alchemical process, he would turn those six pies into six rupees. He even said that he can turn them into golden coins also. The mesmerising talk of the coachman lets Swami to fall into a hectic activity of securing six pies for himself.

He first asked his father to give him six pies. His father did not oblige him. Then, as usual he approaches his grand mother, who also said that she too did not have any money with her. By way of showing a mock consent for her husband’s deny, the grandmother directed Swami’s mother to pay him six pies. But Swami’s mother too said “no” for the six pies. Inspite of the fact that his demand was only for six pies, nobody took his demand seriously. They brushed him aside, as well as his request for six pies. This infuriated Swami.

There after what all he does exposes his innocent stupidity. His only rapport is in the God, whom he suppose, would grant all prayers, if made sincerely. It is then that he takes out an empty box from the prayer room, fills it with a little bit of sand and few
leaves, and hides it in a ground, underneath a tree in the courtyard. Then he prayed God to turn the sand and leaves into six pies. After sometime he dug the box out and found nothing really changed. The sand and leaves are intact. He became terribly angry and had a mind to have a revolt against God. But the fear of God's becoming angry with him, brought him to a submissive path.

All this suggests that R K Narayan's study of the psychology of children is complete in all respects. In fact, the 'wheel' episode in Swami and Friends, is a direct lifting from his own autobiography. Narayan himself, as a child, was extremely fascinated with the cycle-wheel, with which he played during the vacations.

The story of Swami does not end here. It takes many mock-heroic turn, producing a hilarious low comedy. When he contacts Mani and asked him to urgently give six pies, Mani also said that he had no money. Somehow, Swami manages to procure the said amount to the coachman, not once but three times. There onwards the coachman became un-contactable for Swami. In the whole episode, there is an interesting point as to how the simplicity, gullibility and idiocy of children, very often gets exploited by the low class slum-dwellers. These slum-dwellers, to which class the coachman belonged, are highly independable, as responsible members of the society. They resort to cheating the innocent children also. They are more or less of a the modern proriterate category. The coachman simply cheated Swami.

The act of the coachman became highly mortifying and uncontainable for Swami. Presently, he nurtures a serious desire to take revenge upon the coachman. He went to Rajam and asked him to lend him a policeman. It is Swami's childish manner of thought that provokes him to consider a policeman as an executive that can co-exist with him.
of Swami, there is substance that all children invariably fear policemen. But quite
ironically, Swami’s tall demand for a policeman does not get any positive solution for him.
Children do not understand that the policeman is a law and order maintaining agent in a
given society. He is not meant to be used as a personal or private course, of any particular
person. But somehow, Swami is confirmed in himself that the coachman cheated him.
Therefore, he should be handed over to the police. Rajam was not in the position to give
him a policeman, but they make a serious plan to get back eighteen paise from the
coachman. They wanted to kidnap the coachman’s son and take ransom from the
coachman.

They secretly go to the coachman’s house. The coachman was not there. The
coachman’s son was very much in the house, but than he could not come out. It order to
get the people around themselves, they make another stupid plan. Rajam and Swami start
fighting amongst themselves. It is only a mock fight. The sudden idea came into the mind
of Rajam. He start accusing Swaminathan in a mock-heroic manner that he had taken
eighteen paise and would not return. That was the plot to get coachman’s son out so that
they might abduct him.

On the contrary all the slum-dwellers gathered around them. It is matter of
scandalous partime for them. When Rajam declared in a typical voice as to what should be
done to this cheat, called Swami, the coachman’s son readily said that he should be handed
over to the police. It is at that moment they got an opportunity to abduct the coachman’s
son. They wanted to lure him with a top. When they revolved the top on palm of the
coachman’s son, he felt very glad. Rajam proposed that it could be his if only he come-
along with them. The coachman's son on the other hand took the top and ran into his own house from where he would not come out.

As a result Swami lost his eighteen pies, which he considers as two annas out of his own deficiency in mathematical calculations, and also the top. The slum-dwellers in a unified manner, pats the street-dogs after them. Rajam and Swami ran home, there onwards, Swami's passion for the wheel automatically wound. So this kind of idyllic pictures of life of children and their world gives R. K. Narayan a unique place amongst the fiction writers.

N. Child Aware of Bitter Realities of Life

There are many schizoid problems that lie behind today's culture. But for the few lively moments that Raman (of "The Hungry Child") spend with the child in the 'mela', his whole life is spend in the complex schizoid manner by way of often remembering his ditched love affair. The word 'schizoid' is defined as follows in the Chamber's Dictionary. Schizoid (skit'zoid, skid'zoid cpr Eidosfrom showing qualities of a schizofranic personality, such as social behaviour, introversion, tendency to fantasy, but without definite mental disorder, as schizoid person).

Most of the characters of R.K. Narayan are such schizoid personalities conducting their life in the childhood of their minds. David Holbrooke in his, "Creativity in Children's Writing and Contemporary Culture", offers a fine description of a schizoid, says Holbrooke:

"The child to the logic of schizoid moral inversion is given in complex detail by W. R. D. Fairbairn in Psychoanalytical Studies of the Personality. It is somewhat similar to the 'Schizoid Factors in the Personality'. The schizoid is..."
because it has failed him he has never had the love due to him, so he feels unreflected, and psychically unborn. Because love is so dangerous to him, in consequence he decides that he must try to live by hate he suffers a taboo on weakness and opts for 'strength'. Hate is not the opposite of love, which is indifference hate is the attempt to compel the other to give what is due, and represents a reversal of all those qualities which belong to love” (359-360)

It is interesting to note, that in spite of abnormal constrain in play, as well as in domestic life, the child characters of R. K. Narayan cannot be called schizoid. They are certainly in irrational moves and movements in their lives which may appear sometimes as schizoid activities. For example, the hectic trials of Swami in the act of doubling up the coins, and the contingent tragic dimensions in his acquiring a hoop, Balu’s (The Financial Expert) destruction of his father's ledger in its utmost wanted moments, and the mischievous manner of the child (The Hungry Child) in rocking the bench on its rickety uneven legs, may appear as schizoid activities. But then they are not. They are such symbolic expressions of their inner contextual frustrations. But these symbolic and suggestive actions of the child's character, in spite of the fact that they are insufferable, they just offer a relative mymastic behavioural pattern of the emotionally charged acts and activities of the grown-ups. In an elder, if he resorts to such absurd phenomenal actions, they reveal his schizoid personality. But in children they just stand as relative mymastic actions, and their message lies in such activities of children being playful correctives for the serious and dangerous manner for the grown-ups persuading their lives. Again, in words of Holbrooke “For one thing, the very ability to use language, symbols and culture is seen to represent a tremendous and mysterious achievement by the child. 11341384, 11341384.
A child develops his art of living by way of practising 'unconsciously or tacitly', by way of subjecting it to exacting attentions and description (About Swami and Friends). Swami and Friends is the most important novel of R K Narayan, in which we get a comprehensive view of the pains and pleasures of an average boy in the school, as well as in the house.