

R. K. NARAYAN AND HISTORY: A NOTE ON SWAMI AND FRIENDS (1935) AND WAITING FOR THE MAHATMA (1955)

S. SAVITHA

Department of English, T. S. Narayanaswami College of Arts & Science, Navalur, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India

ABSTRACT

R.K. Narayan is a pure artist who doesn't go into contemporaneity too deeply to create piece which are mere period literature. He is a realist with a wide range. His realism is not the realism of an exact reproduction of external realities. He does not handle events and feelings in the way in which other writers handle them. This paper is a study of the two novels of Narayan touch quite specifically on the struggle for freedom. One is the first novel he produced, before independence, Swami and Friends, and the other a novel he produced after independence: Waiting for the Mahatma. The first novel presents Swami as a boy who responds to the struggle boyishly, and contributes his mite to it by throwing his khaddar Gandhi cap into the bonfire for foreign clothes. It presents the thoughtlessness of the boys and many other participants and their failure to continue with their activities in a more responsible way. Waiting for the Mahatma is a more serious work. It presents the story of Sriram the adolescent who falls in love and through that develops into a freedom fighter. He passes through a Gandhian phase into a violent phase and finally gets back into the Gandhian fold. Narayan presents Sriram in a piquant interaction with a whiteman who says that he feels that he feels like an Indian and therefore doesn't want to go back to England.

KEYWORDS: R. K. Narayan and History