CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled " **The Concept of Heroism ir the Selected Novels of Mark Twain and R.K.Narayan**" submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Calicut is a record of bonafide research carried out by P.M.Sakina under my supervision. No part of the thesis has been submitted for any degree before.

Dr. Mohamed Elias

Guide and Supervising Teacher

Calicut University,

, March,2005.

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

DECLARATION

I declare that, this written account entitled **"Concept of Heroism in the Selected Novels of Mark Twain and R. K. Narayan"** is the record of research work done by me under the supervision of Dr. Mohamed Elias and that it has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree, diploma or other similar titles of recognition.

University of Calicut,
March 14th, 2005.

P. M. Sakina

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

Acknowledgement

I am deeply indebted to my guide Dr. Mohamed Elias, former Head of the Dept. of English, Calicut University, whose expert advice and untiring patience enabled me to complete this thesis.

I express my profound gratitude to Dr. Vijay Nair, Dept. of English, Govt. Victoria College, for his valuable suggestions and timely assistance.

I am obliged to my colleagues in the Dept. of English, Govt. Victoria College, Palakkad, for their co-operation.

I am thankful to all the members of the Dept. of English, Calicut University, for their support.

I owe a lot to my husband Dr. Rahiman, my daughter Siyana, and my son Javaiz for having stood by me all through these years.

I would like to place on record my gratitude to my mother, my brothers and my sisters for their constant encouragement.

I fondly remember my father, who was always a source of strength in my academic pursuits.

Finally, I wish to express my thanks to Mr. Ratheesh, for having typed this thesis with his usual dedication.

Palakkad
March, 2005

P. M. Sakina

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

Preface

Mark Twain and R.K.Narayan have become an integral part of their respective literatures, the study of which is impossible without referring to these two literary luminaries. There is a large body of criticism available on Twain and Narayan, as both writers have been very popular subjects of study and research. The present study is an attempt to analyse the concept of heroism as reflected in their novels, an area where much research has not been carried out so far.

The prevalence of a heroic ideal in literature is not a novel idea. Attempts have been made to examine the possibilities of the Emersonian Hero, The Code Hero of Hemmingway, the Black Hero, the Southern Hero and the Quixotic Hero in literature. In spite of the geographical and cultural differences, the authors under reference exhibit an intellectual kinship, which is worthy of study. Narayan's Swami and Twain's Huck have been favourite boy heroes all over the world. When Narayan's **Swami and Friends** was published, it was hailed by the influential **Saturday Review of Literature** as a book comparable to Twain's masterpiece, since Narayan's adolescent hero is a "Hindu Huckleberry"

Twain's novels show his great fascination for " the unpromising hero" motif usually found in the legends and mythologies of any literature. The story of an unassuming boy or girl, despite all misfortunes in their life, achieving unimaginable victory at the end, is of universal interest. Twain being a dreamer of success employed this motif in his novels.

R.K.Narayan is a worthy counterpart who is famous for his realism and humour. Heroism, among the Malgudians is not a demonstration of physical valour, as they are all the members of the South Indian middle class. The characters of both these authors show an exceptional mental courage, which accounts for their heroism, which again offers scope for a study in comparison and contrast. The method followed is mainly analytical.

Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter that examines different aspects on which a comparison of the heroism in the works of Twain and Narayan can be made. The American dream of success as one of the formative factors is established in this chapter. The influence of traditional Indian Literature on Narayan, and the impact of the existing heroic ideal prevalent in America on Twain, have been examined in detail. The concept of Indian hero found in Dhanañjaya's **Daśarūpa** has been given special mention as a stepping-stone to

the better understanding of Narayan. Dhanañjaya defines four groups of heroes, **dhīrodātta, dhīroddhata, dhīralalita,** and **dhīrāsanta.** Narayan's heroes show more affinity to the last group. The protagonists of Twain and Narayan are not depicted as individuals with superhuman powers. Twain's evident admiration for the unpromising hero fable has been brought to light in this chapter. All his heroes are unpromising at the beginning though many of them achieve success at the end. Robert Regan's work **Unpromising Heroes: Mark Twain and His Characters** and Rajiv Taranath's essay **Average As The Positive** offer a firm ground for study.

Chapter 2 deals with the world of children where the earliest sparks of heroism can be detected. Since childhood is the first phase of a man's life, the treatment of juvenile heroes reflects the attitudes of both the authors. Huck, Tom, and Joe Harper in **Huckleberry Finn;** Swami, Rajam, and Mani in **Swami and Friends** are taken as children who represent the ideals of the nation itself. Huck's idea of heroism and glory is different from Tom's. The heroism of Swami, Mani, and Chandran has been analysed in order to arrive at Narayan's attitude towards the concept. Swami is meek and unassuming. Rajam's character reminds one of Tom, the bookish one, whereas

Swami, like Huck, is a natural child.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the view of the adults towards heroism. Wilson in **Pudd'nhead Wilson**, Colonel Sellers in **The Gilded Age**, Miles Hendon in **The Prince and the Pauper**, Raju **in The Guide**, Margayya in **The Financial Expert**, Nagaraj in **The World of Nagaraj**, and Krishna in **The English Teacher,** are taken as representative characters in this study. The chapter attempts to analyse them as being essentially unpromising, and who are driven to acts of heroism owing to the force of circumstances. It surveys how these characters represent the attitudes of the respective writers.

Chapter 4, entitled " Ordeals of the Female Gender," scans women characters in Twain and Narayan. It is curious to note that the women characters of Twain and Narayan could be classified under two heads — the young, spirited women of the world and the mature, elderly women who act as preservers and protectors of the young. Dhananjaya in **Daśarūpa** offers a classification of the heroines on the basis of their relationship to the heroes as **sviya nari** (or **Atmiya- nari**), **parakiya nari**, and **sadharaṇi nari**. Twain's Joan of Arc, the mulatto slave Roxana in **Pudd'nhead Wilson**, Laura, Ruth, and Alice in **The Gilded Age** are well defined women characters. The depiction

of Narayan's women protagonists like Savitri in **The Dark Room**, Rosie in **The Guide**, Daisy in **The Painter of Signs**, and Bharati in **Waiting for the Mahatma** provides a very effective study in comparison with the spirited women of Twain's world.

Chapter 5 records various other aspects that contribute to the formulation of the concept of heroism in Twain and Narayan. The comic mode of treatment, the existential problems, the dream of escape, and the aversion to politics, are surveyed with the purpose of a better understanding of these two social critics.

Chapter 6 brings together the concluding arguments, evolved from the analysis of the first five chapters. Heroism is a necessary evil in society, as the latter cannot exist without the former. But the characters who take part in the human drama created by these two writers happen to be just ordinary. Even the so-called aristocratic protagonists are made to lead mundane lives due to certain circumstances, which teach them everlasting lessons in humility and compassion. In a world of deceit and treachery, it is better to be born as an average man. In fact, the two authors are not against the concept of heroism or hero. They are actually against the showmanship since what the world needs is " heroism without heroics."

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

ABBREVIATIONS

Huckleberry Finn	**The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**
Joan of Arc	**The Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc**
MT	**Mark Twain (Collected Novels)** **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** **The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson** **The Prince and the Pauper** **A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court** (All references in the thesis pertaining to these novels will be given as **MT**.)
Pudd'nhead Wilson	**The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson**
Tom Sawyer	**The Adventures of Tom Sawyer**

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

CONTENTS

		Page
Preface		i
Abbreviations of the Titles		
Chapter 1 :	Introduction	1
Chapter 2 :	Epics on Innocent Boyhood	32
Chapter 3 :	Average and Unpromising Warriors	71
Chapter 4 :	Ordeals of the Female Gender	101
Chapter 5 :	The Moulding of Unpromising Heroes	140
Chapter 6 :	Conclusion	181
Works Cited		201
Works Consulted		210

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

Chapter 1

Introduction

Heroism, in the Aristotelian sense has a tragic stature and Promethean dimensions. Transplanted to the American Eden, it is manifested, for example, in the sombre majesty of Melville's Ahab, which is aptly summed up by Stanley Geist: "In proclaiming his sovereign power, the hero also proclaimed his solitude" (82). Furthermore, in Melville's "Theology," we are reminded, Pagan and Christian elements mingle freely. Ahab is "as proud as Lucifer" and "as proud as a Greek God," besides being conscious of his affinity to the "dark Hindu half of nature." We thus assume, with Geist, that "Melville, like his hero, admired the rebel archangel for his proud and heroic defiance." We also feel justified in assuming that it is an intensification of this quarrel with God that makes Mark Twain an even more strident admirer of the rebellious Satan. Indeed, the concluding incidents of **The Mysterious Stranger** portray the heroic Little Satan's efforts to dispense justice to the heathen natives of India, suffering under an oppressive Christian imperialism. However, the adolescent archangel has little of the Olympian pride of Ahab, which is a world apart from Twain's commitment to egalitarianism. Not so easy to rule out are the Vedantic

elements that have been consciously or unconsciously assimilated into Twain's concept of heroism with a human face.

In this connection, it is worth noting that S. Ramaswamy has suggested that in his philosophical essay **What is Man?**, Twain's concept of man has taken into account the body-mind complex which is the "illusory self" (35) according to Vedantic thought. Whether, and to what extent, this eastern ramification has compromised the western credentials of Twain's heroes, remains to be seen in the context of Robert Regan's categorization of them as "unpromising" for the reason that "the power of innocence is not the power which wins success, and the innocent who struggles against the authority structure is destined for martyrdom" (143).

The proposed aim of this study is to explore this aspect of Twain's concept of heroism in comparison with the view of an appropriate counterpart from Indian Writing in English. For some very obvious reasons R.K. Narayan has been chosen. Considerable research exists to validate comparison between St. Petersburg and Malgudi; Huck and Swami, as well as an entire range of literary analogies that seem to link these two novelists from America and India. What is even more relevant is a thought-provoking insight about the "average" calibre

of the Narayan hero in the estimation of Rajiv Taranath (307). This study will attempt a comparative evaluation of the "average" and "unpromising" classifications applied to the heroes of the two novelists, and seek to assess their implications for the art of fiction.

Twain and Narayan belong to two entirely different geographical areas which can proudly boast of having distinctive literatures of their own. Americans were able to establish their own literature written in English, with due acknowledgement of indebtedness to the mother country. Soon, they developed a very forceful and vibrant literature with its characteristic "Americanness." Twain pertinently affirms : "There is nothing as the 'Queen's English.' The property has gone into the hands of a joint stock company and we [Americans] own the bulk of the shares" (**Following the Equator** 211).

In India, too, there have been parallel developments. Indian Writing in English came to be recognized by the reading public all over the world. When Twain, paid a visit to India, he was so fascinated by the linguistic hybridization that he devoted a chapter-long discussion of the topic, "Baboo Errors No Worse Than Ours" (**Following the Equator** 273-84). Today, Indian Writing in English has taken great strides and has improved in quantity and quality.

Narayan, one of the "Big Three" (Srinivasa Iyengar 300), established himself as a writer of comedies with a sharp eye for the oddities in men and matters. Narayan's merit lies in combining gentle humour with serious insights, making them dearer to the hearts of the readers. It is curious to note that **Swami and Friends**, the first novel written by Narayan, was first published not in India, but in England, and secured a warm reception.

Twain knows America and knows it whole. Born in Missouri, he saw every type of man, woman and child, white and black, that lived in the vast Mississippi valley. As a pilot on the Mississippi steamboat, he was able to meet so many kinds of people who enriched his experience as a sailor. As Territorial Secretary of Nevada and Editor of the **Virginia City Enterprise**, he knew, at first hand, the mining camps of the pacific coast, the gamblers, the railway builders, and the politicians. Thorough knowledge and clarity of expression are the unique features of **The Innocents Abroad** (1869). It is a vivid account of the Quaker City pleasure trip to the Mediterranean and the Holy Land. This travel narrative was so entirely different from the existing ones that it won great acclaim. The pervading humour in the book is really noteworthy. **The Gilded Age** (1873) was written in association with Charles

Dudley Warner, his friend and neighbour. In 1876, **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** was published. Right after a trip to Europe he published **A Tramp Abroad** in 1880. It was a very productive period for Twain, because in 1881 he was able to bring out **The Prince and the Pauper. Life on the Mississippi** followed in 1883. **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** appeared in 1884 and an earnest, extended satire was written by him entitled **A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court** (1889). Though personal sorrow and bankruptcy dampened his spirit, the books continued to come out, which to him, were a refuge against despair. **The American Claimant** appeared in 1891. **Tom Sawyer Abroad** and **The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson** were published in 1894 simultaneously. **Those Extraordinary Twins** appeared in 1894. The publication of **Tom Sawyer, Detective** and the **Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc** took place in 1896. His last book of travel, **Following the Equator**, came along in 1897, which told the story of his world travel. Mrs. Clemens' death in 1904 shattered the author thoroughly. His dark mood prompted him to write the philosophical essay **"What is Man?"** (1906) which was not included in his **Collected Works** until 1917. **The Mysterious Stranger** was posthumously published in 1916. This is just the bulk of his contributions to the literary world. He wrote a good number of sketches and

stories which were enthusiastically received by the readers.

Narayan is also a gifted writer who has quite a number of novels, stories, travelogues and sketches to his credit. He is justly admired for his wonderful gift of storytelling and for the delineation of the peculiarities of the people of a quiet little town called Malgudi. He chose to be deliberately different from his two noted contemporaries, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. "He is one of the few writers who take their craft seriously, constantly striving to improve the instrument, pursuing with a sense of dedication what may often seem to be the mirage of technical perfection" (359), observes K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar in **Indian Writing in English**. The themes he has chosen for his novels are of perennial interest. He is referred to as a regional novelist who wishes to be a detached observer of men and manners.

Swami and Friends (1935) was the first novel published by Narayan. It was met with approval by the reading public on account of the freshness and originality in the depiction of the world of children. **The Bachelor of Arts** (1936) and **The Dark Room** (1938) appeared in quick succession. He remained silent during the war years, by the end of which, **The English Teacher** (1945) was brought to light, followed by **Mr. Sampath** (1949). **The Financial Expert**

appeared in 1952 and **Waiting for the Mahatma** in 1955. It was during this time he went on his American tour, after which he published **The Guide** (1958) and **My Dateless Diary** (1960). **The Man-Eater of Malgudi** (1962) soon followed, and Narayan took some years to conceive his next two novels, **The Vendor of Sweets** (1967) and **The Painter of Signs** (1976). **A Tiger for Malgudi** was published in 1983 and the next novel, **Talkative Man** in 1986. **The World of Nagaraj** (1990) and **Grandmother's Tale** (1992) are his last works in the world of novels.

One of the significant aspects of his novels is their clarity of perception and originality and freshness of depiction. Narayan's characters are not strangers to any of us. They all look quite familiar to us, because Narayan seldom focuses his camera outside South India. As K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar pertinently remarks:

> He is of India, even of South India. He uses English language much as we used to wear dhoties manufactured in Lancashire -- but the thoughts and feelings, the stirrings of the soul, the wayward movements of the consciousness, are all of the soil of India, recognizably autochthonous. (**Indian Writing** 359)

Twain and Narayan being quite popular writers, considerable number of research works have been undertaken by many scholars down the years. Bernard De Voto, one of Twain's most significant critics, while editing **The Portable Mark Twain**, sketches the literary achievements and stylistic singularities of the American author. His works, **Mark Twain's America** (1951) and **Mark Twain at Work** (1942) are documents that contribute towards a better understanding of the writer. James M. Cox's **Mark Twain: The Fate of Humour** is a study of the comic element in Twain. Peter Stonley in **Mark Twain and the Feminine Aesthetic** sketches the validity of the female characters in his novels, offering a solid motivation for further investigation.

Narayan has a number of critics who have probed deep into all aspects of his writing. William Walsh's **R.K. Narayan: A Critical Appreciation** offers an invaluable and indepth examination of Narayan's works. **A Critical Study of the Novels of R.K. Narayan** by Jayant K. Biswal highlights Narayan's comic vision. Lakshmi Holmstrom's **The Novels of R.K. Narayan** is a tribute to the Indian author who wrote only of the South Indian Middle Class, to which he also belonged.

Writers of any literary genre show a concern for man -- his situations in

society, his place in the universe, and his ultimate destiny. The humanities and social sciences, too, show a similar concern, but unlike them, literature enlightens this through a more intense vision. While portraying man in relation to his place in society, a writer is greatly influenced by his affiliations with the present and with the past, and through these affiliations we may learn of changing values and evaluations, which may, in turn, provide guidance to a better understanding of mankind. In spite of the geographical and chronological differences, when two eminent writers show some kind of an intellectual kinship, it calls for further evaluation. It is with this aim in mind that the proposed study on R.K. Narayan and Mark Twain has been conducted as these two writers show us an interesting world where heroism has a human face, whether it be Swami's kind of heroism, or Huck's.

That Mark Twain and R.K. Narayan belong to two different nationalities and two different periods is a fact, but this does not discourage an observant reader from noticing their remarkable affinities in picturing their responses to human predicament at different levels. Whether it is St. Petersburg or Malgudi, the characters that inhabit the worlds of these writers are no strangers to either an Indian or an American reader. They are, as it were, men and women with

real flesh and blood in them, if one may judge them, taking into account the universal appeal of these authors.

Human society is not only dynamic, but also diverse. Society exhibits diversity because people who constitute society themselves differ in complex ways. Consequently, it becomes the primary concern of any writer of merit to portray man in his diverse states of existence. Heroism, in its real sense of the term, is just one characteristic of human beings. It is not essential that all men are to be heroic throughout their lives. There could be sparks of heroism at some point of time even during the life of an ordinary human being. But these two writers under study, seem to be quite conscious of these occasional sparks in their characters without which they would have been termed thoroughly unheroic and average. Such a significant observation from critics calls for further attention and careful scrutiny of relevant circumstances.

A cursory glance into the worlds of these writers will show us a variety of characters -- from innocent urchins like Huck, Tom, Swami, and Rajam to crafty and beastly villains like Vasu or Tom Driscoll, or ambitious and clever characters like Hank Morgan or Margayya. But one thing common about all these characters is their desire to show a moderate, and at times, unpromising

attempt to prove their heroism at different levels though many of them fail to achieve their much desired goals. However, Twain's heroes do show more vigour and valour compared to the meeker Narayan heroes. Hank Morgan, David Wilson and Joan of Arc definitely are energetic nonconformists, like their creator. Perhaps, it is because of his varied experiences in life and his first hand knowledge of his country from California to Connecticut that shaped his vision as a novelist, a vision which grew sharper as he grew older and maturer in sensibility. His perception of reality, prevalent in mind-nineteenth century America, was essentially ironic, the kind we find in Melville, Conrad, and Faulkner. In fact, he is closer in vision to Conrad than to any of the other American writers. The psychological journey undertaken by his major protagonists like Huck, into the heart of American darkness, reminds one of Marlow's journey in **Heart of Darkness.**

Narayan owes a modest share of his popularity to the realistic and humorous observations of the South Indian middle class in all its variety. **My Dateless Diary** testifies to Narayan's popularity abroad wherein he comes out with his experiences in the New World. He quite modestly describes how he happened to meet many of his admirers there. One of them, Arthur Isenber rightly

remarks that the author (Narayan) found in the U.S., not Americans, but human beings, cut from universal cloth and therefore no different from human beings anywhere else in the world, Malgudi included (12).

Another thing common about these two writers under study is the fact that both of them are sprightly and hilarious writers and are endowed with a captivating style which could be called deceptively effortless. Both of them are delightful storytellers too. But, unlike the American genius, our countryman has an unswerving faith in the basic goodness of mankind which enables him to view men and matters, their idiosyncrasies and absurdities with affectionate, though sharp eyes. He exposes human frailties and chuckles over them. He does not seem to believe in castigating them ruthlessly. His humour could be termed gentle and irony, compassionate and poignant. In all his novels, he makes it a point to select his heroes from a middle class family, about which he had first hand information. It is as if he were pronouncing the truth that in this busy and mechanical world, many of us do not have occasions to be really heroic at all. But even a mediocre and quiet person may be driven to perform acts of heroism, though it need not necessarily be his basic and true nature to do so. We have the examples of Raju in **The Guide**, Raman in **The Painter**

of Signs, Chandran in **The Bachelor of Arts** and Krishna in **The English Teacher**.

A modest analysis itself will bring home the point that from the early days of his literary career itself Narayan has shown a conscious and steady preference for such kinds of characters. His first novel, **Swami and Friends** tells us the story of Swaminathan, an average boy who lives with a single-minded devotion to his sophisticated friend Rajam. The story deals with Swami's desire to impress upon Rajam and his final failure in fulfilling this wish. At the end, we find Swami standing on the railway platform, unsure of Rajam's attitude towards him. There are many other characters too in the novel who are just ordinary and mediocre. Speaking about the characters of Narayan, Taranath observes that an insignificant character like Samuel the Pea becomes a symbol of Narayan's outlook on life: "an attitude which cherishes and explores the unnoticed, subtle possibilities of the average and the unremarkable" (315). S. Kandaswami also shares the view of Taranath when he suggests that Narayan's heroes are unheroic ones (210). But the unpromising characters in the world of Narayan try to grow from a position of insignificance and averageness to one of positive self-confidence.

The American counterpart has, certainly, been one of the most popularly read writers all over the world. Though this folksy humourist is primarily known as the author of boyish tales, he has revealed himself as a modern writer capable of satisfying the demands of the sophisticated and cosmopolitan audience of our own age. In fact, it is not necessary for people to read Mark Twain in the original in order to remember him with affection. Probably, more people know of Tom Sawyer's slick method of getting a fence whitewashed, than have read the book in which it appears. Twain, like Walt Whitman, with his fathomless naivety prepared the ground for a new and unique American art of letters and his earlier books like **The Adventures of the Huckleberry Finn**, **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer**, and the first part of **Life on the Mississippi**, which were composed before 1885, contained the seeds of a new American Literature with a broader base in the national mind than the other writers of New England. **Huckleberry Finn**, with its panorama of river towns and river folk, was the school of many a later western writer. The imaginative world of Sherwood Anderson was largely based upon it and it is believed that the style of Ernest Hemingway owed much to it as well.

However, Twain's primary concern as a writer was to unmask the

prevailing myths about America and to create fresh conditions for their re-appraisal. He examined many of the stereotyped American myths and found them inauthentic in the context of his times. He felt that the pervasive influence of Walter Scott, who created in the American mind the idea of romance and chivalry, needed to be countered before a fresh examination of American reality was undertaken. He felt that the best way to counter these myths was through comic techniques like parody, burlesque, and pastiche. Through playfulness and comic irony, one could demystify more effectively than through other devices, the existing notions of romance. It is no wonder then that his comedy became a tool for serious satire.

Narayan's concern also was not very different from this. He too was able to perceive life in its varied hues, like a detached observer, and by making use of comedy, was able to probe deep into certain issues which have profound psychological significance. Another noticeable trait in these two literary luminaries is their preference for a favourite locale for their fictional worlds. Narayan, like Faulkner, is famous for his permanent locale: Malgudi. Twain, on the other hand, looks more at home, dealing with St. Petersburg, the little river town on the banks of Mississippi. In fact, Twain's great books are set

along the Mississippi. As Edward Wagenknecht remarks: "On the highest level of creativity Mark Twain never left the village he grew up" (9). Bernard De Voto, in his "Introduction" to **The Portable Mark Twain**, examines this peculiar aspect of Twain's works:

> It is not too much to say that he had seen more of the United States, met more kinds and castes and conditions of Americans, and observed the American in more occupations and moods and tempers -- in a word, had ultimately shared a greater variety of the characteristic experiences of his countrymen -- than any other major American writer. (12)

Consequently, Twain was able to feel the pulse of the society in which he lived and so was greatly aware of the growth of the heroic ideal shared by many literary figures of the day. In many works, the hero of the southern frontier was given a Promethean status, endowing him with qualities. It is always a difficult task to differentiate between the fiction and the factual writing of Twain as there is a good deal of fiction in his travel narratives and great many facts in his novels. When Twain started his literary career, literature of the frontier had already been established. There were much sentimental trash that

passed as popular novels at this time. But what appears significant about this period is the establishment of a heroic ideal in literature. The hero or the protagonist happened to be a person of mythical stature who was made to carry out heroic activities, achieving unimaginable glory. The common man always liked to read about "heroes" whose achievements gave them moments of pleasure and emotional satisfaction. Actually, they were attracted by the American dream of success shared by all the protagonists of the period.

Twain's America was a country where varied kinds of transformations were taking place, not only on the political level, but on the social level as well. A large number of American writers could not turn their backs on the American scene and they responded to the new currents of industrialisation and modernity, depicting in literature the impact of these forces on American life, which in turn, highlighted the possibility of the portrayal of an ideal hero in literature. Meanwhile, many of these writers vigorously criticized the new business order and re-asserted the older values of a democratic society in which everyone might seek a fairly satisfactory style of life with reasonable expectation of success. As a result, the protagonists of the fictional works of the period were presented as real "heroes" capable of performing wonderful deeds which would

bring about exotic results. Many of the creative writers have gone to the extent of making American heroes Gods, by endowing them with the most distinctive qualities. The protagonists of each period bear different styles and have distinct personalities. But it is as if many of them shared a few common qualities with regard to their attitude to life. The literature of any given period has always attempted to portray this changing ideal and the readers seem to have been quite satisfied with what they were able to see on the pages of their favourite books. Even where the writer is one who has got a political commitment to the common man, the portrayal of the "exceptional man" as the hero of the work goes unquestioned. This exceptional quality of the hero makes him attractive, though at times a bit unconvincing.

Literature being a true mirror of life, should not distort figures, however brilliant they may be. The following is an insightful observation made by Theodore L.Gross in his "Introduction" to **The Heroic Ideal in American Literature**:

> The hero of American Literature is the exceptional man who seeks to realize an ideal. He may be Emerson's American Scholar -- an intellectual hero; he may be Arthur Dimmesdale

> -- an ethical hero; he may be Ahab -- a religious hero; he may be the Southern Gentleman, who functions as a kind of social hero. Whatever his distinctive features and however idiosyncratic he may be, the hero pursues an ideal and in the process demonstrates certain common characteristics. Like the heroes in the writings of other countries and of other times, the hero of American Literature is a courageous, active social man, whose passions are more intense than those of the people whom he usually represents. (viii)

This observation, if examined along with the traditional Indian concept of heroism and hero, will definitely throw light on a few interesting facts. Irrespective of the country, the concept of heroism has followed almost similar routes. "The hero" in all kinds of fictional works, anywhere, seems to be an exceptional man whose mission in life is to achieve exceptional goals. Perhaps, this could have been due to man's desire to see his wish fulfillment taking place before him.

However, as pointed out by Gross, "Literary heroes are the ones who dramatize the moral texture of a country. They embody the unspoken ideals,

the dream life and the mundane existence shared by the readers" (v). Thus it becomes the business of a writer to depict the struggle on the part of his characters to achieve certain things in life. This struggle usually brings out a conflict with some kind of authority. It is during the course of this conflict that the characters are made to exhibit their characteristics and, which again, is the factor that decides the extent of their heroism. Heroes, undoubtedly, represent a people and by understanding the depth of their characters, by discovering the roots of their behaviour, the readers discover the moral figure in the tapestry of a nation.

Meanwhile, the concept of the hero has provoked some of the most exciting criticisms and many critics have attributed different names to them. "He is the American Adam, Prometheus, and the Rebel-Victim" (viii), says Gross. William Gilman's argument also is equally noteworthy: "The capacity for perception, the nature and the quality of the perception, and the effects of the perception upon the perceiver would seem to be of at least as much important as a norm for the hero as anything else" (**Patterns of Commitment** 14).

If these have been the observations made by the critics while examining the nature of the American heroes, there are a good number of patterns

prescribed by the ancient aesthetic theorists of India, regarding the role of the traditional hero in literature. Narayan, who was well acquainted with the classics and the traditional literature of the ancient era, must have found ample guidelines while moulding his heroes. The traditional aesthetic theorists catagorize the Indian classical hero as **dhīrodātta** (The self-controlled and exalted), **dhīrodhata** (The self-controlled and vehement), **dhīraśānta** (The self-controlled and calm), and **dhīralalita** (The self controlled and light hearted). One thing common about this classification is the presence of the quality of "dhīrata" in all the heroes. One who is not "dhira" is not worthy of being a hero. Dhanañjaya in, **The Daśarūpa**, a treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy, gives a detailed description of the four kinds of heroes to be presented by a writer thus:

> netā vinīto madhuras tyāgī dakṣaḥ priyamvadaḥ
> raktalokaḥ śucir vāgmī rūḍhavaṁśaḥ sthiro yuvā
> buddhyutsāhasmṛtiprajnakalāmānasamanvitaḥ
> śūro dṛḍhas ca tejasvī śāstracakṣuś ca dhārmikaḥ. (40)
>
> [The hero should be well-bred, charming, liberal, clever, affable, popular, upright, eloquent, of exalted lineage, resolute, and

young; endowed with intelligence, energy, memory, wisdom, [skill in the] arts and pride; heroic, mighty, vigorous, familiar with the codes and a just observer of laws].

The above category encompasses all the qualities that we find in any hero for that matter. But this concept has undergone a transformation, though residues are still found even today. The modern concept is that anybody can be a hero. Shakespeare has created an amazingly different variety of heroes: historical, romantic, and realistic. The heroes of James Joyce and Gabriel Garcia Marquez are not like the Shakespearean heroes. A deep probe into the true nature and the basic quality of the heroes presented by Twain and Narayan exhibit a certain kinship, though these two authors belonged to two entirely different periods and nationalities. There have been many works carried out all over the world by which Twain's Huck has been endowed with a really heroic stature, making him almost a myth, finding in him all the qualities of a traditional hero. Almost similar is the case of Narayan's guide, Raju, who seems to have undergone a transition or even a transfiguration at the hands of many critics, making him a martyr and a saint, climbing up the steps of heroism.

However great and attractive these heroes may be, their positive

mediocrity and unpromising simplicity can never be neglected. It is quite interesting to note Regan's observation regarding Twain's novels that they make use of an unpromising hero motif (viii). He points out that Twain's novels fall to some extent under this rubric with a single exception, his first attempt in this genre, **The Gilded Age**. "And even that novel [. . .] would have made use of this unpromising hero motif if Mark Twain had had his way (Regan 93). During the course of his analysis he successfully establishes the fact that even this book is a "medley of aborted Unpromising Hero Fables" (95).

Twain in fact was undertaking a challenge by which he was able to portray his protagonists as unpresumptive at a time when promising heroes were in fashion. By drifting apart from the accepted norms of the times, he was trying to establish his own identity in a world where anything new and out of the ordinary was looked at with raised eye brows. He was being deliberately different, but this deliberate act on his part has enriched the world literary arena with the entry of Huck, Tom, Hank Morgan, Joan of Arc, and David Wilson.

To turn our attention to Narayan, we have as many studies as possible on the middle class status of his heroes. All his heroes belong to the South Indian

middle class society to which belonged the author too. He felt most at home writing about the frailties and follies of the middle class, of their moments of happiness and apparently insignificant worries. Undoubtedly, the nature of his protagonists is such that they can never be called heroic in the real sense of the term. They too struggle, at times against authority, at times against fate itself, but never with a heroic bent of mind. His world is inhabited by common men with whom all of us are familiar, whom we may meet not only in Malgudi, but in any part of the world. D.V.K. Raghavacharyulu points out that Narayan's human specimens are not essentially cut out for great enterprises, and that they stumble into a Brave New World, performing roles not suited to their nature, or Svabhava (23). He further points out that Narayan's heroes are adept at improvisation and somehow they manage to transform their weakness into strength. Graham Greene, perhaps, pays the greatest tribute to Narayan while introducing **The Bachelor of Arts**:

> There are writers -- Tolstoy and Henry James to name two -- whom we hold in awe, writers -- Turgenev and Chekhov -- for whom we feel a personal affection, other writers whom we respect -- Conrad, for example -- but who hold us at a long

> arm's length with their courtly "foreign grace." Narayan (whom I don't hesitate to name in such a context) more than any of them wakes in me a spring of gratitude, for he has offered me a second home. (1)

It is this quality of offering a second home that has become characteristic of Narayan who never wanted to write about things with which he was unfamiliar. Swami's world in **Swami and Friends**, perhaps, might have been his own, and the pangs of love experienced by Chandran in **The Bachelor of Arts** is not unfamiliar to any youth; or the humiliation and negligence meted out to Savithri in **The Dark Room** is not so uncommon in the lives of many an Indian woman. The classical norm by which a typical Indian hero is to be presented is only partly accepted by the Indian author, and we tend to classify his heroes, to borrow the earlier mentioned classification, under the division called **dhīrasānta**.

It is true that human nature is so complex and diverse that it can hardly admit any categorical demarcation capable of making watertight compartments. But our ancient aestheticians made conscious attempts to form classifications based on the personal merits of the hero. "The hero is also called **neta** or

nāyaka because the entire dramatic action culminates ultimately into his (hero's) benefit," observes Surendra Nath Shastri (204). These norms were laid down for the sake of theatrical performances when the novel as a genre did not exist in Sanskrit. But the hero or the **nāyaka** in all literary works of the ancient period was expected to be a man with fortitude and courage. Visvanatha in his work **Sāhitya Darpaṇa** points out that munificent, clever, high born, handsome, youthful, enthusiastic, prompt, devoted to people, powerful and tactful, are the special characteristics of a hero (40). The mode of behaviour and the frame of mind of the central character of a work of art is the factor which decides whether he is to be termed **dhīrodātta, dhīralalita, dhīroddhata** or **dhīrasānta**.

Though this forms the foundation on which the heroes of Sanskrit and the other literatures of India existed, Narayan seems to have deviated from this in the conception of his own heroes. With all due respect to the ancient theorists, he has chosen his heroes from among the South Indian middle class. But the **lalita-sāntasvabhāva** (simple and calm nature) of the Indian heroes seems to have made some impact on the writer who is known as a traditional storyteller. Almost all Narayan heroes are gentle, easy-going and straightforward with the

exception of Raju, the guide, and Vasu, the taxidermist. Taranath's opinion that Narayan's achievements could be described as the creative use of the ordinary (307) points to this peculiarity of writing which is a hallmark of Narayan.

Narayan's heroes, according to Suryanarayana Murti, show "man's thirst for prominent living," and his heroes live in a dream-world of achievements and are finally disillusioned (6). When an artist holds a mirror to life and society, the images he helps to reflect should also maintain their originality. Heroism is a rare thing in this world and the ordinary and the average type of people can never be expected to perform wonderful deeds. All that they can do is to struggle against odds but that too, in the novels of Narayan, is in a moderate fashion. Many of Narayan's heroes -- unlike Twain's -- are fatalists. The hero may be a schoolboy like Swami, or a college student Chandran, an English teacher Krishna, Gandhian disciple Sriram, an insurance officer Ramani, a speculator Mr. Sampath, a financial expert Margayya, a tourist guide Raju, a taxidermist Vasu, a sweet vendor Jagan, a painter of signs Raman, and a writer-cum-dreamer Nagaraj. Each of these heroes strives to attain something that they do not possess, but it is not generally through heroic acts. But in their

simple and comparatively uneventful lives, each problem attains mountainous stature and the tackling of each of these becomes a herculean task.

Twain's heroes, on the other hand, show real spirit though they appear inconsequential in the beginning. The men and women who inhabit the Twainian world are neither very heroic nor very meek. Tom, Huck, and Hank Morgan show more spirit compared to many of Narayan's characters. But Twain's attraction towards the story of the unpromising hero is easily discernible in many of his novels. It, in fact, is one of the perennial fables of mankind and it would have been found appealing to the volatile imagination of the American author.

> For through most of his life, it was as this figure that Mark Twain saw himself, and it was in this role that he cast the heroes of his fiction who most clearly represented his own self-image. Tom Sawyer, Tom Canty, Hank Morgan, Pudd'nhead Wilson, and the Henry Adams of "The 1,000,000 £ Bank Note". (Regan 119)

This view becomes authentic enough, because Twain's own life exemplifies

the personal fantasy of success that drove him to resort to unusual enterprises. It is as if he wanted this fantasy to have the respectability of social usefulness too. The image of an exceptional man who seeks to realise an ideal itself must have been appealing to Twain, who was a democrat in spirit and an aristocrat in action. All his heroes are energetic and contemplative. But there are many instances where his great heroes are made to behave like little children who try to receive attention by showing off. If Tom Sawyer revels in attracting attention, Pudd'n head Wilson is a grownup Tom. Wilson's loneliness and isolation are not actually chosen by him; they happen to be thrust upon him by the public who are incapable of understanding him. The action of the story in **Tom Sawyer**, on the other hand, is "defined by Tom's unwavering commitment to a dream of himself as a hero" (Robinson 105).

There is always a period of painful insecurity experienced by all his heroes -- a sad reminder of his own personal lack of confidence prior to his success as a writer. At times, we see the author "being conscious of his secret fantasies made public and with an iron hand, he restricts the free play for fear that they may be known to the public and that they may embarrass him a lot" (Regan 105). It is, perhaps, this attitude that pervades the whole of **The Adventures**

of Tom Sawyer wherein we see Tom trying to win Becky's love, Judge Thatcher's admiration, and a fortune of unimaginable magnitude. But Huck Finn's story is different. Here, the protagonist is motivated by an impulse much more exalted than a mere dream of glory. Huck's actions, though, of first rate heroism, are not sprung out of any desire for glory, but out of his impulsiveness and generosity. Huck's confrontation with a society which has its own justifications to keep a slave is inevitable. Obviously, he cannot help being who he is. He is not even conscious of the moral ideal he represents and of the social authority he opposes. His heroism comes out as naturally as a bud that unfolds itself to become a beautiful flower.

The story of Joan of Arc is another instance where Twain seems to illustrate his idea of real heroism. The heroic activities performed by Joan, the village urchin-turned charismatic leader, due to circumstances beyond her control, are the most natural ones as far as she is concerned. In spite of all the glamour that surrounds her, she is presented as a lonely child amidst a crowd of admirers, among whom she cannot find a friend. Her actions are controlled by the "inner voice" and she doesn't find any personal heroism in her deeds, whatsoever.

Thus, the above mentioned factors form an interesting field of research in which a study in comparison could be attempted. Both the writers under discussion have been able to feel the responses of the society to which they belonged. They might have wanted to bring home the point that it was time for them to bid farewell to heroism, but not to the hero. It is not the sort of "militant attitude towards everything evil" in this world (Carlyle 11). Neither can they be called "leaders of men [. . .] the modellers, patterns and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass continued to do or attain." To both Twain and Narayan, their heroes represented a cross section of the society where real heroism is hardly found. Their heroes are devoid of the real spirit of heroism, though many of their acts could be termed heroic, like Huck's or Swami's, but they stem out of sheer necessity and innocence.

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

Chapter 2

Epics on Innocent Boyhood

Boyhood and its problems have always been a favourite theme of many great writers. Both Twain and Narayan have been able to hold a prominent seat in the literary arena with their authentic narratives of boyhood. The story of an urchin undertaking deeds of heroism that could turn the wheel of fortune has had a wonderful and everlasting appeal to the reading public. The adventures of young heroes have been considered the most readable ones. We have innumerable number of folktales and legends about an unpromising brother or sister who happens to reap success at the end of an enterpreise, which prompts Van Wyck Brooks, the famous American critic, to refer to American Literature as a "literature of boys" (**The Writer in America** 69).

The universal acceptability of such stories suggests that "it satisfies a psychological need common to all men"(Regan, **Unpromising Heroes** 10) -- their desire to see someone performing heroic acts. The world of children being a microcosm of the adult's, the psychological pleasure derived from such acts is not less. Twain, familiar with the folk stories of his country, found

himself fascinated by the unpromising hero motif perceived in many of those stories. Twain himself, personally, was one who had a dream of success, the realisation of which had been the objective of his long and eventful life. Childhood being the first stage in a man's life, the present study has chosen the treatment of heroism of the juvenile protagonists in the works of Twain and Narayan as its first point of consideration. Needless to say, both these writers have earned the reputation for the dexterity they have shown in the delineation of the child heroes. These child-heroes are motivated by a dream of success, though many of Narayan's heroes fail to achieve this. However, Twain's juvenile protagonists are luckier, as they have a taste of success, sometime or the other. We have the parallel stories of Swami and Tom Sawyer to begin with. Haydn Moor Williams observes that in reading **Swami and Friends** we are reminded at times of Twain's Tom Sawyer or any schoolboy, East or West: the eternal hostility of schoolmasters, the vagaries of parents, the rivalry of cricket, the pain of growing up (95).

Malgudi and St. Petersburg have numerous urchins who are good at heart, and who, in all sincerity, would like to imitate the adult world. The problems and their solutions are the constant worry of these children who,

otherwise, lead a gleeful life in the favourite idylls of the two authors. We have a long list of boys and girls whose story reminds us, with a sense of nostalgia, of our own past. Huck and Tom may be Americans, but their attitude to life is shared by the Indian counterpart Swami. Chandran, in **The Bachelor of Arts** is just a grown-up Swami. Swami leads an uneventful life in the company of his parents and grandmother. A meek and complacent boy like Swami cannot naturally be expected to perform miraculous deeds because his world is confined to his family and school. At home he is a naughty boy, who does not give much heed to studies. He is the darling of his grandmother. At school, he is always in and out of trouble.

Swami has a cherished vision of himself as "Tate", one of the best bowlers of the world, for the fulfilment of which, he is ready to do anything. His decampment was carried out with a definite heroic plan in his mind -- to come back at the right time to bring laurels to Malgudi Cricket Club. He wanted to please and surprise Rajam, his bosom friend, whose sophistication and intelligence had always been a point of admiration for the submissive Swami. He makes frantic attempts to get enough practice, in vain. Even when he escapes to the forest, he is brought back home, and by then, he has already

lost his opportunity to bring success to his team. He is disillusioned and saddened by the sudden coldness in Rajam and Mani, for whom, Swami is a cheat of the first order.

Twain, on the other hand, is more concerned about how his child heroes act and react within the strict structure of nineteenth century America. The story of Prince Edward and poor Tom Canty (**The Prince and the Pauper**) takes us to a world of innocent boys who are overtaken by unexpected events. Tom is a dreamer and a romantic in his own fashion. He imitates the royalty; he is the "prince" of rags, with an endless desire to experience the pleasures offered by aristocracy. Later, when he is mistaken for the Prince, he enjoys the situation at first, but is baffled at the kind of restricted life of a prince and longs to leave the palace. If Tom Sawyer's greatest dream is that of glory, Huck's and Tom Canty's is that of freedom. Even that is denied when Tom Canty becomes a member of the royal family. Edward, on the other hand, at Offal Court, acts like a prince. The depiction of Tom's innocence is so captivating and convincing when we see him using the Royal Stamp to crack a nut. It is as if Twain were pronouncing an eternal truth that innocence can have no affectation, in spite of the growing pessimism in his own life.

The same feeling is again found at work in **The Mysterious Stranger.** Little Satan's act of creating a tribe of little men before the boys excites them. But his act of annihilation of the same as if they were no more than ants shocks them. He declares to the children that men are definitely inferior to angels because they possess the so-called virtue of "moral sense" (60). Little Satan's words about man and his moral sense confuse the children and they seek a clarification from Father Peter, who explains to them that it is the faculty which enables one to distinguish good from evil. Furthermore, Theodore is given to understand that it is very valuable and that it is the only thing that lifts man above the level of beasts and that it makes him heir to immortality. There is a loss of innocence hinted at in this novel, which is inevitable in the life of any child.

"Of all the urges in man, the urge to be conspicuous is the most human of human traits," thus observes Regan (**Unpromising Heroes** 10). Tom Sawyer has an evident inclination for self-advertising, and his actions are always motivated by a desire for popularity and recognition. All child psychologists opine that during the adolescent period each child craves for recognition. But this craving is more dominant in Tom than in his intelligent and obedient half-

brother, Sidney. The adolescent boys of Twain and Narayan share all the qualities of children everywhere. They are loveable, and at times adorable, when they open up a world of innocence and mischief, attacking the pretensions of the grown-ups around them. It is when they come into contact with the mercenary and selfish world of the adults that, they tend to lose their innocence. Tom, Huck, Edward, Tom Canty and the whole group of urchins of St. Petersburg are innocent children like Swami, Mani, Rajam, Samuel (**Swami and Friends**) and Leela (**The English Teacher**).

Swami's desire for growth and his futile attempts to raise himself from the position of the average is the story of Narayan's novel, **Swami and Friends**. Swami, like his friend Samuel the Pea, is just an ordinary boy, who has no "outstanding virtue of muscle or intellect; who is as apprehensive, weak and nervous about things" (**Swami and Friends** 9). No wonder, all his attempts at heroism are found to be fruitless. He is doomed to be disillusioned at the end, standing all alone on the railway platform. But this disillusionment becomes an initiation into maturity.

Most of the juvenile heroes in Twain and Narayan are witty and intelligent in everything except in their studies. Swami, like Tom Sawyer, is confronted

with the problem of getting into the "Monday mood of work and discipline," (**Swami and Friends** 3) after the delicious freedom of Saturday and Sunday. Swami "shuddered at the very thought of school; that dismal yellow building; the fire-eyed Vedanayagam, his class teacher, and the Head Master with his long cane". Tom Sawyer is also equally unhappy at the thought of school. He is heroic enough to act sick and scare Aunt Polly just to evade school, but is caught by her. Monday morning always found him miserable as "it began another week's slow suffering in school. He generally began that day wishing he had had no intervening holiday. It made the going into captivity and fetters again so much more odious" (**MT** 33).

Swami is not much different. He goes to the extent of approaching a doctor complaining of delirium, so that he could be freed from school early in the afternoon and goes on to explain delirium as "some kind of stomachache" (**Swami and Friends** 141). We have a similar incident in **Huckleberry Finn** where Huck tells Miss Susan that Miss Mary Jane has gone to the Proctors because Hanner was seriously ill and might not last many hours, because she was suffering from "Mumps." He is ready with a clarification on the disease and argues that these mumps are of different kind as they are mixed up with

"measles and whooping-cough, and erysipelas and consumption, and yaller janders, and brain fever" (**MT** 258).

However, the boys' world is not always full of happiness and gaiety. They do have real issues, though, many of them appear trivial before the adult eye. But, to children like Swami or Tom Sawyer, they are the most confusing ones. Consequently, in Twain and Narayan, the Wordsworthian concept of the child being the father of man finds expression. The world of children has its own heroes. They have a code of rules to be followed too. It is simply not a world of unruly and uncouth boys and girls enjoying unlimited freedom. Just as adults have their own inhibitions, children too have periods of turmoil in their lives.

The problem of going to school and adhering to the custom-bound life is the first hurdle that a boy faces, whether it is in America or in India. As a result, absconding becomes an essential part of these boys' lives, and, undoubtedly, both Swami and Tom are experts in it. Needless to say, playing truant requires a certain amount of courage. Tom is a veteran compared to Swami in this field and no cross-examination on the part of Aunt Polly is successful in trapping him, whereas Swami is always caught. Swami is greatly

influenced by Mani, the vagabond and the most powerful boy in his class and by Rajam, the intelligent and sophisticated one. The diffident and reticent Swami tries to be more adventurous than Mani and more sophisticated and snobbish than Rajam. Both Tom and Swami are confronted by difficulties at school, which to a large extent, are due to their unwillingness to adhere to the custom-bound life in school. Huck, on the other hand, hates all types of education that could be received from a school, as he is essentially a product of nature. He is allowed to learn his lessons directly from nature and the greatest lesson he learns is the lesson in compassion and benevolence.

Comparisons between Swami and Huck have gone a long way ever since Narayan's boy-hero was noticed by the readers and critics alike. In fact, Swami has been considered a Hindu counterpart of the archetypal adolescent, Huck Finn. Though hailing from entirely different backgrounds they have even the same contempt for etiquette. But unlike Huck's, most of Swami's difficulties stem from schools, schoolmasters and the necessity of passing exams. Swami's anti-school demonstration and the minor escapade towards the close of the novel are the results of the natural spirit of nonconformity possessed by Swami. It is not his interest in politics that instigates Swami to burn his homemade cap,

mistaking it for foreign cloth, but his spirit of adventure and the capacity to question authority. He participates in the hartal after Gandhi's imprisonment -- an incident that proves how rebellious even a decent and amicable boy like Swami can be -- given the liberty to act as he wishes. It is Swami who shouts, "We will spit on the police," (9). A mere mention of the word "police" enrages him and so when the "pandemonium started, he was behind no one in destroying the school furniture." The diffident Swami is no longer there, but he assumes the posture of a grown-up, capable of reaction against the British rule. Rajam once exclaims "What a boy you are! You are always in some trouble or other whereever you go, always always!" (**Swami and Friends** 149).

Swami's heroism begins and ends with his experiences in different schools. He has only one constant aim in life -- to get as much practice as possible, so that he could lead Malgudi Cricket Club to victory. This, ultimately, ends up in his running away, and the consequent starvation in the forest. Even while he is starving in the Mempi forest, he has a vision of himself as a fiery opening bowler entrusted with the task of skittling the opponents' team out. It is with this intention he decides to leave Malgudi for the time being

> and to come back for a few hours on the day of the match,

> disappear once again, and never come back to Malgudi -- a place which contained his father, a stern stubborn father, and that tyrant of a headmaster (**Swami and Friends** 150).

There is an evident communication gap between the modern youth of the world of Narayan and their parents. Mali in **The Vendor of Sweets**, Balu in **The Financial Expert**, and Tim in **The World of Nagaraj** are victims of this. They believe themselves to be better than their parents, who, to them, are epitomes of traditionalism and conventionality. In **Swami and Friends** also there is a reference to the younger generation's abhorrence of the ignorance of their elders. Narayan offers us an amusing sketch describing Swami's excessive admiration for the cricketers. Swami talks excitedly of "Tate" to his grandmother.

> "What is Tate?", she asked innocently.
>
> Swaminathan's disappointment was two-fold. She had not known anything of his new title, and failed to understand its rich significance even when told. At other times he would have shouted at her. But now he was a fresh penitent and so asked her kindly " Do you mean to say that you don't know Tate?" (**Swami and Friends** 127)

This gives him an opportunity to deliver a lecture on cricket and on Tate, posing as an important and authoritative person. But he loses his bravado, the moment his father enters the room, giving way to humiliating awkwardness.

Huck's case is not much different from Swami's. He decides to leave St. Petersburg not because he hates the place, but because he hates the civilizing efforts of the widow and Miss Watson. Likewise, Tom also absconds just to hurt Beckie, his girlfriend. He even thinks of the effect it would create on Becky thus:

> What if he turned his back, now and disappeared mysteriously? What if he went away -- ever so far away, into unknown countries beyond the seas -- and never come back anymore! How would she feel then? (**MT** 44).

Another aspect of the adolescent heroism seen in Twain and Narayan is the children's tendency to leave home in search of new lands. Swami (**Swami and Friends**), Chandran (**The Bachelor of Arts**), Huck (**Huckleberry Finn**), Tom and Joe Harper (**Tom Sawyer**) have a period of separation from home. Joe Harper, perhaps, has the silliest of reasons to leave his home, protesting

against his mother's whipping him for having consumed some cream without her permission, which, in reality, he had not even tasted. Joe's tender mind gets bruised and he decides to leave the place so as to punish his mother and hopes, "she would be happy and never regret having driven her poor boy out into the unfeeling world to suffer and die" (**MT** 61). But these capers make them realise the real value of the security and warmth of their homes. The call from a world of unbounded liberty and eternal joy appears dull for them and they are torn by a desire to go back. It is Joe Harper who decides first to return to see his mother. He is brave enough to admit it to the others. "Yes, I want to see my mother and you would too, if you had one. I ain't any more baby than you are" (**MT** 72). To his great surprise, Tom finds that even Huck, who never really had any attachment to anybody at home, wanted to go back to the familiarity of St. Petersburg.

In the first part of his escapade, Swami is excited over the prospect of eating all the divine sweets made in the Bombay Ananda Bhavan, if at all he could get there. Mempi forest would have looked as attractive as Jackson's Island if only Swami had company. The writers under reference seem to believe that the rebelliousness in the young is just a passing phase in the process

of growing up. The story of these young heroes illustrates the fact that the process of growing up is challenging, and at the same time, painful, for adolescence is a period of turbulence and confusion for any girl or boy.

Undoubtedly, every adolescent suffers from some sort of frustrations in the human family, the signs of which may not be quite apparent in many cases, but they do exist. A return to normalcy and warmth of the familiar surroundings of home is inevitable in the lives of these absconders. Swami, Chandran, Tom, Huck, Joe -- all go back to their homes. Indeed, all of them are happy to be there. This period of separation from home, in fact, serves another purpose -- it makes them realise the value of relationships and family ties, except, perhaps, for Huck Finn. In **Tom Sawyer**, Twain makes the children come back to a world of happiness and affection, but in **Huckleberry Finn**, Huck is allowed "to light out for the territory" (**MT** 317). Possibly, Twain himself could not have bridled Huck's wild desire for unlimited freedom and hence this deviation.

When we come to The **Bachelor of Arts**, we are introduced to a slightly more mature atmosphere of diversion inside the college campus. There is nothing extraordinary about Chandran. But his friend, Veeraswami, who is an

intellectual extrovert, attracts us with his original and revolutionary ideas. Narayan says that Veeraswami's life itself was a preparation for him to achieve higher ideals of eradicating the English from the Indian soil. Imperialism being his favourite demon, he believed in "smuggling arms into the country, and on a given day, shooting all the Englishmen; he assured Chandran that he was even then preparing for that great work. His education, sleep, contacts, and everything were a preparation" (**Bachelor of Arts** 46).

This, evidently, is an expression of heroism from the point of view of a young adult, who is capable of independent thinking. The political consciousness of the college boy makes him bold enough to disclose his secret dream. The boys of Malgudi cannot be expected to perform more forcefully than this, for, they, like their elders, are not at war with the quiet life of Malgudi. Moreover, real acts of heroism are very rare in the world and so are heroes. The children of Malgudi cannot be like Huck who decides to set out for the territory, disregarding the civilized life and the comfort and security of St. Petersburg. No wonder, we tend to think that the characters of Twain have more Life Force in them, to borrow the term used by Bernard Shaw. In **The Bachelor of Arts**, Chandran leaves Malgudi as a result of the star-crossed horoscope.

He leaves home to become a sanyasi like Joe Harper, who has a similar desire to become a hermit after getting beaten up by his mother. To Chandran, life itself seems to have come to a standstill at the prospect of the cancellation of his wedding to Malathi, whose horoscope does not match with his. People with ill-matched horoscopes cannot marry, according to Hindu custom.

Chandran is prepared to disregard these beliefs, but finds himself in the shackles of customs from which he cannot tear himself off. Consequently, he leaves home, treads the hitherto untrodden paths of life -- the life of detachment and renunciation of a sanyasi. It is almost like an act of vengeance on the part of Chandran to whom the only thing possible, apart from committing suicide, is to become a recluse. He feels "he had done with the gamble of life. He was beaten. He could not go on living. With Malathi married and gone" (**Bachelor of Arts** 102). When he longs for coffee, he derives a sort of pleasure watching a part of him suffer acutely, saying: "Go on: suffer and be miserable. You were not sent into this world to enjoy. Go on: be miserable and perish"(107). Gradually, he realises the folly of the whole act. He sends home a letter demanding some money, and eventually returns home, like Swami from the Mempi forest. He further comprehends that his mind is not yet ripe for entering

the last and the most important **ashrama** of life of a true Hindu -- Sanyasa. For him, **grihastha ashrama** is to be the next step and he eventually prepares himself for it, because he has to "cross the shadow line between carefree youth and responsible manhood" (Harrex, **The Fire and The Offering** 57).

But this sort of home-coming is not what Twain would want in his world, he, being an advocate of liberty and adventure. As mentioned earlier, in **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer**, Tom and Huck go back home, not to remain there, but to undertake a longer and more significant journey, of which we are told in **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**. Twain's America was an industrialized, commercialized and modernized nation with an assorted race, that was always engaged in a rat race for power and wealth. He could not be blind to American life and so the picaresque heroes of his much acclaimed works reflect the peculiarity of the American life of the time. They project rebellious young men, who, at times, are victims of indecision and inner conflicts. The adventures of Tom and Huck show a conflict between the assumptions of democracy and its limitations; on another level, a conflict between the ideal of freedom and the nature of man. Twain's heroes always possess a robust virility that refuses to conform. To quote Henry Nash Smith:

> Huck's story is a story of movement -- The outcome of each episode in his story is a renewed flight from Jackson's Island, where he and Jim fear, will be found by slave hunters; from the wrecked steamboat Walter Scott in midriver on which they encounter a band of robbers and murderers -- this pattern of repeated movement has characterized American history from the beginning. (**The American Novel** 71)

All hypocrisy exasperates Twain and his heroes. Both Tom and Huck feel that it is difficult to throw off the burden of conformity in the village. The community along the Mississippi is oppressed by narrow-minded customs, which find expression in Sunday school exercises where a prize is given to the pupil who has learnt two thousand verses by rote. Tom has no qualms in standing before the assembly producing sufficient tickets to own a Bible, though he has not learnt any of the verses. Tom's only desire here is to be a hero in front of his admirers and his obedient brother Sid. Tom, as always, tries to win acceptance and admiration, through which he hopes to get a place of importance in his society of young urchins of St. Petersburg. Huck, on the other hand, is fed up with the civilizing measures, decides to embark on a journey, though he

has never been outside the little river town of St. Petersburg. But he launches upon a journey that takes him more than a thousand miles downstream, passing a constantly changing panorama of new landscape, strange characters, unforeseen and unimagined dangers. It is during this journey we come face to face with Huck the valiant hero, who had not exhibited any sign of heroism so far. He, to Twain, must have been the prototype of the unpromising hero, who is to bring success in the most unexpected manner later. Bernard De Voto observes that Huck's flight is a passage through the structure of the nation. It is an exploration of the human race, whose objective needs no explicit recording (**Studies in Huck Finn** 35).

However, the motive behind the adventurous travel undertaken by Huck and Jim points to one thing -- the desire to escape from the conventions and customs of the everyday American life. Twain was very particular in striking a contrast between the work-a-day reality of the American society and that of the fabulous play-world of the Western frontier. The idea of quitting work, or of a simple walk out, sudden and unexplained, must have had its own charm to a community of speculators and achievers. In fact, Twain himself was an advocate of such a dream. **The Innocents Abroad** and **Roughing It** show

the author's enthusiasm for journeys that take men away from the din and bustle of the world. We have the words of the narrator of **Roughing It** who envies his brother because he coveted not only his distinction and financial splendour but the "long strange journey he was going to make and the curious new world he was going to explore."(2)

Kenneth. S. Lynn's view that of all the American writers, Twain is the principal celebrant of the escape dream appears quite meaningful here (**Lynn** 41). The journey in **Roughing It** is undertaken with an evident light-heartedness and Twain has very aptly chosen the terminology of Paradise while describing Lake Tahoe and the surrounding countryside. To him, "Tahoe's air is the same as the angel's breath" (**Roughing It** 15). The narrator and his friend loll in the sand, smoke their pipes and sleep. But he gets tired of staying in one place and he is at a loss for words to describe the "itch" that drives him on. Committed and unsure of himself, the narrator sets off once again in pursuit of adventures. The whole narration depicts the mind of a restless and rebellious character. But, in **Huckleberry Finn**, when Huck embarks on his journey, he has all kinds of fear in his mind. The journey to an unknown world does dampen his spirit, though he finds no other way to get

out of the surroundings he hates. His adventures are not sprung out of heroism, but out of sheer necessity. He has no glorified picture of a picaresque hero in his mind, though we are sure, had it been Tom Sawyer who had undertaken the journey, he would have made it an elaborately glorified affair. Because, glory, to Tom, is his lifeblood.

Tom Sawyer, on the other hand, is always conscious of a rival in his own household -- his own half-brother Sidney. He delights in getting Tom in trouble with Aunt Polly, setting an example of good conduct, which Tom can never attain. He has no adventurous and troublesome ways, and consequently, he remains quite safe when troubles envelop Tom. But as Regan puts it, "Tom, for all his recalcitrance, occupies a higher place in the affection of his aunt (and by implication, of the community) than Sidney does because he possesses, along with his capacity for getting into trouble, an active capacity for courage and human deeds" (**Unpromising Heroes** 143). Perhaps, this quality in Tom is what Judge Thatcher found attractive in him, for he acts as a father figure to Tom, the orphaned and fatherless boy. Tom "would have liked to fall down and worship him" (**MT** 29) and he was quite approachable and warm. When Tom is introduced to him, the Judge puts his hand on the boy's head and calls

him "a fine little man." The subsequent, heroism that Tom exhibits in the church inn has a catastrophic end; but Tom is confident that he will win his affection, which becomes true at the end and Judge Thatcher virtually adopts him.

Tom's heroism, like Swami's, primarily aims at attention, since both of them yearn to achieve recognition, acceptance, admiration, and a place of importance. Swami tries to get attention by cultivating friendship with Mani, the strong boy, and Rajam, the intelligent one. In fact, these two boys represent what Swami lacks -- physical strength and social recognition. Tom's intention is to show-off in all possible ways. He has enough confidence in himself, unlike Swami. Tom's exhibitionism is aimed at a boy-audience and he is the leader of his boy-army and boy-pirates. He shows enough courage in organizing and executing his plans. But we get a glimpse of the boy-hero, when his girl friend Becky is confronted with a dilemma in the classroom. Becky tears Dobbin's book and Tom happens to witness this. At first he finds satisfaction in observing Becky's discomfort and he even anticipates the scene of punishment with a kind of positive pleasure. But when he sees her looking like a "helpless rabbit," a change takes place in his mind and he rises to the occasion heroically

admitting "I done it."(**MT** 88) This is a selfless act that wins Becky's love. This alone, other than the Muff Potter case, perhaps, is the real act of heroism on the part of Tom. Indeed, he wins applause after this incident as Becky feels indebted to him. Tom goes to sleep that night with Becky's words in his memory, "Tom, how could you be so noble?." (**MT** 88)

Regan, while discussing the nature of the child protagonists opines that Tom Sawyer's earlier actions really account for his vanity and not his heroism and that even Twain's usage of the word "hero" itself to refer to Tom is ironical (**Unpromising Heroes** 116). The three pirates on Jackson's Island are referred to as "a vain and boastful company of heroes" (**MT** 76), and Tom himself is referred to as a "strangling" (**MT** 60) hero in the episode where he is drenched by a pan of water thrown out by a servant, lying under Becky's window, proposing to die of unrequitted love. Regan again points out that Tom is called "a hero" frequently in the course of his unheroic boyish adventures which occupy the first half of the book; whereas in the second half; in which Tom repeatedly acts mature indeed heroically, the word hero occurs only once (116).

The unfolding of the mystery of the murder of Dr. Robinson provides

Tom with a chance to prove his heroism. He, at last, is celebrated as a hero, and the people of the town really come to understand that Tom undertook the risk of testifying against Injun Joe not out of any hope to win fame, but out of a sense of duty stronger than his own fear. Swami, the Narayan hero, likewise, gets a couple of opportunities to prove his courage, but unfortunately, he is incapable of winning acclamation. He tries to act heroic during the demonstration scene. His last and final act of absconding, to bring laurels to his club, also fails miserably.

Politics is not a forte of the youngsters of Malgudi, unlike the youth of today. It is a western concept to them and the Malgudians try to avoid it with a passion, perhaps, except in **Waiting for the Mahatma**. In **The English Teacher** Gajapathy bursts out:

> There are times when I wish there was no politics in the world and no one knew who was ruling now. The whole of the West is a muddle owing to its political consciousness and what a pity that East should also follow suit. (42)

The youngsters of Malgudi may go astray, but it is not to embrace politics.

Right from **Swami and Friends**, Narayan seems to believe that politics is not an average man's game. The grown-ups insist that the youngsters should not have anything to do with politics, especially the students. Swami tries to be heroic in the anti-school strike by breaking the window glasses and when he comes back home, his father asks him: "Why do not you urchins leave politics alone and mind your business? We have enough trouble in our country without you brats messing up things" (**Swami and Friends** 102).

Swami is made to pay heavily for this "messing" up. When he is interrogated by the headmaster and caned by him, Swami's desperation gives way to courage and "he restrained the tears that were threatening to rush out jumped down, and grasping his books rushed out muttering, 'I don't care for your dirty school' " (**Swami and Friends** 106).

Unlike in Raja Rao's **Kanthapura**, where the freedom movement becomes a passionate involvement of an entire community, the movement in this novel touches only the periphery. Swami, in his own way, was trying to carry out his protest against the authority of the school for having punished him unnecessarily. He felt that he was only doing his duty as a sincere cricketer to save his team.

Mani in **Swami and Friends** may be more heroic than Swami himself, because "he monopolised the last bench and slept bravely" (8). To Swami, Mani always towered above all the other boys of the class. "He seldom brought any books to the class and never bothered about homework" (8). Swami acts as his assistant when Mani starts fighting with the other boys after the exams are over. Mani snatches ink-bottles from boys and destroys them in a mood of joviality. The boys who protest against this, were aptly punished by Mani, pouring ink over their clothes. "Overcome by the mood of the hour, he had spontaneously emptied his ink-bottle over his own head and had drawn frightful dark circles under his eyes with the dripping ink" (66).

Heroism, in the traditional sense, goes hand in hand with religious feeling in Narayan's world. Narayan's child protagonists are all religious, though the whole exercise of religious rituals is ridiculed by the author. Twain's heroes seem to possess a questioning mentality towards religion, which, in a way, is a trait that they received from their creator. Swami's ardent desire to see the pebbles converted into money brings a smile even to the most insensitive readers. He has learnt that Gods are capable of doing all kinds of miracles. It is only natural and easy for him to approach the Gods rather than approach

his father who is a stern disciplinarian. He wanted only very little cash to purchase a hoop to play. Gods become his last resort as he remembers Ebenezar's words that God would readily help those who prayed to Him. He enters the "pooja" room and explains the situation to the Gods. He promises to give up biting his thumb if the Gods helped him. He closes his eyes and mutters: "Oh, Sri Rama! Thou hast slaim Ravana though he had ten heads, can't You give me six pies ?" (70) He fixes a time limit of half an hour for the Gods to perform the miracle. He is infuriated at the indifference of the Gods who did not turn the pebbles into coins. " He wanted to abuse the God, but was afraid. Instead, he vented all his rage on the cardboard box, and kicked it from place to place."(71) Later, he repents, fearing God's wrath and respectfully buries the box at the root of a banana tree. O.P. Saxena remarks that it is these serio-comic reflections which authenticate Narayan's portrayal of children (**Glimpses** 56).

Twain's Huck too ponders over the possibility of God's miracle in a similar context. In **Huckleberry Finn**, Huck rejects both heaven and hell, symbols of man's concept of the eternal. He even admits to Miss Watson that he wished he was there in hell as all that he wanted was a change. He does not

even, for a minute, consider the possibility of going to heaven, as it was where Miss Watson too hoped to go. Huck's stream of thought is exactly like Swami's, when he makes up his mind: " I couldn't see no advantage in going where she was going. So I made up my mind I wouldn't try for it" (**MT** 144). The very same principle of the rejection of heaven is seen, when Huck decides to keep the whereabouts of Nigger Jim, a secret. Though Huck decides to help him, it does not point to his rejection of moral values. He believes in following his own moral code. In fact, he has his fears regarding his impulsive decision. He voices his fears thus: " People would call me a low down Ablitionist and despise me for keeping mum -- but that don't make no difference" (**MT** 196) Miss Watson and the widow try to teach Huck of God's mercy. Huck is puzzled. Was God the widow's kind God or Miss Watson's harsh one? He decides to belong to the widow's God if at all He wanted him.

Again, the principles regarding prayer confuse him; like Swami, he thinks about the results of prayer. Huck says to himself: "If a body can get anything they pray for, why don't Deacon Winn get back the maney he lost on park? Why can't Miss. Watson fat up?" (149). He sees himself as a bad boy doing bad things but the reader can see him only as a good boy doing good things.

James M. Cox observes thus :

> If Huck even begins to think he is doing a good thing by helping Jim, he will become a good boy like Sidney -- one knowingly engaged in virtuous action: or a bad boy like Tom -- one who can seem to go against society because he really knows that he is doing right. (**Cox** 120)

It is with the least intention to achieve glory that Huck decides to help Jim. To arrive at this decision, it takes a whole world of pain and confusion for him. He believes that he will be sent to Hell for this and prepares himself for that without any hesitation. The peculiarity of Huck's heroism is his apparent ignorance of it. He is, unaware of the fact that he is engaged in a continuous struggle with the values of St.Petersburg because freedom for Huck is not realised in terms of political liberty, but in terms of pleasure.

Having arrived at a decision, he sticks on to it, disregarding its consequences. "The moral code handed down to the generations by their predecessors means nothing to him as his values are based on pure intuition," says Leslie A. Fiedler (133). He has an unpolluted and undisciplined heart,

which is essentially virtuous. Henry Nash Smith makes the following observation: "Mark Twain intends for the reader to identify himself with this part of Huck to feel a thrill of moral exaltation when the ignorant boy decides to go to hell rather than betray his friend" (**The Development of a Writer** 76).

It is the same moral code that perplexes him when Tom offers to help Jim. He just cannot understand Tom coming up with a suggestion to act against the law. He is undecided as to whether he should praise Tom or not, for his impulsive action. Tom has only one objection to Huck's plan- that it was too simple and as mild as "goose-milk" (**MT** 282). He draws up an elaborate plan that involves real acts of bravery. Huck closely follows Tom's plan though an internal debate takes place in his mind as to the moral sanctity of their action. But his conscience is relieved when he realises the truth that Jim is let free by the widow. He is satisfied that his "hero" continues to be respectable. Once the problem of Jim has been settled, Huck only finds it apt to continue his journey. He is at last permitted to "return to his anonymity, to give up the role of a hero, to fall into the background which he prefers, for he is modest in all things and could not well endure the attention and glamour which attend a hero at a book's end," observes Lionel Trilling (7). There is a

moral crisis, of which Huck is not conscious, and this provides the emotional climax of the story.

The Mysterious Stranger illustrates the world of children when they are exposed to the stark realities of life. Philosophical digressions regarding man as the damned species somehow do not look out of place. They fit into the larger context of things elaborated in the novel. Little Satan makes a relentless exposure of the futility of life and the meaninglessness of God. Through the words of Philip Traum, Twain voices his own lack of faith in any established religion. The novel illustrates an evident attack on the concept of God itself, on one level, but on the other, it ridicules the pride of folly and self-deception of mankind. Little Satan's vehement attack on God at the end of the novel, while bidding farewell to Theodore, is full of unveiled anger, anger at a God who created both heaven and hell, a God who created good children and bad children, a God who made unhappy individuals when he could have easily made all of them happy. To him, such a God is not worthy of adoration.

Narayan's child heroes definitely are not involved in such profound and everlasting issues capable of consuming all their mirth and hilarity. They are more relaxed and contented, though Chandran (**The Bachelor of Arts**), at

times is found to reflect on serious issues like the illusory nature of life. Their kind of heroism does not call for philosophical musings, except, of course, in a mocking fashion. Chandran, while watching his college group photo, is nostalgic and at the same time philosophic.

The same mock-serious treatment is shown while Chandran ponders over the possibility of being a sanyasi after his disappointment in his first love. But when the villagers take him for a real sanyasi, he is conscience-stricken, unlike Raju (**The Guide**). If the sight of the gifts fetched by the gullible villagers creates immense pleasure in Raju's mind, the very same sight gives rise to moments of extreme agony in Chandran. "The sight of the gifts sent a spear through his heart, He felt a cad, a fraud, a confidence trickster. These were gifts for a counterfeit exchange" (**The Bachelor of Arts** 111).

Huck suffers from a greater moral dilemma, right after his decision to stand with Jim and to help him out of slavery. Huck is aware of the fact that slavery is not a crime in America and that helping a slave to the road to freedom could necessarily be called a crime, for which he will be ridiculed by society. At first, he writes a letter to Miss Watson informing her of the Negro's whereabouts. But he finds it difficult to choose between his desire to follow

the prescribed social code and his equally strong inclination to protect his friend from the slave catchers. At last, after a mental debate he decides: "All right, then, I will go to hell" (**MT** 195) and tears up the letter. This moment marks his entry into a world of protest -- protest against Negro slavery. "But he comes reluctantly," says James M. Cox, " not gloriously, forward; even as he makes his famous declaration to go to hell, he is looking for a way out. He is certainly not a rebel: he is in a tight place and does the easiest thing." (**The Fate of Humour** 174). This brilliant observation illustrates the very basis of Huck's character: his reticence to undertake acts of heroism, just for the sake of heroism. "When he repudiates his own conscience in this way, Huck takes a long step further in his repudiation of Southern Society, which has formed his conscience," observes Frank Baldanza in the essay "The Structure of Huckleberry Finn" (**Nineteenth Century Novel** 282).

The next issue that unsettles Huck's happiness is Tom's evident willingness to help Jim. Huck cannot understand how a civilized boy like Tom could take part in an illegal activity like this. He is satisfied that his companion remains respectable and his unceasing fascination for adventure was the reason for the elaborate arrangements to free Jim. The adventures, thoughts, and emotions

of the boys in **Tom Sawyer** become emblematic of a stage both in the growth of civilization and in the life of any man. The novel faithfully represents two aspects of man -- his romantic conventions and natural religion, which, in turn, are respectively represented by Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Both are essentially orphans who are allowed to find their new fathers in either society or nature, Tom chooses civilization, while Huck chooses nature. Tom remains within the conventions of the pseudo-Christian society, while Huck shows a total rejection of it. Huck's worship and devotion involve nature, whereas, Tom's are fastened to society. Tom's actions are governed by knowledge, received from books. Whenever he explains any of the intricacies of his chivalric plan, he argues that such actions can always be seen in books.

Huck does not even attend school. For Tom, Huck is a romantic outcast. "In portraying the conscience free Huck, he (Mark Twain) creates an unfettered demigod, free because unentangled by social imperatives," says Jay Martin (**Harvests of Change** 188). Eventually, the boys get the custody of the treasure, but Huck loses his freedom by gaining wealth and respectability.

Tom does not attach much seriousness to religion. Sunday Bible classes are really boring to him. The whole assembly of believers remains scandalised,

despite their inclination to laugh, when the dog incident takes place inside the church. Tom is excited to think that there is some satisfaction about divine service when there is a bit of variety in it. Though he is inclined to take everything lightly, he is over-burdened with uneasiness after the graveyard incident. He gets up late in the morning and feels uneasy over the fact that he was not woken up by anybody. "There was no voice of rebuke and averted eyes and there was the silence and an air of solemnity that strikes a chill to the culprit's heart" (**MT** 54). The realisation that his heroism has been taken too far makes him dull and sober. He, certainly, would have preferred a flogging by his aunt. Her mute suffering hurts him, and he seeks pardon, promising reform.

The very same code of law is found to operate in **The Prince and the Pauper**. The prince is not guileful. He agrees to have a change of clothes with the pauper boy, who wants to have a taste of aristocratic life. Though he is punished for this simple game of exchange, he learns much in the course of his miserable life as a pauper. The world of the innocents is guided by their conscience and impulses, which prompts Tom Canty to identify the real heir to the throne. If he had really wished otherwise, he could have had power and

wealth in his hands forever. Unlike the practical and selfish world of the schemers and manipulators, the innocent and simple-minded children are always endowed with conscience. Tom Canty's repentance is complete when he falls on his knees in front of the real heir in rags and says: "Oh, my Lord the King, let poor Tom Canty be first to swear fealty to thee and say 'put on thy crown and enter into thine own again'" (**MT** 426). The Prince rises to the occasion offering all sorts of protection to the usurper, declaring him the "King's Ward" (**MT** 434). The unpromising pauper has had his taste of royalty, whereas, the promising hero Edward, has painfully realised the circumstances in which the poor lived in his own country.

Swami also undergoes an experience comparable to Tom's apparent disregard for Aunt Polly. Swami neglects his grandmother's request to buy some lemon for her to cure her stomachache. On his way to the shop, he meets Mani and Rajam playing cricket. The possibility of joining them was too much of a temptation for him. It is only after the departure of both Mani and Rajam, he is reminded of the old lady's "pathetic upturned face and watery eyes" (**Swami and Friends** 126). He feels guilty and calls himself "a sneak, a thief, an ingrate and a hardened villain which is a poor substitute for lemons."

What we find common in Swami and Tom is the fact that in both the cases the earlier actions of the heroes are childish whereas the later actions are more mature and manly. The earlier actions are full of trepidation but the later ones are full of courage and heroism. This helps the reader to have a concrete idea of the boy's growth, from childishness to maturity. The same, again, is true with Twain's Prince and Pauper and Narayan's Raju and Chandran.

Such are the boys who inhabit the worlds created by Twain and Narayan. Whether it is St. Petersburg or Jackson's Island or sixth century England or nineteenth century Washoe, the characters that people these novels have become quite familiar to the readers all over the world. It is gratifying to citizens of all nationalities to recapture and recall the pleasure and delight that Twain's and Narayan's works have given the world for decades. The theme of growing-up -- from innocence to experience -- seems to be a matter of common interest to both of them. These epics on boyhood have been welcomed with a rare kind of enthusiasm all over the world. Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn are perhaps the best-known juvenile heroes and Indian Writing in English cannot exist without mentioning Narayan and his adolescent protagonists.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and **Huckleberry Finn** have been

prescribed for high school and postgraduate classes alike in many countries. The immense popularity of Twain is evident from the fact that even in Russia there appears to be a growing tribe of Twainians, as the admirers of the American novelist describe themselves. A production of **Tom Sawyer** was also quite successful in Russia. Vladimir Ilyin writes, in his essay " How Fedya came to be called Tom" thus :

> Not long ago Soviet T.V. viewers saw a film based on Mark Twain's story, Tom Sawyer was played by Moscow pupil Fedya Stukove,and the viewers thought that he was so good in his part that it was difficult to imagine a different Tom. (**Ilyin** 19)

Needless to say, Narayan also has his child protagonists who have brought great honour to its author. It is with a healthy attitude he tries to understand the children and their likes and dislikes. The juvenile heroes of Narayan show their resentment over discrimination of any kind and a natural hatred for discipline. Child psychology is not at all an equipment that Narayan needs to understand the inner world of his child heroes. He prefers to deal with them as human realities, and not as abstractions, problems, or bundles of psychological activities. Perhaps, the best thing about Narayan's juvenile heroes is that they

are true to their nature. They have come out of real earth, have real blood in their veins, and as such, are true to the whole human race. No wonder the readers all over the world feel themselves to be in direct communion with someone, whose tastes and attitudes seem identical with their own, a voice that speaks for them, as well as to them.

An analysis of the juvenile heroes of Twain and Narayan, reveals quite a few points of similarity in their attitudes: but there are a few other aspects too, which are worthy of notice that take the Twainian child heroes -- especially Huck -- to a higher plane. Huck, towards the end of **Tom Sawyer**, declares that his attempts to follow the civilised ways of society are a failure. "I have tried it, and it don't work, Tom. It ain't for me," (**MT** 138), he says. Such an earnest and strong negation of the accepted norm of society requires real strength of character. And Huck has it. But as mentioned earlier, Huck's heroism is convincing and acceptable because it happens to spring from an innocent mind that is unmindful of the material benefits he is going to lose with that decision. Maybe, it is this aspect of heroism that both the writers under discussion wanted to project through their novels -- that heroism without heroics is the need of the day.

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

Chapter 3

Average and Unpromising Warriors

Reading the novels of Twain and Narayan is always a pleasurable experience to any lover of letters. While their juvenile heroes remind us of our own childhood, evoking in us a sense of nostalgia, the adult protagonists often persuade us to identify ourselves with many of them. In artistic integrity, themes, and in narrative craftsmanship and art, these writers have many things in common, eventhough they maintain their own individuality in techniques and style.

A sojourn in Malgudi or St. Petersburg offers ample instances that will enable us to have a concrete view of heroism as conceived by these two authors. Both of them appear more at home when they deal with men of average status in their novels. They do show their preference for common men as their heroes, though Twain has a few heroes from the aristocratic class to his credit. Narayan's fame on the other hand, rests mainly on the realistic depiction of the average man who belongs to a quiet place like Malgudi. He has a wonderful capacity to weave his human comedy against the background

of a gradually changing South Indian society. William Walsh makes the following observation: "It is the members of the middle-class who are psychologically more active, in whom consciousness is more vivid and narrowing, that Narayan chooses for his heroes -- modest unselfconfident heroes, is true" (**R.K. Narayan: A Critical Appreciation** 27).

We can see manipulators and schemers, men of ambition and desire, trying to achieve success throughout their lives, among whom there are winners as well as losers. Robert Regan, while explaining the relevance of the unpromising hero motif in his novels, points out that Twain's own image of himself as the unpromising hero in his mind originally rose in response to his "personal anxieties" (219). He cites the examples of Philip and Colonel Sellers in **The Gilded Age**, Hank Morgan in **A Connecticut Yankee**, Tom in **Tom Sawyer,** Huck in **Huckleberry Finn** and David Wilson in **Pudd'nhead Wilson**, to justify his view. All these characters fail to achieve real victory, in spite of their innate capacity for heroism. They pass as average types, like the protagonists of Narayan. Their pathos and disillusionments have a quaint similarity. Though they appear to be unpromising at the beginning, they do struggle for the fulfillment of a cherished dream of triumph. In fact, they

come out of their cocoons of averageness to declare that they too can be heroic. Many of the characters of Twain and Narayan struggle against all kinds of odd circumstances, but most of them are not permitted to be really victorious, for instance, David Wilson and Nagaraj (**The World of Nagaraj**). In **The Gilded Age**, Philip Sterling alone is allowed to have a moderate accomplishment at the end.

Colonel Sellers lives in a world of fantasy, with numerous plans of material success, that remain unfulfilled till the end. Sellers, with his poverty and illusions, stands as a pathetic figure, who will never be forgotten. In the case of David Wilson, the title itself celebrates his commonness - he is a Pudd'n Head. Richard Chase remarks that Wilson stands at the head of the procession of small town intellectuals, cranks and nonconformists that we find in American fiction, especially of the 1920s (**The American Novel and its Tradition** 153). Though Wilson is a man superior in intelligence to all the men in Dawson's Landing put together, he is thoroughly misunderstood. He is a fool in front of the people who could not appreciate his talk. Perhaps, Roxy, the mulatto slave in **Pudd'n head Wilson** alone is capable of understanding the real worth of Wilson. She believes him to be really wise, despite all his appearances. She

has only contempt for the foolish townsmen who call him a Pudd'n head. She says: "Dey calls him a Pudd'n head, and says he is a foll. My lar! dat man ain't no mo' foll den, I is ! He is de Smarts' man in dis town less'n its' Judge Driscol or may be Pem Howard!" (**MT** 453)

Perhaps, this rare quality in Wilson's character is what makes him exceptional, but not heroic. Though he is the pivotal character in the novel, he is hardly required to do anything throughout. He is, in fact, blocked off from any participation in the affairs of Dawson's Landing. In a world of enforced solitude, Wilson keeps watch over the affairs in society. He appears unique as a result of his aloofness, but it does not in any way act as a proof of his heroism. He represents the power of Law, which towards the end, catches hold of the culprits. Wilson possesses a sort of quiet patience, surviving twenty long years before his acceptance by the public. He appears neither jubilant nor excited when his intelligence and ability are established. He has a queer feeling that his success is no success at all. It is as if he had become the chief citizen in a city of the blind. A calendar entry just before the conclusion is enough to substantiate the feeling of utter emptiness inside him after the wonderful performance in court. The entry reads thus: "October 12--The

Discovery -- It was wonderful to find America but it would have been more wonderful to miss it" (**MT** 529). Heroism is not surely his forte. He has no penchant for heroic acts which will bring him in the limelight. He would rather prefer his earlier state of existence -- living like an observant stranger in Dawson's Landing. With his victory in the courtroom, he has lost a very important part of his own self -- his separation from the town -- which prompts Richard Chase to affirm :

> David Wilson has lost his individual identity: he is still Pudd'n head Wilson, but the town is a town of Pudd'n heads. Wilson's attempt to preserve authenticity both in himself and as an abstract value does not succeed: other form of identity -- identity as likeness has won in the end, and Wilson is martyr to the battle. David Wilson's final calendar entry aims to acknowledge that discovery and revelation are two sides of the same coin, but this coin pays nothing but pain. (150)

Unlike the heroes of popular stories, Wilson does not aim at his glory and as such, his actions are never calculated. It is his disinterested honesty and personal effectiveness that distinguish him and not his heroism. Regan remarks that in

the final trial scene, Pudd'nhead seldom seems to be striving for an effect, unlike Tom Sawyer or Hank Morgan. He points out thus:

> Pudd'n head succeeds, as Miles Hendon had, without trying: he patiently suffers the contumely of his towns-people during twenty long years; he serves justice and truth when he has an opportunity; he remains aloof from all compromising commitments and although he does not see success, success finds him. (**Unpromising Heroes** 211)

But Wilson's achievement throws light on some other sad aspects of the society of the nineteenth century. The seeming slave is free, but it is the freeman who is the real slave. So when Valet de Chambre is declared free, he does not gain actual freedom. Because in a world so full of falseness and hypocrisy, he is going to be a sad man without education or good manners. "His gait, his attitudes, his gestures, his bearing, his laugh -- all were vulgar and uncouth; his manners were the manners of a slave. Money and fine clothes could not mend these defects or cover them up, they made them only the more glaring and the more pathetic" (**MT** 530). The saddest thing with regard to Chambre is the fact that he is even denied of the consolation he used to

receive from the Negroes, as he is not one among them anymore. Here again, we can see Twain's unpromising hero motif at work. Chambre is endowed with riches at the end, but with that he loses everything else. He would have been a happier man had he been allowed to maintain his old status. Thus, he too becomes one of those unheroic characters of Twain whose charm lies in being so.

Nagaraj, the protagonist of Narayan's **The World of Nagaraj** resembles David Wilson, the famous American crank in his idiosyncrasies. Like Wilson, Nagaraj too has a mission in his life. His ardent attempts to materialise this vision of himself as a writer and the problems he faces in the midst of this effort, is the story of the novel. If Wilson becomes lucky at the end, Nagaraj does not get an opportunity to write his "Kavya." Just as Wilson's strange remarks invite bantering from the people, Nagaraj's obsession with Sage Narada is ridiculed by the Malgudians. Wilson spends his leisure time reading books on palmistry and collecting fingerprints. Nagaraj is engaged in viewing men and the world, sitting on his pyol. He is always in a mood of meditation as his head is full of ideas to be brought into the book he is planning to write. There is something common in both these heroes -- their reflective inwardness and

contemplation -- which, to the ordinary people, is a disqualification. Nagaraj is looked upon as a dreamer and an idler. If Wilson's life becomes turbulent after witnessing the nocturnal activities of Tom Driscoll in **Pudd'nhead Wilson**, Nagaraj's peaceful life is troubled by the untimely homecoming of his doted nephew, Tim. He finds his peaceful days suddenly filled with unwelcome complications. He is unable to proceed with his work. "Unceasing demands of quotidian life and life's pressure proves too urgent for Nagaraj and sheer life and its multiple pressures must prevail over mere art," (214) observes S. Kandaswami.

As mentioned earlier, Narayan's heroes possess "**dhīraśānta svabhāva**" (self-controlled and calm nature) and, as such, they are reticent to perform heroic acts. Nagaraj is no exception to this. Narayan writes: You could not find a more contented soul in Malgudi" (**The World of Nagaraj** 16). He leads a **lalita** (simple) and **śānta** (quiet) life in the little town of Malgudi with his wife. His life would have continued as such, but for the arrival of Tim, his spoilt nephew. Tim works in the "Kismet" and after marriage, allows his wife to sing there. It is to rise above mundane existence and its urges that Nagaraj decides to wear the ochre robe which symbolises the transition from the world

of activity to that of contemplation. But even this does not help him in achieving his goal. Tim and Saroja come back to threaten his creativity. Like many of the Narayan protagonists, Nagaraj feels defeated, which makes him tell Sita :

> I can have no hope of writing. You could take the notebooks back to the room where at least white ants may relish my notes on Narada. And another thing: don't be surprised if I wear the ochre robe when I am at home. (**The World of Nagaraj** 84-85)

He believes that this change of clothes is the only way out and chooses to remain a typical Narayan hero who is totally feckless as an agent of action. Possibly, this is what prompts Harish Trivedi to make the statement that Nagaraj is the meekest of all the mild men of Malgudi (4). There is a total rejection of the traditional concept of heroism in these two heroes.

Raju, the hero of **The Guide**, may be the best suited example to attempt a study of the concept of heroism seen in Narayan's novels. This novel won the author the Sahitya Academy Award and like Twain's **Tom Sawyer**, this too

has been filmed. Raju is an average middle class man, who has nothing exceptional in him, except his willingness to help the tourists who frequent Malgudi. This is how his association with Rosie, the snake dancer, begins. Rosie is the lovely wife of a rich man, Marco, who is more interested in cave paintings than in his own young wife. She falls an easy prey to Raju's charm, and their association ends up in Marco's desertion of her. She comes back to Raju and Raju accepts her whole heartedly. His act of forgery is the last thing to be expected of a hero. But the reader is ready to give him due concession, taking into account his emotional insecurity.

Lakshmi Holmstrom has aptly remarked that Raju accepted the role of sanyasi for the very reason which makes Chandran reject it. "It provides him with an adequate living for which he does counterfeited form of spiritual guidance" (**The Novels of R.K. Narayan** 67). It is just an impulsive decision on his part to declare his intention to fast till the people stopped fighting, because he never expected them to go on fighting after such a declaration since they had great regard for him. The moronic brother of Velan, who misunderstands this message, informs the people that the Swami was going to fast till the rains came. Raju becomes a redeemer and a Mahatma to them.

Raju is aghast at the turn of events. He becomes heroic enough to confide in Velan which enhances Velan's respect for him. Though Raju is tormented by the thought of food, he is forced to conquer it, and eventually he resigns to his fate. With a sort of vindictive resolution, he decides to enact his role -- the role chosen for him by the villagers. This resolution gives him a peculiar strength and he realises that

> for the first time in his life he was making an earnest effort; for the first time he was learning the thrill of full application outside money and love ; for the first time he was doing a thing in which he was not personally interested. He felt suddenly so enthusiastic that it gave him a new strength to go through with the ordeal. The fourth day of his fast found him quite sprightly. He went down to the river, stood facing upstream, with his eyes shut, and repeated the litany; it was not more than a supplication to the heavens to send down rain and save humanity. (**The Guide** 238)

This, perhaps, is the greatest act of heroism, in the unusual and interesting story of an average man turned martyr and hero. The **dhira santha** nature of

Raju is being converted into **dhīrodātta** (self-controlled and exalted nature), which points to the elevation of Raju from ordinariness to sublimity.

Regan observes: "For Mark Twain, the greatest difficulty in presenting an unpromising hero tale seriously (ie., melodramatically, not satirically) lay in making the hero 'succeed' without trying. If the hero seems to be seeking his own advancement we lose sympathy with him" (147). Miles Hendon, one of the unpromising characters of **The Prince and the Pauper**, achieves success this way. Miles Hendon's younger brother Hugh has caused him to be sent into virtual exile, and during this period, Hugh has managed to possess Miles's inheritance and marry his sweetheart. Long before Miles learns of his brother's treachery, he decides to protect the pathetic Prince Edward in pauper's rags; Miles does not even for a moment believe that this pauper is the true prince, and that by saving him, he was saving the future of England itself. He is not rendering his services to the future king, rather he is protecting a mad and helpless beggar-boy out of sheer sympathy. Miles' exertions on behalf of Edward are as selfless as Huck's on behalf of Jim: he has nothing whatever to gain except jeers and hoots and a dozen lashes. Miles Hendon, at the end of the story becomes Earl of Kent and the Prince rewards him with material benefits.

Hank Morgan, the mechanical wizard in **A Connecticut Yankee**, is another important character created by Twain. The novel deals with "an inverted utopian fantasy" (Cox 118) wherein the protagonist recedes to the past, in order to look forward. Morgan is a Superintendent of a Colt Arms machine factory who falls asleep and wakes up to face sixth century England. He, being the child of the democratic industrialism of the nineteenth century, is amused and irritated at the same time to see the feudal, pastoral life in England. The meaninglessness of knighthood is revealed by Twain in this novel. In order to survive in the unfamiliar world of the knights, Morgan undertakes a series of duels with Merlin in which nineteenth century science is pitted against sixth century magic. "But what finally emerges from beneath the contrast between Yankee ingenuity and medieval superstition is the portrait of an American," remarks Lewis Leary (**Six American Novelists** 143).

Morgan gets chances to display his heroism and one is left to wonder whether he is only a grown-up Tom Sawyer because he exhibits a similar urge to draw attention to himself. His heroism, is only a means for self-glorification. His battle for survival at the stake is with the help of a timely eclipse. He, like Tom, in the Bible Ticket episode, proudly proves that he is powerful enough to

put out the sun and bring it back. He loves the impact it makes on the credulous people of the Arthurian land.

A Connecticut Yankee reminds one of Edward Bellamy's popular Utopian romance **Looking Backward** (1888). Bellamy makes his hero, Julian West, a member of the future world who is startled at the material and ideological progress that he witnesses in the year 2000 AD. But Hank Morgan is not shocked; in fact, he tries to establish his own supremacy, by destroying Merlin's power. He is able to do this initially with the help of science. He uses dynamite to destory Merlin's tower. But he is finally caught and is forced to admt his own failure. "There is an ironic appropriateness in the ending of the novel when Morgan, trapped in his cave by the stench from the rotting bodies of his victims and condemned to a thirteen century sleep by Merlin, emerges deranged before us -- adrift in space, unmoored from time (Cox 120).

Almost similar is the fortune of Margayya, in **The Financial Expert**. Margayya begins his life as petty money-lender doing business under a banyan tree in front of the Central Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank in Malgudi. His meeting with Dr. Pal turns out to be very decisive. Dr. Pal hands over to him the manuscript of **The Bed Life** and Madan Lal publishes it on a fifty percent

partnership. The book catches on and Margayya's fortune is made. The fall from the greatest height is the most painful. And so is the case with Margayya. Though prosperity smiles upon him, without any apparent effort on his part, it cannot last forever. His son Balu becomes the root cause of the downfall of Margayya. He loses all his money and is completely bankrupt. He advises his son to take his place with the old box, under the banyan tree. But the son finds it difficult to do this and Margayya readily replies: "Very well, then, if you are not going, I am going on with it" (**The Financial Expert** 280). His total submission to fate is quite moving. To an unheroic person like Margayya, subservience to fate is the best policy. Margayya, like Nalan who was doomed to wander in the forest after he was possessed by Kali, becomes realistic in his approach to wealth and poverty. Finding himself incapable of showing **dhirata**, in fighting against the odds, he resorts to resignation, which to him is the best expression of heroism.

The story of Tom Canty in **The Prince and Pauper** is equally interesting. He belongs to Offal Court, the place of residence of beggars. He, like Bernard Shaw's Bluntchli in the **Arms and the Man** has an incurably romantic disposition, and so lives in a world of dreams where he is the prince and his

beggar friends his courtiers. He has no love for adventure or heroism for he is essentially a "dreamer" and not a hero. His birthday coincides with the birthday of a noble soul, the Prince of Wales. But "no one ever mentioned Tom Canty lapped in his poor rags except among the family of paupers he had just come to trouble with his presence" (**MT** 323). From the beginning of the story, Twain wants us to keep in mind the fact that his hero is essentially an insignificant person though he may, for sometime, act as the head of the authority-structure. To a boy belonging to Offal Court, life in the royal palace will remain a dream forever. But in the case of Tom Canty, his dream really comes true. Though he appreciates his own image in the mirror, he is panic-stricken and he repeatedly attempts to escape from the palace.

Even the King does not understand his dilemma, which is taken as a sign of his mental illness. Here too, Twain is in no way recommending heroism as a means to achieve honour. Heroism to him remains a glorified dream that Tom Sawyer quite often has. Tom Canty's innocence becomes polluted for some time. He is a changed person on the coronation day. The very same Tom Canty who even dreams of being back in Offal Court, a pauper joyful in possessing twelve pennies, pretends not to see his own beggar mother at the

time of the coronation. He becomes heartless enough to deny his own mother. Tom realises that his royalty, in actuality, is a kind of slavery and exclaims: "Would God, I were free of my captivity!" (**MT** 374). This realisation helps him see his real position and he most willingly offers the crown to the real heir. This heroic act on the part of Tom confirms the fact that heroism in his case is only a means to understand his own self. Though young, Edward, the real King, rises to the occasion, pardoning the usurper and making him the Chief Governor of Christ's Hospital.

Colonel Sellers in **The Gilded Age** is etched in great detail. The quixotic character of Sellers somehow reminds one of a Narayan hero, the financial expert of Malgudi, Margayya. Colonel Sellers spends his life dreaming of different schemes which are supposed to bring in large amounts of money. Margayya, on the other hand, approaches a priest to find out an easy way to acquire wealth. The priest tells him point-blank: "Wealth doesn't come the way of people who adopt half hearted measures. It comes only to those who pray for it single-mindedly with no other thought" (**The Financial Expert** 36). It is on his way to collect the things required for the "Pooja" that he meets Dr. Pal who becomes instrumental in making him affluent. But towards the

end, we see the jubilant Margayya turn a sad and shattered man who makes the agonizing discovery that money is not everything. He has become a bankrupt and a pauper.

All significant writers have made it a point to picture the central conflict between human possibility and institutional power, between idealism and authority. The conflicts in the novels of Twain and Narayan are presented through the comic mode. The essential nature of Margayya and Colonel Sellers may be different. But there is a Quixotic peculiarity in these two dreamers. In their passionate approach to wealth and worldly luxury, in their ardent desire to step up the ladder of social hierarchy, these characters show a similarity. Though Colonel Sellers' brainchild -- extraction of petroleum as a fuel -- brings money to many, he does not get any benefit out of that during his lifetime. And Sellers remains a loser among the money-minded schemers of the period.

Like Twain himself, Sellers too has many wonderful ideas, but he is left impecunious at the end as well as at the beginning. He does not succeed in material life and his dreams remain as such for him, though we come to witness the practical application of the same at a later period. By then the dreamer has left the stage and many others are left to enjoy the benefits of his dream

project. This is the saddest fact about Colonel Sellers. But Margayya's plight is different. Every nook and corner of his house is stuffed with sacks full of currency notes. In spite of all the wealth he acquires, his life remains as it was. He does not know how to live in luxury, and cannot think of leaving the cramped house in which he resides. He does not even go in for furnishing the house, for it "was not necessary to have anything more than a box for carrying on any business soundly" (**The Financial Expert** 145). He travels third class and has no belief in installing a calling bell as he considers using it a waste of time. He cannot see himself as a "shepherd playing on a flute calling back his flock" (117).

Like Twain, Narayan also detests the self-glorifying antics of showmen heroes. Such is a hero we see in **The Guide.** Raju lives in a world of fantasy and Narayan satirises the heroic antics of Raju in the novel quite effectively. Sriram, in **Waiting for the Mahatma,** is also not much different. He is an average man, not at all chivalrous, who has fallen madly in love with a girl for whose sake he undertakes many deeds of real valour. Despite Sriram's political involvement, Narayan makes it a point to present him as a man with no particular political conviction at all. He finds politics as a means to be near his love,

Bharati, whose prime concern is politics. That is how his involvement in politics begins. Later, he continues to be an active member of the Congress Party to please his love. P.S. Sundaram in the book **R.K. Narayan** observes that Narayan is not concerned with how one individual -- very ordinary, mentally, and morally, with no preference to any ideology -- reacted to this great man [Gandhiji] (84). Had he not met Bharati earlier, he would never have attended the meeting which ushers in his entry into the world of politics.

Sriram is not interested in any kind of heroic action though he gets involved in terrorist activity for sometime. Narayan very humorously describes Sriram's thoughts when he penetrates a military camp. He does not want to be killed by a common sentry for destroying the barbed wire of the camp. He thinks that there is no sense in getting shot by an unknown sentry. Having come to such a conclusion, he puts away the cutter, and pastes the notices on the pillars supporting the wire, hoping that the boys in the barracks will read them at their leisure, the next day. That was all he was prepared to do as a heroic deed. Sriram's heroism is akin to Tom's act of valour in **Tom Sawyer**, when Becky is caught by their Teacher in the classroom. Both of them have only one aim -- acquiring the admiration of their sweethearts -- The portrayal of this incident

shows the author's attack on the vainglorious attitude of certain so-called "heroes."

Chivalry, to both these characters, is just a facade to acquire applause from Becky and Bharati. It is more his love for Bharati that instigates Sriram to participate in the Quit India Movement, than his love for the country itself. That is why Sriram is found to spend listless days when he is unable to see Bharati for a while. He goes back to a state of passivity, by suspending his "usual round of lecturing, agitation and demonstration. He didn't seem to think he owed any duty to the country" (**Waiting for the Mahatma** 92). He finds himself in a mood of agony till Bharati re-appears. Again, we find him brimming with energy. He has no qualms when he is arrested by the police. But in jail, during one of his moments of weakness, he even thinks of giving an undertaking, as wanted by the police. The next moment, he is reminded of Bharati and her possible reaction to this. To him, her reaction mattered more than any other thing in the world. He understands that she may probably say, "You sneak out of prison, do you? You have degraded yourself beyond description. Get out of my sight!" (146). He feels that this is an important phase in the process of self-development and self-discipline and decides to

undergo any hardship for the sake of his love.

Once out of jail, he feels like a hero. But even amidst this exultant mood, he has his own doubts about his heroism. He asks himself, "Am I the one who has done all this or is it someone else?" (161-62) Like many other Narayan heroes, Sriram is not ashamed of his lack of heroism when he admits to Gandhiji that he had gone astray while Bharati had been in jail. "Bharati went away to jail, and there was no one who could tell me what to do: no one who could show me the right way" (**Waiting for the Mahatma** 146). Wilson in **The Pudd'n head Wilson**, Huck and Jim in **Huckleberry Finn**, Sriram in **Waiting for the Mahatma**, Nagaraj in **The World of Nagaraj**, and Swami in **Swami and Friends** show that they all detest the self-glorifying deeds of showmen heroes, however attractive their images appear to be.

The self-advertising antics of the so-called nineteenth century heroes never attracted Twain who, enshrined as a national and cultural hero himself, attributed more greatness to a "patriot" than to a "hero. " In an era when any unemployed man with a medal to exhibit was running for public office, it is only natural for a man like Twain to develop antagonism for the cliched term of "hero." Indeed, it was the unpromising hero and the anti-hero who attracted him most. This

attitude may have inspired him to write about the tatterdemalion coyote of **Roughing It**, who causes the proud town-dog to alter his good opinion of himself by effortlessly outrunning him. The coyote enjoys his victory but is not interested in exploiting it. He remains a willing outcast, and Twain salutes the lovely creature and wishes him "the blessed novelty of a long day's good luck and a limitless larder the morrow" (42). While attempting any study of Twain's portrayal of heroism, Regan's enlightening comment may be kept in mind:

> What Mark Twain responds to in the Coyote is a combination of the hapless and the uncompromising, a ragged but fierce individualism which confirms a faint hint of Huck Finn's social idealism. The success story hero, as Huck would learn, is at liberty to be true to himself only upto a point; with his patrimony the hero receives a new code of conduct -- society's code, dictating how the Sabbath should be kept and what lessons the young will, and will not learn. In contrast, the individual who adjures heroics, who refuses to be heir to riches and power if he must be heir also to all the ills of civilization, keeps his

> integrity at the cost of success. With this figure as well as with the figure of the unpromising hero Mark Twain felt strongly impelled to identify. (**Unpromising Heroes** 89)

There is a horror of conventions that acts as the hallmark of Twainian heroes. His heroes, like the author himself, detest all kinds of snobbery and false sensibility. Huck detests the hypocrisy of the King, which makes him say "I never see anything so disgusting" (**MT** 220). Huck is at times uneasy to see Tom helping in his attempt to save the black slave. To him, such an action should not have come from a decent boy like Tom. He never suspects that Tom's elaborate plan to save him is just for mere adventure. While reading **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** one is forced to feel that every person who possesses a conscience is doomed to be uncomfortable. Huck's real and final goal is the achievement of freedom. James M. Cox's view that the freedom Huck wants is the freedom from any conscience (**The Fate of Humour** 170), provides an almost clear picture of Twain's own concept of freedom which is the prerequisite for any kind of heroism. It is for sheer pleasure that he embarks on his travel on the raft and decides to "light out for the territory." Towards the end of the novel **Tom Sawyer** we find Tom attempting to persuade

Huck that a boy can enjoy the happiness of being accepted and idolized at the negligible expense of social conformity, and he comes out with the argument that everybody does it that way. But Huck does not hesitate to reply "I ain't everybody, and I can't stand it" (**MT** 138).

This nonconformity and thirst for freedom make Huck different from all the other juvenile heroes of all times. On the other hand, Tom is still motivated by a neurotic impulse to make himself a hero. This accounts for his silence regarding Jim's freedom. His elaborate plans are made just for the fun of it. He wants "to take Jim back on a steamboat, in style and pay him for his best time, and write word ahead and get out all the niggers around, and have them Waltz into town with a torchlight procession and brass-band and then he would be a hero and so would we" (**MT** 286). While Tom is willing to sacrifice anything for an effective theatrical entrance, Huck has no interest in it. If at all he undertakes a deed of bravery it is done out of sheer necessity and sincerity. He is devoid of all hypocrisy found in the civilized folks of St. Petersburg. He is a natural child who wishes to do everything naturally. De Voto's view that Jim is the greatest heroic character of the book is quite relevant here. According to him, "Twain has created only two other heroes -- Pudd'nhead Wilson and

Joan of Arc" (**Mark Twain at Work** 24).

Jim has all the virtues that make him worthy of admiration. He is good at heart and Huck has been able to understand the real worth of this black man who is all white inside. Huck and Jim constitute a community of saintly people. They live outside conventional society and Huck learns much out of this experience. Huck decides to go with Jim since he wants somebody's companionship. The friendship between Huck and Jim is not quite stable at first. Huck even exploits the simplicity of the Negro to amuse himself. The fog episode brings Jim under a new light, by which time Huck has come to acknowledge his humanity. He does not mind humbling himself in front of a black man. "But I done it, and I warn't ever sorry for it afterwards, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks, I wouldn't done that one if I had' knowed it would make him feel that way" (**MT** 194). With Huck's apology a world of new friendship opens up. Their friendship is of a very rare kind in this world of hypocrisy, sham, and selfishness.

Huck learns that though he has the skills to survive in Nature, he needs company. The nightmarish experience of Huck in the bog and his separation from Jim exposes him to the terrifying aspect of a world of genuine isolation.

Huck's initial acquaintance with Jim is only formal. He himself does not know about the significant part that Jim is going to play in his life as a friend and a guardian at times. What is special about this relationship is their mutual feeling of guardianship. Both Huck and Jim consider themselves as guardian of the other: Huck, with his white man's superiority, and Jim, with his black man's practical wisdom and courage. We come to realise that Jim's role is

> precisely that of the wise old man of the myths and fairy tales whose words assist the hero through the trials and terrors of the weird adventure. He is the one who appears and points to the magic shining sword that will kill the dragon-terror, tells of the waiting bride and the castle of many treasures, applies healing balm to the almost fatal wounds, and finally dismisses the conqueror back into the world of normal life, following the great adventure into the enchanted night. (Campbell **The Hero with a Thousand Faces** 9-10)

In the course of Huck's flight from civilized society, Jim assumes different roles. He is the father figure of Huck, he is a friend, a guardian, and a philosopher. James A. Kastely pertinently comments: "In their budding friendship Huck

and Jim enact in a modified form the mythic drama of Rousseau's theory of the social contract and leave their condition of being separate and unrelated individuals in the state of nature" (146).

In spite of all the togetherness and mutual trust, Jim is reticent to reveal the actual purpose behind his presence on the Island. He withholds himself because he is a black man and Huck is white, which prevents him from entering the community of the free people openly. Jim is not a dishonest person, but his prudence cautions him to be wary of the white men in whom he could not put his blind faith, a lesson he had learnt from his past experiences. Huck understands and acknowledges the actuality of the situation. He is conscious of the slave-holding that existed in the community and he is not particularly against it because it is not a crime according to the prevailing social order. Hick has nothing against the community; he is just fleeing from civilization which he cannot stand. Knowing well that he is going against the accepted social norm, Huck decides to help Jim, an act symbolic of the greatest sacrifice demanded of a person with a clean conscience. Andrew Hook remarks: "Huck has come to see Jim as an individual human being to whom he owes an immense debt of loyality and love" (**American Literature** 77). Among the various attributes of

the novel, Jim's character and community life stand supreme.

The relationship that exists between Miles Hendon and Prince Edward in **The Prince and the Pauper** is also modelled along the same lines. Miles acting as the protector and Edward as the poor victim who flees from the restraining and inhuman hands of the society of hypocrites. Edward, unlike Jim, cannot hide the feeling of superiority related to his actual position, which Miles takes as an expression of unsound mind. But Miles makes it a point to humour him, not with any apparent self-interest, but with the true heart of a lover of humanity, a helper of the week and the poor.

Narayan does not open up a world of such emotional intensity in Malgudi. Here, all the activities of the individuals show a moderation. And so are their friendships. Bari is a very good friend of Nagaraj in **The World of Nagaraj**. Mani is a very close friend of Swami in **Swami and Friends**. Swami's friendship with Mani reminds one of Jim's relationship to Huck. Like Jim, he is the protector of little Swami in school from the threatening eyes of the rest of the big boys. He is the one who acts as a mediator between Rajam and Swami, when they become a little estranged after the cricket match. But even Mani's interference cannot win back Rajam's love towards Swami. And Mani finds

the sorrow written on Swami's face unbearable at the time of farewell to Rajam. He can do nothing but console his friend with the words that Rajam will definitely write to him as he had given his address to him. But when Swami wants him to repeat the address, Mani is at a loss. He blurts "It is -- it is -- never mind that. . . I have given it to Rajam" (**Swami and Friends** 179). When Swami looks up at his face, to ascertain the validity of the statement, he is unable to see whether Mani is serious or not. "But for once Mani's face had become inscrutable" (179). But like a true friend, Mani is there with him, which will help him to alleviate the pain of growing up in a world where such sentiments are not counted with due relevance.

It is true that Narayan's world does not show the dark abysses of wickedness. Still, it is not a happy world where Jagan in **The Vendor of Sweets**, Margayya in **The Financial Expert**, and Raju in **The Guide** live. Here, innocence is a non-existent concept except, perhaps, in the world of Swami. They too suffer under the weight of sorrows and personal anxieties. Yet, Malgudi is definitely a more habitable place than St. Petersburg, in spite of the fact that the inhabitants of both these places show a family likeness in their attitudes and demeanor.

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

Chapter 4

Ordeals of the Female Gender

An authentic and successful portrayal of the female is a baffling question to many good writers. It is not always a woman's prerogative to offer a convincing and acceptable delineation of women in literature. Both the authors under discussion are noted for their preference for the depiction of the masculine world as the sphere of activity in their novels, where female characters are foils that highlight the complex nature of the male protagonists. They act and react in a very modest fashion, giving no room for any kind of heroic activity. It is as if the term "hero" and "heroism" were alien to the world of women. However, we cannot have a world worth living in, without the presence of women, and the worlds of Twain and Narayan do have a good number of women worthy of study.

If Huck could be accepted as an archetype for heroism by the critics, what could be the attributes of Joan of Arc for contesting to the same office? Joan of Arc is the village girl who challenged the course of history, whereas Roxana, the mulatto slave can never have such epithets describing her. But a

careful perusal through the novels, **Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc** and **Pudd'nhead Wilson**, will definitely enlighten the reader on the efficacy of the description of two women of character and strength, one representing the freshness and vigour of youth, and the other representing the warmth and tenderness of motherhood. There are quite a few other women characters too in Twain, who attract our attention. The term of reference applicable to many of these characters can never be the "hero," but they also show heroism in their own way by confronting this world of bitter and dark experiences with a rare kind of determination and confidence, that can be emulated. Joseph Campbell observes :

> The world-generating spirit of the father passes into the manifold of earthly experience through a transforming medium -- the mother of the world. She is a personification of the primal element named in the second verse of Genesis, where we read that "the spirit of God moved *upon the face of the waters*." In the Hindu myth, she is the female figure through whom the Self begot all creatures. More abstractly understood, she is the world-bounding frame: "space, time,

> and causality" -- the shell of the cosmic egg. (**The Hero with a Thousand Faces** 297)

Such being the role of women in mythologies and legends, heroism, in the fast changing modern world, can no more be a term strictly applicable to a group of chauvinistic individuals, who act as the pivots of action in the novels. It is only proper to say that the depiction of woman in fiction is a powerful vehicle for the exposition of the author's perception and, hence, she cannot be ignored. A study of the concept of heroism can never be complete without exploring the position of the heroines of these two authors.

Heroism, a term with masculine connotations, can be applicable to the performances of the womenfolk also. The female characters portrayed in the novels of both these authors are comparatively very few in number, though they exhibit a variety of heroic characteristics. An analysis of the character of Roxana in **Pudd'nhead Wilson**, Joan in **Joan of Arc**, Laura in **The Gilded Age**, Bharati in **Waiting for the Mahatma** or Daisy in **The Painter of Signs**, will reveal interesting facts. Not only does it offer a solid base of study on the predicament of women of nineteenth century America, and that of twentieth century India, but it also exposes a wide variety of human experiences that

obviously point to the skill of the creators behind them.

When we come to view these women of the world of Twain and Narayan, we can observe that these characters could very conveniently be classified under two groups. The first group consists of young and rebellious non-conformists, and the second group is represented by the mother figures who act as the protectors and preservers of the young. We have numerous characters who belong to the first group -- Laura, Ruth and Alice in **The Gilded Age**, Joan in **Joan of Arc**, Rosie in **The Guide**, Daisy in **The Painter of Signs**, and Bharati in **Waiting for the Mahatma**, to name a few. To the second group belong Aunt Polly in **Tom Sawyer**, Mrs. Hawkins in **The Gilded Age**, Mrs. Tom Canty in **The Prince and Pauper**, Savitri in **The Dark Room**, Sita in **The World of Nagaraj** and the innumerable number of mothers, grandmothers and aunts present in Malgudi and St. Petersburg. To put it briefly, almost the entire feminine community created by these two writers under discussion belongs to either of these two groups.

It is a common aspect to note that both Twain and Narayan led happy married lives, and shared a very warm and respectful attitude towards women. Twain's own words point to his stand towards women:

> Human intellect cannot estimate what we owe woman; she gives us good advice, and plenty of it, she soothes our aching brows, she bears our children . . . In whatever position you place a woman, she is an ornament to society and a treasure to the world. As a sweetheart, she has few equals and no superiors. As a grandmother with an incurable distemper, she is precious. (**Mark Twain to Mrs. Fair Banks** 71)

Yet, he was scornful of the sentimental delineation of women by many of his contemporaries, like Maria Cummins, whose **Lamplighter** offered a tearful picture of the heroine. He was never interested in the portrayal of the sentimental musings of the fair sex and naturally, the world he created in his works was primarily a man's world where women were expected to play a modest part, with the exception of Joan of Arc, of course.

Turning our attention to the world of the female seen in the novels of Narayan, one is really impressed by the variety of the characters found in his novels. We have Rosie, the dancer, Daisy, the Population Control Officer, Bharati, the disciple of Mahathma Gandhi, Commandant Sarasa, the iron woman and so on. The mother and grandmother of Swami, Raman, Krishna

and Sriram leave indelible marks on the minds of the readers for their total dedication and unswerving faith in the goodness of man. While the young women of Malgudi show spirit and vigour, and a desire for liberation, the members of the older generation remain orthodox to the core. Saxena, while making an insightful study of the female in Narayan's novels observes:

> The traditional Indian womanhood derives its strength and enjoys its particular status with family and the society at large from sacrifice and service, an ideal forming basic Indian ethos; Sita, Savitri, Draupadi, Kunthi and Sakunthala are the embodiments of feminine ideals and values. (117)

By and large, this is still our archetypal pattern. In spite of the passage of twenty centuries, the ideals of service and sacrifice as integral parts of a woman's life are still found acceptable by the enlightened readers of the world. In fact, many of the modern women are desperately engaged in a war against these cliched ideas associated even with their very outlook on life. However, the women of the fictional worlds of Twain and Narayan exhibit a rare emotional and attitudinal kinship with regard to the ideals of their lives. One is surprised to find that the mothers in the novels of Twain and Narayan exhibit a similar

concern over the welfare of their wards. The cultural, geographical, social, and intellectual differences notwithstanding, they pose themselves as epitomes of motherhood, radiating warmth. Meanwhile, one should not be negligent of the fact that the American women are pictured as more vehement and determined whereas their Indian counterparts are meeker and more docile in their approach to life. Many of Narayan's heroines show an inclination for resignation and mute suffering.

This does not in anyway mean that the Indian womanhood as expressed by Narayan is devoid of strong sparks of character. Though, not always heroic, they too struggle to maintain a moderate amount of freedom in their lives. Rosie leaves Marco, not so much because of her lack of love for the uncaring ways of her husband, but for perfecting her art. Daisy's act of absconding is an act of defiance and protest at a society that allows bridal examination and bargaining before marriage. Bharati is even willing to keep aside her marital life, for the sake of the political upliftment of the nation. In an understated manner, these acts of protest are the illustrations of their heroic bent of mind.

Laura, Ruth and Alice in **The Gilded Age** are the creations of Twain and

Warner. Still, Twain's attitude to the status of women in society, goes a long way in their delineation. Of all the women characters of Twain, the most powerful one is Roxana, the mulatto slave. Twain has portrayed this woman with such skill and clarity that all the other characters fade into insignificance when she is around. Roxana, actually, remains more life-like and authentic than the hero of the novel, David Wilson, the Pudd'nhead himself. The portrayal of Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans, tells us another tale of individual adoration. The personal attraction felt by Twain for the girl's story has a very long history. Albert E. Stone observes :

> Few natural events in the history of American letters seem in respect less accident than the wind when, one day in 1849, supposedly blew the stray leaf from a book about Joan of Arc, across the path of a thirteen-year old printer's apprentice in Hannibal, Missouri. Clearly, Mark Twain himself, who came to believe in a world wholly determined from the beginning, regarded it as the first, if not the last, turning point in his life. (71)

This was the casual beginning of Twain's fascination for the worlds of literature and history.

Mark Twain's devotion to girlhood is seen at work in the depiction of Joan of Arc. The popular notion that the maid was believed to have remained a child in body as well as in spirit seemed to have pleased him much. Joan is definitely a hero in an unheroic world of the rough English soldiery. But Twain is rather more concerned about the unpromising heroic aspect of the girl's nature than that of the heroic side. In fact, he dwells more on the personal life of Joan than on her political life. Joan moves about in a man's world. But she remains unique in her outlook and actions, as she listens to her "inner voice" to bring about a total change in the political situation in France.

While Twain has the portrayal of a political heroine to his credit, what Narayan can lay claim to is the comparatively bolder sketch of Bharati, the ardent disciple of Gandhiji, in the **Waiting for the Mahatma**. Bharati can never be compared to Joan on political or individual grounds, but, both these characters show a rare and admirable kind of devotion to duty while performing in a man's world. Though not an exact parallel to Joan, Bharati is a special woman, who is willing to sacrifice her lovelife and personal happiness for the welfare of the nation. Malgudi, being a world of mediocre people, has the highest demonstration of heroism, that too, among the women folk, in offering

a protest against any kind of authority, be it social or political. Daisy does this, and Rosie also is not much different. Compared to the average heroes of Narayan, many of his heroines definitely show better spirit and valour. While the male protagonists function primarily as average heroes in Narayan's novels, the heroines operate in a more realistic fashion and so are better accepted.

Savitri in **The Dark Room** suffers intensely, she being an ineffective woman who is scared of raising her voice against her chauvinistic husband, Ramani. But the rest of the heroines are capable of handling even the toughest of situations satisfactorily, all by themselves. In a place where politics is viewed with real scorn, Bharati's determination and dedication are qualities worthy of emulation. She offers a clear contrast to the male protagonist of the novel, Sriram, whose interest in politics is superficial. To him, politics is only a means by which he could be assured of Bharati's nearness. Neither the Mahatma nor the ideals for which the Mahatma stood are of any importance to him. His interest is in Bharati and her love. He adores Bharati and her dedication to politics, though at times irritating, provided she acknowledges his sincerity and affection. On the other hand, Bharati remains undaunted by the external event, like the death of Mahatma Gandhi, and she has an untiring interest in

social service. Her emotional need for Sriram and the prospect of a life with him are secondary interests as far as she is concerned. She remains an enigma to Sriram when she does not reveal much enthusiasm in associating with him. To put it briefly, Bharati is more of a "hero" than Sriram himself.

Rosie's case also is not much different. She has a single-minded devotion to dancing. She leaves Marco, and joins Raju primarily because she has been able to find a better and ardent admirer of her art in Raju. Raju provides her with what had been lacking in her marital life -- due acknowledgement of her skill in dancing. For the sake of this, she is willing to sacrifice her financially secure and peaceful life with Marco. It is Marco's indifference and Raju's sympathetic approach that draw her closer to him. Even amidst Raju's caresses, she is painfully reminded of her wifely duty towards her husband. Consequently, she feels terribly guilty and is tormented by scruples. Rosie is not a coward; she is heroic enough to admit her adultery to her husband, for which she has to pay heavily. Though a woman with an unconventional and independent attitude to life, Rosie finds it hard to bear the negligence and insult of her husband who refers to her dancing as "Street Acrobatics" (**The Guide** 152).

Rosie is relieved to find that she is accommodated in Raju's house. She expects him to help her arrange a public performance. She becomes "Nalini," an act symbolic of the change brought about in her mental attitude. She is not bothered about the financial aspect of her performances; she is bothered only about the emotional satisfaction she receives from her dancing. However, amidst her moments of sheer happiness over her performances, she is conscious of her existential predicament. She feels that she is "a bull yoked to an oil crusher" or like a "performing monkey" (202-03). But she tries to overcome these moments of total desperation.

It is after Raju's eclipse due to the forgery that she becomes her own mistress. By now she has no ill-feelings towards Marco. Unlike her earlier days, she has come to understand the silent potential in him as an excavator. She treasures the book he has written; the write-up on Marco and his book are treated as valuable by her. It is Raju's jealousy and greed that prompt him to forge her signature. But he is caught by the intelligent Marco and he eventually falls from grace. Rosie's resourcefulness and boldness in facing life is commendable. She makes Raju understand that they cannot have a life together. They have to lead separate lives. She cannot succumb to the power of a

romantic hero any more. Once again, Narayan is able to bring about a change in attitude on the part of the reader towards Rosie. The shift is from one of total indifference to marked admiration for Rosie.

Undoubtedly, the sketch of Rosie as a victim of romantic illusions is quite convincing. There is poetic justice in Rosie's suffering. The doubt remains: did Narayan want his heroines to be more powerful and life-like than his heroes themselves? Because one feels that Daisy's life in **The Painter of Signs** is also directed towards this. Raman, the male protagonist of the novel, in spite of his blind love for Daisy, remains unimpressive as an agent of action. He pleads for her love, is willing to incur the displeasure of his mother, but Daisy remains steadfast to her convictions, among which the idea of marrying does not hold a place. She is a feminist in her own fashion, and is not ready to sacrifice her ideals for the sake of a foolish romantic infatuation. She appears more masculine in her outlook than feminine, in the sense that she is realistic enough to admit her "biological need," but she does not believe in marriage. Marriage and its social sanctity are no concern of hers. She is more concerned about the rising population of India. Narayan writes: "Her imperious manner, both charmed and frightened Raman. In her previous incarnation, she must

have been Queen Victoria or in a still earlier incarnation, Rani Jhansi, the Warrior Queen of Indian History" (**The Painter of Signs** 69).

Perhaps this trait in her character comes to her help when she has to explain the process of birth control in front of the "giggling women and sniggering men." She quietened them with a "word or gesture" (58). It is as if, in the process of liberation, Narayan's female protagonists are made to acquire more masculine traits than feminine manners. To express their creative powers in a male-ordained world, women like Rosie, Daisy and Bharati tend to be masculine, even if it is at the cost of scorn and sniggering from the orthodox members of society.

Educational empowerment acts as a prerequisite for heroism in Narayan's heroines. There is a world of difference between the attitudes of Savitri and Rosie. The latter has a Postgraduate Degree in Economics, whereas the former's educational standard is not mentioned. Savitri is found to be resigned to her fate whereas Rosie asserts her independence. Sarasa in **Talkative Man** is portrayed as a strong woman working in the army. Daisy is exceptionally independent, and hence she leaves her husband's people to lead a life of her own. The bridal inspection itself creates a rebellious attitude in Daisy. She

does not believe in exhibiting herself as a commodity for bargain. In **The Bachelor of Arts** and **The World of Nagaraj,** Narayan gives us amusing scenes of bridal inspection by Chandran and Nagaraj. From the male point of view there may be nothing wrong in this age-old custom. But to a liberated and intelligent woman like Daisy, the experience is humiliating. She hates her husband's people who treat her as a commodity worth possessing. Having a good opinion of herself, she risks her future and leaves the village in search of a new world. She is taken care of by the Christian Missionaries from whom she gets the name "Daisy." May be this is why she does not succumb to Raman's desire to get married. She is not a romantic fool and the confinement of marital life is not meant for her. Her views are quite progressive, in fact, more progressive than any of the male members of Malgudi. Hence, she reacts in a natural fashion:

> "Let us face the fact," she whispered, her breath, wafting on his face. "Married life is not for me. I have thought over it. It frightens me. I am not cut out for the life you imagine. I can't live except alone. It won't work. . . . I want to forget my moments of weakening and you must forget me, that's all." (**The Painter of Signs** 179)

She may appear callous and unsympathetic to the readers, as she fails to understand the depth of the havoc she has wrought upon the poor painter of signs. But Santha Krishnaswami in **The Woman in Indian Fiction in English** has a different opinion regarding this. She observes: "Daisy's story is one instance where the possibilities in the active feminine are used for the good of the society. She is no longer the persecuted maiden who believes in motherhood as an act of God" (142). The world of the female recorded in Narayan's novels illustrates his own changed assumptions regarding the role of women in the present time, for, we witness an evident difference in the attitudes of Savithri, Daisy and Saroja.

The women who have been most studied and analysed in Twain's fiction are those who function as foils for the young protagonists. "Sexless and rigidly conventional, they are a far cry from the loving wife he ultimately celebrated" (120), says Susan K. Harris in **Mark Twain's Escape From Time**. Although woman shares the destiny of man on earth, Twain puts a halo around her head. He regards her as morally superior to man, and feels confident that she can play a prominent role in the moral regeneration of the world. Twain's devotion to his wife Livy, his attachment to his daughter Susy, his love for the

other two daughters Clara and Jean, and his admiration for Mrs. Fairbanks, whom he called "mother," all seem to have been consummated in his portrayal of Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans. Twain wrote this novel when he was facing financial ruin. But it was not written with a motive to make money. He never expected it to bring much. He is reported to have written to Mrs. Fairbanks in January 1893 thus: "That is private, not for print, it's written for love, and not for lucre, and to entertain the family with, around the lamp by the fire" (qtd. in **Albert E. Stone** 71).

Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc was written after fourteen years of ardent labour, twelve years of study and two of writing. Though Joan is known to the reading public through Holinshed, Voltaire, Southey and Schiller, Twain's treatment of the girl has something unique about it. The opinion of many critics about the lack of convincing women in his novels is found baseless when we see the portrayal of Joan of Arc and Roxana. Bernard De Voto in his "Introduction" to **The Portable Mark Twain** observes:

> But there is a striking limitation. Nowhere in that gallery, are there women of marriageable age. No white women, that is, for the slave Roxana in **Pudd'nhead Wilson** lives as vividly

> as old man Finn himself. It must be significant that the only credible women of an age that might sanction desire is withdrawn from desire behind the barrier of race. None of Mark Twain's nubile girls, young women, or young matrons are believable; they are all bisque, saccharine or tears. He will do girl children in the romantic conventions of boy's books and he is magnificent with the sisterhood of white frontier wives whom Aunt Polly climaxes, but something like a taboo drains reality from any woman who might trouble the heart or flesh. (18)

This argument does not necessarily mean that Twain's portrayal of Joan is also defective. Twain found himself more at home when his heroines were given some masculine qualities, because he wanted them to wage a war with the custom-bound society of the nineteenth century America with the particular intention to establish their identity in a hostile world. The image he constructed of them in his novel was the result of much thought; it answered not only to his intellectual interests, but also to his personal and emotional needs. To him, Joan of Arc epitomised an age-old struggle of the common folk against the

twin institutions of cruelty and oppression of the Crown and that of the Church. Twain, at all times, was dead against oppression and tyranny of any kind. Twain's idea of a woman-hero was justified in the portrayal of an innocent and intuitive girl, like Joan, who was the perfect hero in his eyes. She was courageous, rebellious, and at the same time a confirmed nonconformist. It was in this role he found many of his male heroes too. Nonetheless, Joan is heroic. She is not a romantic hero like Tom, or a moral hero like Huck, or an intellectual hero like Wilson. Her heroism, too, is devoid of the frills of heroics, because, through Joan, we are introduced to a lonely girl, who is doomed to suffer on account of her purity and innocence. The world of practical human beings cannot tolerate that kind of purity, and therefore, they will try to break in down, whereby the pure will have to suffer.

Joan's early life is described with a rare kind of radiance and innocence, cast in the role of a shepherdess. She leads the life of a blissful child in Domremy, in the company of village urchins, the portrayal of which follows the life pattern of the other picaresque heroes of Twain. But her mental growth at a later stage baffles even the translator of her history. Sieur Louis de Conte wonders how she could carry out these marvels. He writes: "She

who could not read and had no opportunity to study the complex arts of war? . . . It is a riddle which will never be guessed" (**Joan of Arc** 304).

Joan of Arc, nevertheless is a deeply pessimistic book. Though it affirms the power of innocence, it also records the author's caustic attack on the betrayal of innocence. According to Albert Stone, to Twain "Joan was the incarnation of youth, purity and power" (75), and so Twain willed her to remain eternally young. We do not find any hint of sexual development in his heroine. Twain was never keen on disclosing details about sex in his novels and, as such, this image of Joan as an innocent young girl appealed to him very much. Twain makes the aged narrator Conte refer to Joan thus:

> She was truthful when lying was become the common speech of men; she was honest, when honesty was become a lost virtue; she was a keeper of promises, when the keeping of a promise was expected of no one. (60)

Not a word of reproach comes out of her mouth when the French fails to ransom her, allowing her to fall into the hands of the English, as de Conte says: "She was too great for that. She was Joan of Arc; and when that it said, all is

said" (215). This remark holds good for anyone who makes a study on the heroic qualities of Joan. But what is specially relevant is the fact that the heroism manifested here is not a conscious one; it is unconscious and intuitive, for Joan expects to get no glory out of any of her acts of heroism. Perhaps, Twain, in his own way, was making her follow the route of Huck, one of the greatest democrats and nonconformists. Heroism without the help of heroics is found to be established here too.

Twain has never appeared more poetic than in his description of Joan. To him, Joan's death is like the death of Jesus Christ, who sacrificed his life for sinning humanity. Joan, like a true martyr, dies with a cross pressed to her bosom, praying for the welfare of the King of France. She, who had an army of friends around her, dies a lonely and pitiful death. This is another instance where Twain snows his temperamental inclination to depict his heroes and heroines, as essentially alienated and tormented by incidents beyond their control.

Though we are told of the victories of Joan, the real act of heroism of the girl is found during the trial scene. All through the victories in the battlefield Joan remains unaffected. Her divine innocence and humility are stressed, throughout the novel and one cannot but notice Twain's similar treatment of

Huck. Huck is baffled and, to some extent, irritated by being the focus of attention, unlike Tom. So is Joan. After the siege of Orleans, we see the exalted and the jubilant people welcoming Joan, "those acres of people that plowed through shed tears enough to raise the river, there was not a face in the glare of those fires, that hadn't tears streaming down it; and if Joan's feet had not been protected by iron, they would have kissed them off of her." (**Joan of Arc** 270) But she remains calm and unaffected by the open admiration in all the faces that surrounded her because she had the "greatest and the simplest heart that ever beat." (270) She can never be like Tom, who is ready to do anything to achieve glory, to be the centre of attraction.

Joan is more powerful than all the heroines of Narayan put together. But in many of his novels, women play an important role, sometimes passively, and at other times, militantly, with a view to bring about changes in the otherwise changeless world of Malgudi. Actually, Bharati in **Waiting for the Mahatma** and Daisy in **The Painter of Signs** could be termed as the precursors of feminism in Malgudi, as both of them represent unconventional and aggressive Indian womanhood. Santha Krishnaswami's comments look quite relevant in this regard:

> In western countries, the women's issue is mostly one of identity, job equality and sexual roles. But in India, for majority of women, it is a question of stark survival. The few who have escaped the vicious existential circle through education and better opportunities also find themselves in a constant tussle with inevitable social mores with the oppressive weight of tradition behind. (**The Woman in Indian Fiction** 5)

The problems faced either by Rosie in **The Guide** or Daisy in **The Painter of Signs** may not be very devastating ones, compared to the problems confronted by the Maid of Orleans. But in the comparatively staid world of Malgudi, their problems have the power to create a commotion. Daisy's illicit relationship with Raman infuriates his aunt, who is hurt by her nephew's growing infatuation for a Christian woman. She can do nothing else, but ask him, "A Christian; how can you bring in a Christian?" (47), for which Raman has no answer. So, she decides to leave for Banares, hoping for a change of attitude in Raman.

Saroja in **The World of Nagaraj** and Savitri in **The Dark Room** are diametrically opposite to each other. Narayan has created another woman, in

The World of Nagaraj, Sita, who acts as a foil to the modern minded Saroja. Sita is the representative traditional Indian woman, who considers motherhood as the highest post of glory in this world. Saroja chooses to be different. She decides to work in a nightclub called "Kismet," singing and earning fifty rupees an evening. The prospect of a daughter-in-law of a respectable family working in a nightclub is outrageous for both Sita and Nagaraj. Despite their constant appeals, Tim allows Saroja to do as she likes. When Saroja has her own say in all activities connected with her marital life, Savithri is forced to remain a weak, malleable, and economically backward woman and a subordinate being. Ramani, the chauvinist of the family is the one who runs the whole show. Narayan, like Virginia Woolf in **A Room of One's Own** (1929), seems to believe that economic independence is the prerequisite for intellectual independence. He makes Savitri think thus:

> No one who could not live by herself should be allowed to exist. If I take the train and go to my parents, I shall feed on my father's pension. If I go back home, I shall be living on my husband's earnings and later on, Babu's, what can I do myself? Unfit to earn a handful of rice except by begging. If

> I had gone to college, and studied, I might have become a teacher or something. (**The Dark Room** 114)

Her self-contempt moves her to radical thinking. She painfully understands that she was in darkness till then, and that her life with Ramani is nothing but licensed prostitution, for she muses thus: "What is the difference between a prostitute and a married woman? The prostitute changes her men; but a married woman doesn't. That's all, but, both earn their food and shelter in the same manner" (116). Her absconding remains an aborted act of protest. Her attachment to family is so strong that she wants to come back and start her life anew. But even when she is found to function in the same manner, cooking and cleaning and caring for the family, she strongly feels that she has undergone a transformation after her escapade. She feels that "an essential part of her is dead" (120), and she is doomed to lead the same old life of a traditional Indian woman.

There is a social problem posed in **The Dark Room,** because, it directly deals with the status of women in society. In his **My Days**, Narayan himself explains the circumstances in which he chose to write about Savitri's plight:

> I was somehow obsessed with a philosophy of woman as opposed to man, her constant oppressor. This must have been an early testament of the "woman's lib" movement. Man assigned her a secondary place and kept her there with such subtlety and cunning that she herself began to lose all notion of her independence, her individuality, stature and strength. A wife in an orthodox milieu of Indian Society was an ideal victim of such circumstances. My novel dealt with her, with this philosophy broadly in background. (**My Days** 119)

Heroism, is not the forte of the traditional woman of India, as it is a term with masculine connotations. Savitri's bold act of leaving home is the only gesture of protest that we can see in this novel. Her willing acceptance of fate towards the end of the novel reminds one of Isabel Archer's in **Portrait of a Lady** (1881) by Henry James.

Another woman, worthy of special mention in this context is Commandant Sarasa of **Talkative Man**, a liberated woman. She is one who has undergone a total disillusionment in her love life with Dr. Rann, a cheat and a trickster. She has learnt her lessons through the hard way and presently, she has become

a mistress of her emotions. She tries to win her husband back, knowing perfectly his weakness for women. She also operates in a man's world wearing trousers and shirt, and travels alone in a jeep. She becomes a curious spectacle before the people of Malgudi where the very idea of a woman wearing jeans is considered blasphemous. Sarasa's portrayal illustrates Narayan's own change of attitude towards women, as we witness a steady growth of the status of women, represented by the hapless and woe-begone Savitri, to the self-confident and liberated Sarasa, who is ready to stay in the railway resting room all alone.

According to the Indian concept of womanhood, matrimony is incomplete without motherhood. Once a woman becomes a mother, she is expected to make all kinds of adjustments for the sake of her family. In return, she receives veneration and care. Narayan seems to believe that virtuous womanhood, educated motherhood, wife, and companion -- all yield pride of place to woman as a person. Women like Rosie and Daisy can never be the devoted, suffering, and submissive Sitas and Savitris of epics and legends. Yet, one cannot ignore the heritage of the past. However, even the so-called traditionalists among women of Malgudi find it difficult to accept the codes of law prescribed by a masculine world. Savitri, for example, tries to bear all

domestic injustices patiently for a long time, but eventually, she also protests. She comes to the sad realisation that all that a woman possesses in such a set up is her own body and that everything else she has is either her husband's or her father's or her son's. Narayan, in his own modest way, is ridiculing **Manusmriti** wherein a woman's place in the world is described thus:

> Pitā rakṣati kaumāre
>
> bhartā rakṣati youvane
>
> rakṣanti sthavire putrā
>
> na strī svātantryamarhati (Nene, ed. **Manusmriti** ix.3.)

Translated into English, this verse reads thus: "Her father protects [her] in childhood, her husband protects [her] in youth, and her sons protect [her] in old age; a woman is never fit for independence." However, Narayan does not want his modern, educated women characters to think along the lines of **Manusmriti**, and, perhaps, this is why he makes them more heroic than the moderate heroes of Malgudi.

Twain's **The Gilded Age** offers a wide variety of women -- ranging from selfless and adorable mothers to the spirited and self-confident young women.

Though the American author is criticized for the lack of convincing heroines in his novels, we see a few deft strokes while sketching women characters like Laura, Ruth, Alice, Mrs. Hawkins and Mrs. Bolton in **The Gilded Age. The Prince and the Pauper** too shows the venerable presence of Mrs. Canty who is the incarnation of selfless motherhood on earth. Furthermore, we have Aunt Polly, Miss Watson and the widow Douglas in **Huckleberry Finn**. But the most striking of all these, apart from Joan of Arc, is Roxana, in **Pudd'nhead Wilson**. The view of many critics that Roxana is the only complete woman Twain had created, throws ample light on her characterisation. She has a different order of fictional reality from the figures of fables, with which she is surrounded. Though born a slave, she is a fine, brave and majestic woman whose vitality expresses itself in pride, high spiritedness, and generosity.

In **Pudd'nhead Wilson** it is Percy Driscoll's threat to send the negroes down the river that sets Roxana to thinking of swapping the small children. It is a natural act of protection on the part of an unfortunate mother who wants to safeguard the interests of her only child. But the dream of having the constant companionship of that child in the house is proved meaningless, as Tom develops an antagonistic attitude to the slave woman. Roxy reminds

him, in spite of a wounded heart, that he will have to beg for her mercy in future. For a moment, she forgets the ties of motherhood and craves for revenge. After Tom's realisation of the truth, his attitude to his mother is not much different. At times, Roxana is an accessory to his criminal, clandestine efforts, and on other occasions, she is just a slave woman to him. Still, Roxana's heart goes out to him, when he is in despair. She comes out with the only possible way of escape--to let him sell her down the river. Even the heartless Tom is astounded to hear this. But Roxana in her own fashion, justifies the decision.

> "Ain't you my chile? En does yo know an anything that a mother won't do for her chile? De aint nothing a white mother won't do for her chile? Who made 'em so? De Lord done it? En who made de niggers? De Lord made dem? In de inside, mothers is all de same." (**MT** 452)

But Tom is unworthy of such boundless love. He does not want this poor lady to have anything to do with his life. When Roxana comes to realise the fact that Tom is planning to sell her down the river, she is totally shattered. She opens her eyes to the most shocking truth that her only son is the "low-

downest orniest hound that was ever pupped into this worl-en I's sponsible for it," (**MT** 453) and she spits on him. Leslie Fiedler observes:

> In all of the book (**Pudd'nhead Wilson**) only a single mother is allowed the centre of the stage -- the true mother of the false Tom, the slave girl Roxana. Just as in **Huckleberry Finn**, Nigger Jim is played off against the world of Aunt Polly, Aunt Sally, Miss. Watson, so in this reversed version, a negress is set against the society refined by Driscoll, Howard and Essex. (**Fiedler** 136)

Roxana's endless self-sacrifice and unfathomable love for a brute of a son speaks volumes about the boundless and unswerving faith that a mother has in her child, be it Indian or American. In **The Prince and The Pauper** Mrs. Canty's case too is almost similar. Her love would not have been understood by Tom Canty, had he been a bit more selfish. He is not such an unscrupulous child, and hence his conscience pricks him. He could do nothing but to admit the truth in public that the woman in rags is his mother. He offers the crown to the rightful heir, Prince Edward.

This is the kind of love at work, when Prince Edward reaches Offal Court. Mrs. Canty, the silent and sympathetic mother, offers her love and attention to the heir of England. When Tom Canty reaches home in the evening without any money, he is beaten up by his father and grandmother. But at night, the starving mother of Tom provides him with any miserable crust she has been able to save for him by going hungry herself. She is often caught in this act and is severely punished. Still, she becomes the protector of Prince Edward, who is mistaken for Tom. Like Savitri, in **The Dark Room**, she intervenes, when Tom is punished by her husband, in the process of which, she is made to receive all the blows directed at Tom. Here, too, it is the "fire in a mother's belly" (**The Dark Room** 111) that prompts the mother to protect her son. No wonder, Mrs. Canty is the only person who understands that the boy in her home is not her real son. She feels: "there was some undefinable something about this boy that was lacking in her own son" (**MT** 347). She realises that it is beyond description, yet, her sharp motherly instinct can never be blind. Even when she realises the truth, she cannot give him up.

This prompts her to attend the coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey.

The false prince recognises her, but does not acknowledge her at first. But the mother dashes forward and covers his legs with kisses, but is thrown back by the guards. Seeing this, Tom's pride is shattered and he feels that "his grandeurs were stricken valueless; they seemed to fall away from him like rotten rags" (**MT** 423). That happens to be the greatest moment of realisation for Tom Canty who offers the crown to the prince himself. Mrs. Bolton and Mrs. Hawkins in **The Gilded Age** are etched with great care. Both of them are exquisite mother figures, who, despite their own inadequacies, are capable of offering selfless love and service to their children.

The Hawkinses are not financially very well off and they already have two young children, to which is added Clay, the orphan boy. Mrs. Hawkins gives all moral support to her husband when Clay is brought home. Almost similar are the circumstances in which Laura is brought to their home. She remains a true mother, in all senses of the term, to Laura who is forced to murder Colonel Selby, who had cheated her with his insincere love.

Narayan's portrayal of mothers is also carried out almost along the same path. The Indian author has shown great regard for grandmothers, a regard he himself shared for his own grandmother. Sriram's grandmother in **Waiting**

for the Mahatma is quite worried when she comes to know of his association with Gandhiji and the Congress, for it definitely meant an unsettled life for her boy. The police raid, and the subsequent imprisonment are too much for her to bear. She leaves for Benares to await the final call from God. It is quite curious to note that the elderly mothers and grandmothers of Narayan's novels are allowed to spend their last years of their lives in a holy place like Rameswaram or Benares. We have the instances of Raman's aunt, in **The Painter of Signs**, Raju's mother in **The Guide**, to add to the list of such old women. William Walsh observes that these elderly women were modelled after Narayan's own grandmother who had a great influence on him. He observes that she was clearly the original of those robust, dry, temperamental old ladies, who flourish in Narayan's fiction and that she was an orthodox woman of extreme devotion and individuality (**Sweet Mangoes** 91). Krishna's mother in **The English Teacher** also can be described likewise.

Any reference to the role of mother figures in Twain's works necessitates the mention of Aunt Polly in **Tom Sawyer**. Behind a strict exterior, she has a very soft heart which yearns for the welfare of Tom and Sid. She tries to shelter her wards from external and internal threats. The code of conduct

prescribed by her is always violated by Tom. She is totally disturbed when Tom is found missing, and is overjoyed and exalted to see him alive again. Her happiness knows no bounds, when she learns that Tom's kissing her was not a part of a dream, but a reality. Even the possibility of Tom's lying again in this regard, is not admitted by her. She is willing to console herself thus: "It is a blessed, blessed lie, there is such comfort in it" (**MT** 119) and her heart goes out to pardon him even if he committed a million sins, just in return for the kindly act of kissing her.

A journey into the world of Twain's women characters will not be complete without a mention of Laura Hawkins and Ruth Bolton in **The Gilded Age**. Laura is a beautiful and educated woman with commendable manners at the beginning. But the unveiling of the secret of her parentage brings about a total change in her attitude to life itself. Though she takes refuge in books, to escape from bitter memories, local libraries could not offer much, apart from the usual romances, which fed her imagination with the most exaggerated notions of life and showed men and women with a very false sort of heroism (206).

Laura commits the greatest mistake of falling in love with Colonel Selby and marrying him. Selby's treachery teaches her the need for the emancipation of women. She becomes a strange woman with a total understanding of the endless capacities of a girl with good looks. She utilises her charm to win and to break men's hearts with a vengeance. She has a libertarian spirit and she hates the cruel world that pursues an independent woman as it never does a man. She is heroic enough to shoot Colonel Selby when he tries to abandon her a second time. At the time of her trial, she is arrives at the court quite majestically. Twain writes: "She would not have entered a drawing room with more self-poise, nor a church with more haughty humility. There was in her manner or face neither shame nor boldness" (400). Laura's trial scene reminds one of the trial scene in **Joan of Arc**. A.B. Paine identifies Laura with the young childhood sweetheart of Twain who lived opposite to his house in Hannibal (**Mark Twain: A Biography** 37).

Ruth Bolton, another lively presence in **The Gilded Age** is an independent woman with high ideals of life. She has her own convictions and is willing to sacrifice even her personal life for their realisation. She believes that a school is a place where the fruition of the young people is frustrated as it has a

tendency to stifle them. Her decision to learn medicine shocks her mother. We can see the same fire of liberation in Narayan's characters like Rosie in **The Guide**, Daisy in **The Painter of Signs**, or Bharati in **Waiting for the Mahatma**. Ruth, in **The Gilded Age**, who is disgusted with the lot of women exclaims:

> What a box women are put into, measure for it, and put in young; if we go anywhere, it is in a box, veiled and pinioned and shut in by disabilities [. . .] why should I rust and be stupid, and sit in inaction because I am a girl? (113)

Though self-willed and high spirited, she is not as objective and detached in her love-life, like Daisy.

The delineation of women by Twain and Narayan reflects their personal affirmations that the realms of intellect and career are no longer an exclusive masculine preserve. The assertive woman turns her attention from passivity, from reproduction to action and achievement. A closer look into the nature of the heroines portrayed by Narayan calls for a re-thinking on the nature of the heroines as envisaged by ancient Sanskrit scholars. Dhanañjaya makes three

broad classifications, namely, the **sviya nayika**, (The married consort) the **parakiya nayika**, (The unwedded lady) and the **sadharani nayika** (common woman). The **sviya nayika** is a married woman, or legally wedded wife, like Savitri of **The Dark Room** or Susila of **The English Teacher**. She is further described as a "caste lady devoted to the domestic duties, modest in behaviour, and straightforward in her dealings. She is a partner both in times of weal and of woe like Sita of Ramachandran [sic]" (Surendranath Shastri 213). Women who come under this category are also called **atmiya nayika**, which refers to their position in life. Savithri and Susila are **sviya nayikas**. Ramani, on the other hand, is after a **parakiya nari**, Santabai. Rengi, in **The Man-Eater of Malgudi** also comes under this division. Susila in **The English Teacher** remains a true wife to Krishna and she remains so, even after her death. **parakiya nayika**, can either be a virgin or mistress. Her nature may range from sheer bashfulness of an unwedded girl, to the immodest and frivolous nature of a woman with libidinous tendencies. Narayan has Daisy and Rosie whose personalities defy classification. But one cannot deny the apparent similarity in delineation of these characters. Santabai of **The Dark Room** and the numerous women who frequent the lives of Vasu in **The Man-Eater of Malgudi** and Dr. Rann in **Talkative Man** could be accommodated in this group. As has

already been mentioned, Narayan does not show much inclination to deal with the profane and immodest activities of the Malgudians, as he has a staunch faith in the goodness of man. However, he does not shut his eyes to reality. People like Vasu or Dr. Rann are unfit in a world like Malgudi, so he does not allow the Santabais to remain in Malgudi. He also forces Vasu and Rann to leave Malgudi because it can never accommodate such men.

Mark Twain, on the other hand, seems to be more realistic in his approach as he is more conscious of the darker aspects of life. In fact, he makes a scathing attack on the licentiousness of nineteenth century America. But he holds men more in contempt than women as responsible for the fallen moral standards. To him, women really occupied a high status. Though women like Joan of Arc are rare in this world, we can at least hope to hope to imbibe their spirit of independence and compassion.

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

Chapter 5

The Moulding of Unpromising Heroes

While discussing the nature of the heroic ideal in American Literature, Theodore L. Gross makes the insightful observation that there is a central paradox in American culture -- it's political commitment to the common man and its literary obsession with the extraordinary man or hero. There is a second paradox too which is connected with the very foundation of the American sensibility. The United States of America claims to be the strongest of the nations, though it is founded upon Christian principles that speak of humility and abnegation (**The Heroic Ideal in American Literature** vii). It is the actual power of the American nation that has conditioned the heroic posture of the characters in their literature. The writers of the nineteenth century were conscious of this paradox in the texture of their lives, and so, they resorted to the portrayal of a heroic hero, who symbolically suggested victory. The so-called American dream of success was popularised as a result of such literary efforts.

"Success" is a magical word that has always exacted the attention of all the writers of the world. The idea of a common man, who ends up victorious

after his struggle with life, is an enchanting one. Consequently, there was an urgent need for the depiction of such characters in all literary works. Many of them went to the extent of giving a romantic halo to this story of success, which made the literary world quite familiar with terms like the Emersonian Hero, the Code Hero of Hemingway, the Black Hero, the Southern Hero and the Quixotic Hero.

An analysis of the protagonists of Twain and Narayan helps us to arrive at a conclusion that all of them refuse to be categorized like this. Though Twain celebrated the frontier man in his novels, all his characters can never be called typical southern heroes. In the case of Narayan, we come to assume that his protagonists, in most cases, belong to a single category of the ancient heroes called **dhīraśānta**. Naturally, there is an evident overlapping of the qualities associated with these different sects. They are men and women who refuse to be heroic, in spite of their occasional acts of valour. They remain simple men, who, at times, are driven to face difficult situations that call for courage. Many of them, to their surprise, act impulsively though that does not always go well with their true nature. Almost all of Narayan's heroes are dreamers, who have very little to do with the world of action. But, the case of

the Twainian heroes is different. Despite their capacity to dream, they believe in action as a means of fulfillment of their dreams.

A study of the concept of heroism of these two authors will not be complete, if we do not consider the various factors that have been instrumental in moulding the nature of the protagonists. Though belonging to different periods, Twain and Narayan have many common grounds -- their capacity for creating humour and satire, their treatment of juvenile heroes, their preferences for a favourite idyll, and their attitude towards politics, -- to name a few. Equally perceptible is the intellectual kinship they exhibit, in the handling of certain themes, characters, and situations. Both the writers under reference, have emerged as undisputed masters of verbal humour. There is no history of literature, which bestows greatness on any literary figure, whose fame solely rests upon the basis of humour, however enchanting or universal that humour may be. What an intelligent reader expects is a deep and serious implication, which is capable of giving distinctive solidity and acceptability to the work. No wonder, Twain and Narayan could be ranked very high for their judicious and delicious mixing of humour in their works. Both of them are capable of creating humour through verbal adroitness, which, definitely, is of a subtler kind, than the one

based on situational humour.

Humour born of linguistic devices has a permanent attraction to the careful readers, as they prefer inaudible laughter to the boisterous one. Of all types of verbal humour, it is the dialectal humour that is more popular with the common man, and which finds its best expression in Twain's novels. Apart from being a master of vernacular, he is noted for his ability to perceive the absurd and the comic, which forms an integral part of the charm of the humour in his novels. Guru Dayal Grover points out: "Twain's use of the colloquial idiom acted as a proclamation of emancipation to countless writers who would not have dared to depart from the literary language of their contemporaries (**Mark Twain: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** 104).

Humour is employed as a powerful weapon by these authors to attack the pretentiousness and falseness of the society of their time, though Twain's is more poignant and caustic. A.B. Paine, in his book **Mark Twain**: **A Biography** mentions Twain's own remark about his humour, while writing to his publisher McClure thus:

> I value humour highly and am constitutionally fond of it, but I

> should not like it as a steady diet. [. . .] Of the twenty three books which I have written, eighteen do not deal in humour, as their chiefest feature, but one half and half admixtures of fun and seriousness, I think, I have seldom deliberately set out to be humorous, but I have nearly always allowed the humour to drop in, or stay out, according to its fancy. (100)

There are times when Twain uses fantasy as a comic mask for common sense, which is meant to evoke humour, while castigating manners and morals. His **Pudd'n head Wilson** is one such example. While Wilson amuses us with his cranky calender entries, we are reminded of the eternal and naked truth behind their apparent mockery. For instance, one of his calender entries reads: "Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education" (**MT** 458). It was as a result of such a misunderstood joke that he was treated as the "Pudd'nhead." His first meeting with a group of local people at Dawson's Landing proves abortive when he is found to think aloud about the yelping dog thus :

> "I wish I owned half of that dog."
>
> "Why?" Somebody asked.
>
> "Because I would kill my half" was the answer. (**MT** 445)

But the mischievous humour behind the remark goes unnoticed, and a prolonged discussion as to the sanity of the speaker follows, at the end of which, they come to the conclusion that the new citizen is a crank, a jackass and a Pudd'n head. He has to wait twenty long years to prove them wrong.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn abounds in humour. This novel is viewed as a comic epic, though, evidently, we can find a change of attitude in Twain in this novel. He is not concerned with the humorous aspect alone, but he has deeper and more serious considerations while writing this novel. The tone of the novel too grows serious here. Issues like the slave trade, moral degradation, the presence of the schemers and manipulators and the like, attract the attention of the author. The very question of the "superiority" of the white man over the black man is also treated in detail, though coated with humour. The creative use of the vernacular is an outstanding achievement of Twain's, and finds its highest expression in this novel.

The south-west humorists like Longstreet, Harris and Thorpe have also experimented with dialectical humour. But in Twain's novel, dialect becomes a part of Huck's character. The conflict in man over moral issues is indirectly expressed through Huck's innocent observations. When Twain makes Huck

narrate the story, he is giving ample scope for the varied uses of the dialect, which are in agreement with the mood of the narrator. The humour in **Huckleberry Finn** varies -- ranging from high comedy to low farce and the life pictured here shows the poetic tranquility of the life on the raft, the violence of the mob, and the depravity of human beings.

The Indian author, too is acclaimed for his humorous and graphic perspectives in his novels. William Walsh refers to Narayan's novels as those belonging to a difficult genre, the serious comedy (**Indian Literature in English** 79). Comic realism is the forte of Narayan. It is through his comic realism, he weaves intricate patterns of life, which reflect his amused tolerance. Nowhere does he seem either caustic or didactic. Even when he makes fun of the idiosyncrasies and hypocrisies of society, it is not with the zeal of a preacher. He appears to be a tolerant observer holding a mirror to the innumerable types of life prevalent in the small town of Malgudi, and who would like to keep a distance from the affairs of the town, so that he can always use the weapon of criticism, untainted by pedantry. As such, his comedy is never cutting, and hence, is well appreciated by the reading public. Twain's humour is dark and pungent, while Narayan's is light and accommodating. When Twain shows

his anger and irritation at the follies and foibles of the American society, Narayan demonstrates a more sympathetic attitude towards Indian Society.

Both these novelists present the constant struggles of the protagonists in an unfriendly world. But the Malgudians are reticent, and even a bit diffident even, Vasu in **The Man-Eater of Malgudi** and Dr. Rann in **Talkative Man** being exceptions. They are pictured as the undesirable yet unavoidable human types in the peaceful world of Malgudi. Likewise, the heroes are found to be satisfied with the state of things where heroism is not at all necessary for the smooth flow of their lives. Though they are referred to as psychologically active people, the men and women of Malgudi are not much keen on exhibiting physical valour. Their heroism is more on the side of fortitude. Most of them are dreamers who prefer to remain as such, as they find no special glamour in being otherwise.

As mentioned earlier, Narayan's **Swami and Friends** has many things in common with Twain's **Huckleberry Finn** and **Tom Sawyer**. The world of the children operates almost on the same level everywhere, which is a world full of laughter and diversions. Usually, the more serious issues of society are unrelated to that world, and, hence, the children tend to keep a distance from

such issues. But Twain's world is one where fun and frolic are just superficial, and it is a world where children too are made conscious of the existence of evil and darkness. The problem of the black slave Jim's escape is not a problem of Jim or Huck alone, it is a problem posed before the sympathetic hearts of the readers all over. Tom's eternal thirst for heroism in **Tom Sawyer** shows man's constant desire for glory. Malgudi also, has children like Tom. But they can never have a chance to exhibit heroism of any kind, because they are under constant vigil of the elders. Nevertheless, Swami plays truant, like Tom, and he too gets involved in all sorts of troubles.

Twain and Narayan revel in dealing with the world of children. It is as if they were re-living their old days when they were unaware of the bitter realities of the world. St. Petersburg offers Twain opportunities to recollect his childhood days in Hannibal, and the children's life in Malgudi is nothing but a re-living of Narayan's school days. The words of the Headmaster in **The English Teacher** appear quite relevant here. He affirms: "Most of us forget that grand period. But with me, it has always been there. A time at which the colours of things are different, the depths greater, their magnitude greater, a most balanced and joyous condition of life. There was a natural state of joy over nothing in

particular" (167-68).

Swami's account of his teacher Ebenezer and his lecture on Jesus Christ can never fail to create a smile on the face of the reader. Swami gets annoyed and hurt at the same time when the fanatical teacher compares Jesus with the innumerable number of Hindu Gods. Swami's blood boils at the scornful mention of his favourite Gods in whose mercy he has great belief. Ebenezer asks the students: "Did our Jesus go about with dancing girls like your Krishna? Did our Jesus go about stealing butter?" (**Swami and Friends** 5). When the rest of the students keep quiet, Swami cannot help asking, mustering up all his courage: "Why was he crucified then? If he was God, why did he eat flesh and fish and drink wine?" (5). Even Ebenezer is shocked to see Swami retort like this. As a result, he advances towards Swami, in complete rage, to wrench his left ear off. The very thought that a God could be a non-vegetarian astonishes Swami, as "non-vegetarianism" was considered a sin in his Brahmin house.

Swami's Monday morning syndrome reminds one of Tom's. Narayan, like Twain, does not miss any opening to bring forth laughter wherever and wherever possible. Swami's serious discussion with his grandmother on cricket

is such an occasion. S.C. Harrex observes:

> In Narayan's novels social attitudes and cultural beliefs may be treated disrespectfully, or exaggerated to the point of absurdity, but the consequential comedy remains relevant in being enjoyable for its own sake and in manifesting a compassionate awareness of the world of childhood. (**Fire and Offering** 57)

Twain seems to be aggressive in his criticism and more forceful in approach. Even when he attacks the decadent and perverted culture along the banks of the Mississippi, knowing fully well that the traditional values of life are fast deteriorating, he remains steadfast in his convictions. Even the innocent boys like Huck and Jim are at the mercy of the scoundrels like the Duke and the King who know how to exploit their delusions and prejudices. Twain cannot discard humour even while approaching serious issues. This inimitable trend in Twain remains a unique feature of his novels. His humour has a robust virility. Maurice Le Breton points out the two trends in Twain's comedy, "one pure fantasy, completely spontaneous, the other, more thoughtful and tinged with seriousness" (**Mark Twain: An Appreciation** 37). Depending on the aspect that is emphasised, Twain appears "either an overgrown child who amuses himself in the simplicity of his heart with enormous lies, or an embittered

sentimentalist who barely hides his deep pessimism beneath the mask of humour."

The Indian as well as the American author employ humour in order to highlight the attitudes of their protagonists. In the depiction of the life of true "heroes," one cannot have much scope for amusement as they will always be engaged in making their basic dreams come true. That is why we cannot just imagine traditional heroes being entangled in a comic situation, which calls for humorous description, however attractive the whole exercise may look. In a way, this is why the comic element in the nature of the heroes of Twain and Narayan appears more humane and, hence, convincing. Characters like Margayya in **The Financial Expert**, Jagan in **The Vendor of Sweets**, or Raju in **The Guide** can be seen anywhere around us. They are made dearer to us for their authenticity and for their realistic simplicity, which, definitely, is Narayan's hallmark.

Behind the eccentric humour of Pudd'n head Wilson, what we can perceive is a curious mixture of the dark humour of Philip Traum, the "Little Satan" in **The Mysterious Stranger** and the innocent laughter of the juvenile heroes. True to the image of an iconoclast, Twain was always involved in war with the corrupting tendencies of society. Though a man with considerable aspirations

in life, Twain never wanted them at the cost of others' misfortunes. Perhaps, this has been instrumental in making Huck, Wilson, or Tom admirable characters. None of them appear to be unrealistic. Wilson's calender entry throws light on his attitude towards valour. He writes: "Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear -- not absence of fear" (**MT** 485). Quite true to this entry, Wilson is delineated as one who is struggling to conquer fear throughout the novel.

Narayan's heroes are also engaged in a constant struggle to free themselves from the intricate designs of life in Malgudi. They too are required to perform certain roles which are often misunderstood as their heroism. Their heroism lies not in the exhibition of physical power, but in moral and spiritual power. Margayya's decision in **The Financial Expert** to go back to his seat under the banyan tree, after years of affluence, requires such a moral and spiritual strength. And so is Raju's decision in **The Guide** to do justice to the role of the Mahatma thrust upon him. In spite of his villainous activities in the past, Raju finds himself quite earnest, thinking about the possible results of his fast thus: "If by avoiding food I should help the trees bloom and the grass grow, why not do it thoroughly?" (**The Guide** 238). He starts to enjoy the peculiar feeling in his

body produced by the lack of food. He goes to the extent of thinking that the enjoyment in that special case is something that Velan cannot take away. If these acts can be taken as illustrations of heroism, they remain true to the term hero. But a close analysis reveals the fact that in both instances, the protagonists had no other alternative. So, Narayan's heroes, undertake acts of valour, when they find themselves at the end of their resourcefulness. They are by nature reserved, and choose to remain unnoticed, with quite reasonable aims and expectations. Talkative Man, for all his tall talk, remains ineffective when he finds the enforced company of Dr. Rann unbearable. The Hindu belief of "atithi devo bhava" (ed. Namputhiri **Chandogyopaniṣat**) pulls him back even when he is irritated and angry at the crude ways of the doctor.

Heroism in Twain's novels is invariably associated with the dream of escape, shared by many of his characters. This escape may be from the mundane activities of life, or from the suffocating problems faced by the individual, or it may be from the more serious questions related to the very existence of man. However, the protagonists of both these writers, at some point of time, prefer to move away from the chief scene of action, quite often, to come back. This short interval sometimes opens up an entirely new world

before them, making them more experienced and matured. They are made to arrive at the realisation that what they considered as crucial problems are not problems at all, and that there are others who live in constant threat of misery and misfortune. We have the instances of Prince Edward (**The Prince and the Pauper**) and Chandran (**The Bachelor of Arts**) who learn very valuable lessons, which come to their help at a later stage when they have to face real life. In fact, Hank Morgan's visit to the sixth century Arthurian Land (**A Connecticut Yankee**) is another manifestation of Twain's escape motif in novels. The same is the case with the experiences of the Little Satan. Huck's journey is nothing but an attempt to escape from the suffocating circumstances in St. Petersburg.

Jagan in **The Vendor of Sweets** feels the necessity of having a retreat, so that he could sufficiently disentangle himself from the problems of the **samsara** (world) where he could take a few steps to **sanyasa**, the final stage of man's existence in this world, according to Hindu philosophy. But **vanaprastha** (Ascetic life in the forest) has to precede **sanyasa**, and, to him, this is the right time to enter into this third **ashrama** in one's life. He is excited to think of the prospect of such an action: "Yes, yes. God knows I need a retreat. You know,

my friend, at some stage in one's life one must uproot oneself from the accustomed surroundings and disappear so that others may continue in peace" (126). Though he appears quite sincere in his desire, at a later stage Narayan pictures him taking his cheque book along with him, which is another typical humorous observation at the falsity and hypocrisy of Jagan. Narayan's heroes find it difficult to face the trials of life. In fact, V.S. Naipaul, the celebrated West Indian novelist holds this view in **India: A Wounded Civilization**, when he says that Jagan's is "an act of despair" and he runs away in tears" to retreat "from civilization and creativity" (40-43).

When Narayan's heroes attempt to escape from the warmth and security of the life of Malgudi, Narayan has a clever way of calling them back to enact the roles kept aside for them in the drama of life. Perhaps, this regression is made easy for them due to the support they get from a firm religious faith. In Twain's world religion is treated with scant respect. A direct confrontation with religion is found in its aggressive form in **The Mysterious Stranger**, a lighter variety of which is reflected in **Huckleberry Finn** itself. When Little Satan pictures God as a powerful bad boy, it is the apparent duplicity in the existence of God that confuses Huck, because he is given two different versions

of the same God by Miss. Watson and the Widow. If Twain's protagonists desire uninhibited existence, Narayan's child heroes prefer fraternity.

The superhuman heroes of traditional literature do not have a place either in Twain's or in Narayan's world. The traditional heroes are accepted by the common man due to the their affinity to the world of religion. Where religion holds no power, how can one expect the religious heroes to be celebrated? Even Joan of Arc, the religious martyr is portrayed as a person who is essentially guided by her intuitions, and not by religion. In fact, **Joan of Arc** illustrates Twain's yet another attack on the degenerated state of the Church. The greed, pettiness, and the insincerity of the clergy, are attacked scathingly, while Joan remains innocent and unpolluted. The same attitude is at work when Twain deals with Philip Traum, the Little Satan. He is the "mysterious stranger," who has come to please himself with the same kind of showmanship, exhibited by Tom Sawyer. The civilization he encounters at Eseldorf is nothing but paltry and contemptible, and he tries to expose its pettiness. In his final speech, the children of Eseldorf are given a shocking realisation, which is meant for the community of human beings as well. He states:

> It is true that which I have revealed to you; there is no God, no

> universe, no human race, no earthly love, no heaven, no hell. It is all a dream -- a grotesque and foolish dream. Nothing exists but you. (**The Mysterious Stranger** 405)

This sheer existential argument has no place in Malgudi which is rich in its religious and cultural heritage. From the young Swami, to the elderly, worldly-wise Jagan, God is a living truth. None of the Malgudians can afford to be heroic at the cost of irreverence to God. The "Rakshasas" who come into contact with the god-fearing people of Malgudi fail to bring about any change in their attitudes. Vasu in **The Man-Eater of Malgudi**, like the mythical **Bhasmāsura**, becomes the cause for his self-destruction. He can never kill the temple elephant Kumar, because the Gods of Malgudi will take care of their loved ones. **A Tiger for Malgudi** takes one to deeper and more serious problems regarding the existence of man. Tiger Raja, the only non-human protagonist of Narayan, narrates the different stages of his life -- his life of captivity, and his life of liberty -- which act as a threshold to a life of spirituality.

Temperamentally there is an affinity between Vasu and Little Satan. Both of them have a very low opinion of human beings around them. Vasu enjoys

killing animals and Nataraj, the poor printer, is hurt and frustrated at the state of affairs at his Press. He is unable to concentrate on his business, and he finds himself, against all his interests, drawn towards the demoniac character. Like all the other heroes of Narayan, Natraj also is most inadequate as an agent of action. He just cannot tolerate Vasu, because he was brought up in a house where they were taught not to kill. He avers: "When we swatted flies, we had to do it without the knowledge of our elders." (**The Man-Eater of Malgudi** 67)

Narayan has a habit of giving the familial details of all his important characters, with the exception of Vasu. Even Tiger Raja, in **A Tiger for Malgudi** narrates his familial life in the Mempi forest with his mother. But Vasu is pictured as a person who has no ancestral roots. Perhaps, he is a born outlaw. One is left to wonder whether the omission was deliberate. Narayan being a traditionalist, would have, naturally, wanted this cruel "element" to be an outsider, devoid of any familial relationship. The sacred bonds of a family can never accommodate a person like Vasu. He has a very poor opinion of women too. He believes that only fools marry in this world. Quite sarcastically he states: "You don't have to own a coffee estate, because you like to have a

cup of coffee now and then" (41).

Vasu, the man-eater of Malgudi, is a contrast to the real "man-eating tiger" of Malgudi. Raja, the Tiger, is more modest than Vasu, the taxidermist. Raja is presented as a contented and happy tiger in a zoo who recollects the story of his past life. Like the other heroes of Narayan, he too leads a happy life in his childhood, under the care of his mother, whom he loses eventually. There is a struggle for survival and the tiger establishes itself as the supreme "Lord of the Jungle" (**A Tiger for Malgudi** 13). When Raja becomes a householder, with his wife and four cubs, he becomes somewhat sober in his attitude to fellow creatures. But he becomes vengeful towards the human beings, who have killed his family. In his attempt to do this, he is caught, and is trained to perform in a circus, where he becomes the star performer. He emerges from his captivity soon, only to find solace in the company of his "Guru," the hermit in the novel. While narrating the story of the tiger, Narayan is actually extending the concept of renunciation followed by many of his characters, when they reach a state of maturity.

There is an obvious disinterestedness in Twain to portray his heroes as absolutely powerful masters, devoid of any association with society. With all

his evident disregard for the hypocrisy in the American society, he seems to be equally conscious of the necessity of having one's roots firmly embedded in the ground. One cannot always live in the company of nature. Even Huck desires for fellowship when he has had too much of loneliness. Society, with all its inadequacies, is a necessary evil. It may stifle, corrupt, and contaminate one. What is required is a change in attitude. David Wilson keeps himself aloof from society in **The Pudd'nhead Wilson**, only to come back, well received. Even Huck's father requires the company of at least his son, though he is as free as a bird. A careful investigation into the novels of Twain reveals himself as a man who wants the "damned human race" to change its ways. He wants the world to be a habitable place for the innocent and the experienced alike. Otherwise, there will be no meaning to man's "moral sense," which will be the butt of ridicule for all the Little Satans to come. This feeling is central in his novels, and it certainly has a role to play in the mental make-up of his heroes. Through his heroes he tries to make one wary of the cultural erosion that has already taken place in America.

Huck's confrontation with the genteel society widens the scope of his experience. And one can never live in a permanent state of innocence in this

world. Even Adam was required to have his Fall. The unpromising hero motif in Twain's novels makes it necessary for the protagonist to lead a life of unpretentious existence, so that he could climb up the steps of heroism. David Wilson in **Pudd'nhead Wilson**, Miles Hendon in **A Connecticut Yankee**, Tom Canty in **The Prince and The Pauper**, Joan in **Joan of Arc**, Huck Finn and even Tom Sawyer in **Huckleberry Finn** belong to this category of the unpromising hero. Wilson's act of proving the innocence of the twins is such an attempt, that fetches success for him. The Prince of Offal Court, Tom Canty, is a beggar with a golden dream, which is materialised in the most unusual fashion. Miles Hendon, the Earl of Kent, is an insignificant man, whose titles, revenues, and privileges have been snatched away by his own brother. The role of an unpromising hero, who happens to be an achiever at the end, suits no other character so well. Huck's qualification for such a role is undisputed. Perhaps, this is why Twain does not bestow superhuman powers on his characters, Little Satan being an exception. The powers that are conferred upon his best heroes are the powers of observation and intuition. The Twainian hero refuses to be treated as an individual standing alone, self reliant and self-centered, for, no man can be an island.

Prince Edward in **The Prince and The Pauper**, normally, cannot be treated as an insignificant person. But even here, Twain has a way of making him yearn for success, that is, by making him exchange his role with the pauper, Tom Canty. If the swapping had not taken place, the story of Edward would have been different and we could never have included him under the title "unpromising." Tom Canty, the lowly beggar is a dreamer who enacts the role of a royal personage, when he is in the company of his friends. Victory is accorded to him in the form of entry into the palace, whereby he is capable of enjoying all the luxuries of power and wealth. But the exchange of roles is not deliberate or conscious: the circumstances force Prince Edward to live in the Offal Court and Tom Canty to spend many an unhappy day in the palace. But Twain shows that even the innocent tend to be malicious and selfish, once they come into contact with the aristocracy, by showing Tom's negation of his mother at the time of coronation. But remorse follows and he owns up his crime. Even the crime does not get the deserved punishment, because the Prince's magnanimity saves him at the crucial point.

The individual characteristics of Narayan's protagonists are eternally connected with the society of Malgudi. Malgudi is a place where shockingly

disruptive happenings do take place. It is always described as a quiet place where individuals live in perfect harmony with nature. The youngsters of Malgudi at times wish to go away from the place, seeking more comfort, but invariably they too come back to the consoling presence of the small town. Mali in **The Vendor of Sweets** and Balu in **The Financial Expert** offer solid evidence to support this view. People living under such conditions can never fathom the relevance of heroism. Arguably, this is the basic reason for their timidity and averageness. Their highest act of physical heroism is illustrated by the hero's participation in a political demonstration or in undergoing imprisonment as a political prisoner. But one should not fail to notice the intellectual capability of Raju in **The Guide**, Krishna in **The English Teacher**, Margayya in **The Financial Expert**, Jagan in **The Vendor of Sweets**, or Nagaraj in **The World of Nagaraj**. Even the tiger of Malgudi has a an amicable existence. Raja, the tiger has displayed cruelty before he became a householder, but **grihasthāsrma** teaches him a lesson in moderation.

Individual isolation and psychological alienation are not very popular terms in Malgudi because Narayan has "scrupulously avoided high-strung crusading attitudes and extravagant, intellectual, and ideological commitments, while

animating the familiar known world with luminous liveliness of wit and feeling" (Raghavacharyulu 21). Nowhere do we find a total contempt and lack of faith in the works of Narayan, though he points out the falsehood and hypocrisy of man. When Natraj is upset, over the irritating presence of Vasu inside his Press, Sastri consoles him that the universe has survived all the "Rakshasas" that were ever born. He, quite pertinently, states: "Every demon carries within him unknown to himself, a tiny seed of self-destruction and it goes up in the air at the most unexpected moment. Otherwise, what is to happen to humanity?" (**The Man-Eater of Malgudi** 231). This comment prompts Walsh to make the following assessment: "Sastri's remark offers a modest word of hope about the possibilities of human survival and that it indicates the quality of the quietly complex tone of Narayan's fiction" (**R.K. Narayan: A Critical Appreciation** 139).

Meenakshi Mukherjee in the book **The Twice-Born Fiction** notices a particular pattern in Narayan's novels -- a pattern of order - disorder - order (154). There is a sense of orderliness in all his novels at the beginning, which is thwarted by some external element. But towards the end of the story, order is regained, to the great relief of the Malgudians. This cyclic pattern is

perceivable in **The Bachelor of Arts, The Guide, The Financial Expert, A Tiger for Malgudi, Mr. Sampath,** and **Talkative Man.** Even in **The Dark Room,** there is an evident return to order, in spite of Savitri's change in her attitude to life. Traditional Hindu Literature like **The Mahābharatha** or **The Rāmāyaṇa** follows this pattern; as these epics describe the victory of the **suras** (Devas) over the **asuras** (Demons). When the **asuras** disrupt the peacefulness of the country, it becomes the duty of the **devas** to regain it, by defeating them. Both the **asuras** and the **devas** are warriors.

Though Malgudi does not offer much scope for physical heroism, the eternal war between the good and the evil -- Devas and Asuras -- takes place here. Natraj's confrontation with Vasu in **The Man-Eater of Malgudi,** Talkative Man's tussle with Dr. Rann in **Talkative Man,** Nagraj's constant quarrels with Tim in **The World of Nagaraj,** and Jagan's rivalry with the new and deteriorated value system represented by Mali in **The Vendor of Sweets,** are illustrations of this aspect. What is peculiar, is the absence of "action" in these novels. The evident answer for this is the author's preference for unheroic heroes, who are interested in extending the principle of **niṣkāma karma.**

"Karmaṇyevādhikārasthe mā phaleṣu kadācana," thus says the

Bhagavad Gita (ii.47). If one has to perform his act of **karma** without caring for the result it fetches, one necessarily should be a person with a sense of tolerance. One cannot be easily excited or easily disappointed. One ought to possess great fortitude. Raju does not wait for the result of his final act of martyrdom. And so are Jagan in **The Vendor of Sweets**, Raja, and the hermit in **A Tiger for Malgudi**.

If Narayan's novels offer us glimpses into the Hindu myths of **bhasmasura** and the other **devas**, Twain's novels provide us with an opportunity to trace the growth of a cherished dream of the author himself, the American dream of success, and the myth of the American Man as the innocent Adam. The myth of the unpolluted innocence of the American Adam has been treated very well by the other writers of American Literature. Emerson's **The American Scholar** seeks to define heroism that is peculiarly organic to America. Gross points out that Emerson, while examining ideal aspects in individual heroes like Pluto, Montaigne, Swedenborg, Shakespeare, Napolean and Goethe, "confronts them personally, forgetting the average man" (**Emerson and The Heroic Ideal** 11). Hawthorne in **The Scarlet Letter** and in **The House of the Seven Gables** illustrates the incongruity of the Emersonian heroic ideal that takes literature

away from the common man. The passion for heroism was always the object of Hawthorne's criticism, for the very reason that he was persistently aware of man's limitations that make him real and more convincing.

Twain desired to write profoundly on the American hero's innocence. David Wilson's innocence in **Pudd'nhead Wilson** is quite convincing as he is considered to be a crank by the commoners, and Huck's innocence in **Huckleberry Finn** is beyond criticism. Joan of Arc, perhaps, is the incarnation of innocence and purity on earth. Conte's account of Joan's childhood is replete with references to the pastoral life of Domremy. But the mood of the narrator changes, as Joan gets involved in the political drama. The boyish voice of admiration that Conte has, while narrating the story, gives way to the voice of the unhappy old man in him. Twain was personally happy to write about Joan because her personality refused to be categorized under one head -- that of Christian or Pagan. Joan of Arc, to him, escapes from time, from old age, and from loss of faith, which were some of the problems that baffled the minds of the intelligentsia. These sentiments are well expressed in the "Song of the Fairy Tree" which was written by Twain himself. The tree is a symbol that represents happiness and innocence, freshness and vitality, which at a

later period "shares its power with the cross, in sight of which, she dies" (Stone 93). Roger B. Salomon rightly remarks:

> While Edward magically puts everything to right at the end of his wanderings, while Huck (at least in **Huckleberry Finn**) succeeds in escaping to the West, Joan, on the other hand, is abandoned by her friends, and burned by her enemies, and nothing De Conte and his creator are able to do, can save her. (188)

Twain is all praise for his young girl protagonist, Joan of Arc. Such words of praise coming from a man who never attached any importance to religion, show his faith in the basic innocence of man. He always believed that the human race lived in a world of continuous and uninterrupted self-deception. It duped itself from cradle to grave with shams and delusions which were mistaken for realities. He does not hesitate to call it paltry, lying, always claiming virtues which it has not got. Twain, by the end of his career, was tormented by serious thoughts about man's essential loneliness and rootlessness. Even behind the seemingly genial atmosphere of St. Petersburg, there lurks the shadow of lonesomeness and gloom which troubles the minds of the boys. Hank Morgan's story in **A Connecticut Yankee** is the story of a single man

against the Church and its authority. Both David Wilson and Joan are lonely, though Joan finds herself pathetically alone in front of a hostile crowd.

Narayan's happy Malgudi is also not devoid of such issues. From **Swami and Friends** onwards we can see instances of haunting pain experienced even by the innocent boys of Malgudi. Swami's agony, when he stands on the railway platform, is his first experience of sorrow. His isolation becomes even more acute, because, Swami still does not know whether Rajam cared for him or not. After the horoscope episode, Chandran in **The Bachelor of Arts** also feels listless and gloomy. Having got over this first pang of unrequitted love, Chandran learns to start his life anew. Krishna's desolation in **The English Teacher** is the most painful. But like a true Hindu, he learns to bear the pain, receiving consolation from mystical experiences and religious thoughts, which help him to pull on. Jagan's final realisation in **The Vendor of Sweets** about man's loneliness makes him a changed man. The doting father in him dies a natural death, leaving him unconcerned about the release of Mali from prison. But, he is reminded of his **karma**, the duty towards his son, however spoilt he may be, and hence arranges with his cousin to bail him out. Mr. Sampath, the eponymous protagonist of the novel, at the end, is a man shorn of all his pomp and glory.

The delincation of Krishna in **The Dark Room** is especially noteworthy. After the death of Susila, though a desperate man, Krishna does not accept help even from his mother to take care of Leela. He derives a "peculiar satisfaction," like Chandran, in his decision to "live it out alone, to face the problems alone, never drag in another to do the job" (109). He feels that a "terrible fatigue and inertia" have set in. But, as time passes he finds solace in communicating with his wife by way of telepathy.

Twain does not allow his juvenile heroes to stray away from the world of reality, however ugly it is. The pain of separation is aptly expressed by Twin in the picaresque novels. Huck undergoes such an experience of severe boredom, and inexpressible gloom, just after the widow's study classes. He goes to his room in a dampened mood. Sitting by the window, he tries to think of something cheerful, but in vain. "I felt so lonesome, I most wished was dead," says Huck (**MT** 144). The same sense of desolation pervades the mood of the boy, confronted by the vast wilderness of the forest and the river. At night he sees the shining stars in the sky, and hears the mournful sigh of the leaves rustling in the wind. He feels that the wind was trying to tell him something, something fearful, most probably of death and he admits that he

could not "make what it was and so it made the cold showers run over me" (**MT** 144). This incident reminds one of Swami's own feeling when he is trapped in the Mempi Forest. He, too, like Huck, feels that his ears have grown abnormally sensitive. In **Swami and Friends** Swami's thoughts of fame, through the heroic escapade, bid farewell to him at night fall and his heart started to beat fast. Narayan writes: "His throat went dry as he realised that he had not reached the Trunk Road. [. . .] But here one could hardly see the sky, the stars gleamed through occasional gaps overhead" (157).

Swami, the little hero of Malgudi, is made to stand still, frightened to the core, to listen to the "uncanny ghostly quality" of the fluttering of the wings of the birds and "to the sinister whispers calling him to dreadful sacrifice" (158). This marks a turning point in Swami's life. He is getting prepared for darker experiences in life that await him. The departure of Rajam, is a landmark in Swami's journey from innocence to experience.

Regan observes that Twain had a predisposition to identity himself with the unpromising hero, for, he was one who detested the self-glorifying antics of the showmen heroes (**Unpromising Hero** 218). Hank Morgan, the technical wizard in **A Connecticut Yankee**, who wants to prove the superiority of the

Yankee over everyone, also becomes desperate at the end of the novel. In spite of all his mechanical and electrical inventions, he is condemned to a thirteen century sleep by Merlin. Though the Yankee claims himself to be the antithesis of sentimentality, and professes that he is barren of sentiments, his final doom haunts the reader. His world of technological marvels is blown up forever. Twain, who never wanted his protagonists to move away from the world of the common man, makes Morgan experience self-realisation.

Narayan, like his heroes, is modest in his criticism of the unscrupulous and hypocritical ways of modern man. Susila's cremation and its related rituals in **The English Teacher** are given in detail by the author, who, in a way, is recollecting the silent anguish and the darkness experienced by him at the time of the death of his wife, Rajam. There is a clinical detachment in his description. Disregardful of his pain, some of the visitors were discussing the hike in the price of commodities and their deteriorating quality. He observes that the trappings of trade do not leave us even at the scene of death. With a mathematical precision Krishna describes the cremation:

> Presently, I go over, plunge in the river, return and perform a great many rites and mutter a lot of things which the priest

> makes one repeat. They build up a pyre, place her on it, cover her up with layers of fuel. (182)

Here, too, we can see the glimpses of Hindu philosophy at work, for, death to a true Hindu, is just an intermediary stage in the life of man. His daughter, Leela's departure along with her grandmother is as painful as Susila's death is to Krishna. "A profound unmitigated loneliness is the only truth of life. All else is false" (**The English Teacher** 203); this realisation helps him bear the ordeals of life more serenely.

The heroes of Twain and Narayan may vary, to some extent, in their essential nature and disposition. But a common factor, like the recurrence of the same locale for many stories, calls for some careful analysis. Narayan is famous for his permanent locale of Malgudi. It is true that Twain shows a considerable variety in choosing the locales of his novels, which range from St. Petersburg to sixth century England, and, hence, his canvas is broader by way of comparison. But many of his best novels are set along the banks of the Mississippi, which appears to be the favourite idyll for Twain. Dawson's Landing, where the story of Pudd'n head takes place, is the same St. Petersburg in progress, and resembles Hannibal, where Twain spent his childhood. In

creating St. Petersburg, Twain has put in all his cherished memories of a little river town where he himself was an urchin like Tom, Huck, or Sid. In the description of Domremy also we can see the influences of Hannibal. The charm of the prairies and forests was not inaccessible to the children of Twain's world. Bernard De Voto observes: "Wilderness [. . .] nurtured the memories of Samuel Clemens, out of which came five-seventh of his books and those of men who were boys when he was" (**Mark Twain's America** 30). Walter Blair is of the opinion that Tom's house is the "old Clemens' house, Becky Thatcher's, that of a childhood sweetheart of Twain. Cardill Hill, where Tom re-enacts Robinhood's adventures, is Holliday's Hill, the cemetery where Tom and Huck watch the murder is the Baptist Cemetery and Jackson's Island is Glassock's Island" (65). In short, St. Petersburg, like Malgudi is an idyll and a cosmos.

Malgudi has definite topographical features and it acts as a living presence in Narayan's novels. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar assumes that it might be Lalgudi on the river Cauveri or Yadavgiri in Mysore (361). There are some other critics who identify this town with Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, because it has a river on one side, forests on the other; it can proudly boast of having a Mission

School and a College, a Town Hall and a Municipal Office -- in short, all the extensions mentioned in his novels, could be located in Coimbatore. Narayan is able to achieve an organic whole through the presence of Malgudi as a permanent backdrop where each of his characters takes part in a human comedy. In fact, Malgudi is Narayan's "Casterbridge" according to Srinivasa Iyengar (360). Indianness and Indian sensibility pervades the whole of Malgudi. Narayan proudly admits that the name Malgudi dawned upon his mind on a Vijayadasami day, which is supposed to be the day of initiation of learning (55).

The Malgudians also show moderation in outlook. None of them can boast of any high stature in the social hierarchy, nor do they belong to the lowest strata. Moderation, in the strict Hindu terms, is considered as a virtue. Even in the case of a scholar, traditional Sanskrit literature advises temperance. The maxim, "mitam ca saram ca vacohi vagmita," (a scholar is one who practises frugality in words) applies not only to the scholar, but to any of the heroes of Malgudi as well. Though Talkative Man claims himself to be a "loose talker," he appears modest in comparison with Dr. Rann. The eagerness to get involved in others' affairs is a common characteristic of Malgudians. But, this is not out

of any unhealthy inquisitiveness, but out of sheer sincerity and compassion.

Raju in **The Guide**, tells us that he cannot deny any help to anyone. Jagan in **The Vendor of Sweets**, Margayya in **The Financial Expert**, Srinivas, and Sampath in **Mr. Sampath** find pleasure in doing this. Srinivas's involvement with Sampath and the old man takes away a major share of his time. Jagan decides to enter a retreat as a means to escape from worldliness. But he is generous enough to offer the expenses of a ticket to America if Grace wants to go back.

The Indian as well as the American heroes under reference, live in close association with rivers. While St. Petersburg is blessed with the presence of the river Mississippi, Malgudi has its own Sarayu which offers emotional consolation to the men and women in their moments of utter desperation. Sarayu, like Malgudi itself, is a living presence. The children as a rule, are invariably attracted towards the calmness and comfort of the river. It is on the banks of the river Sarayu, Chandran meets his first love, Malathi in **The Bachelor of Arts**. Rosie, in **The Guide**, finds comfort on the river bank after her rejection by Marco. For the boys, Sarayu's banks offer a meeting place where they can even have a duel. Sampath's confession takes place on the

banks of this very same river. Rivers are considered sacred in India. To a Hindu, a dip in the holy river offers purity of body and soul. The river has almost become a symbol of spiritual cleansing, and has a wonderful ability to provide relief to ailing minds.

A river journey offers all kinds of freedom, as the traveller is not restrained by external influences and Huck and Jim in **Huckleberry Finn** take the maximum advantage of this freedom. The fact that the greatest civilizations of the world sprang up on the banks of rivers provides ample proof for the relevance of rivers in moulding man's character. The river has a redeeming influence on Raju, by which, the initially reluctant saint gets the courage to become a true martyr.

Hero-worship is a common trait of man, especially of the young. The renowned boy protagonists of Twain and Narayan have their own heroes, Tom and Rajam respectively. Swami is evidently attracted by the smart and fashionable boy who has newly joined his class. Rajam becomes a shining star in Swami's eyes, and he even feels proud of being called "Rajam's Tail," disregarding the insinuations. For Huck, Tom represents the very world of heroism, wherein he does not have a place. Tom is all that Huck can never

become. He believes that Tom's conduct is worthy of emulation. The "hero" in Tom is so glorified-looking to Huck that he tries to follow what Tom would have done, if he were placed in similar circumstances. When he sees the wreck, he thinks:

> Do you reckon Tom Sawyer would ever go by this thing? Not for a pic, he wouldn't. He call it an adventure that's what he would call it, and he would land on that wreck if it was his last act. [. . .] I says to myself "Tom Sawyer wouldn't back out now and so I wouldn't either." (**MT** 183)

Swami, in all respect and humility, tries to imitate Rajam's conduct. Swami's admiration for the sophisticated Rajam is enhanced after his visit to his house. So when Rajam is invited to Swami's house, the latter asks his father to lend him his room temporarily. Swami talks in an unusually authoritarian manner, to the shock of his servant, who chooses to be deliberately disrespectful to the new ways of the young master. Swami is terribly hurt to see that the servant has not complied with his request to wear a clean dhothi at the time of Rajam's visit. The fundamental difference in the attitude of the two boys accounts for the existence of familial ties in the case of Swami and the very lack of it in the case of Huck. Swami has a responsible father and a

caring mother and a doting grandmother. All that Huck has is a drunkard for a father, who does not have any emotional ties with anyone. But at the prospect of a choice between the stifling security of the widow's house, and the crude confinement of his father's cabin, Huck chooses the latter as the better one. He even enjoys his Pap's act of kidnapping him, for the very reason that it will at least fill his life with some excitement. The ugly hands of the civilized society, he hopes, will not be able to reach up to him. His escape from such a society is inevitably inexorable. Huck, being the child of Nature, does not plan to come back at all. Huck hates all aspects of civilization, which ultimately means social captivity.

It is not the fault of the author, if **Huckleberry Finn** celebrates the principle of escapism. Twain was an admirer of the escape dream which many of the intellectuals of the period shared. The Jackson's Island or the raft on the Mississippi happen to offer the best idyll for his dreams of escape. An escape from the work-a-day world is a most welcome thing, though, it may adversely affect the world of the youngsters, at times, when things go out of control. They wish to enact the adventures of endeared outlaw, Robin Hood, and with this idea in mind, they form a group of robbers. But a few days' freedom

bores the children and, eventually, they all return. For Huck, yet another journey awaits, the choice of which proves crucial, because he has much to lose when he embarks on his journey. This is really heroic of Huck. But Huck's decision to help Jim partially comes out of his practical wisdom. He decides to protect Jim partly due to his boundless compassion, and partly due to the consoling thought that he will never again go back to St. Petersburg and hence he does not stand the risk of being called an "abolitionist." This is worthy of special mention in the present context, which opens up a new line of understanding of Twain's concept of heroism. Huck's action, definitely, is one devoid of heroics.

The men that people the worlds of Twain and Narayan are never types. They are extremely authentic and life-like, and their heroism, just for that very reason, is also, not out of proportion. All of them, whether they are **dhīraśānta** heroes or **dhīrodatta** heroes of Dhananjaya, remain very close to the hearts of the young and the old alike.

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

Chapter 6

Conclusion

"Every culture seems, as it advances toward maturity, to produce its own determining debate over the ideas that preoccupy it: salvation, the order of nature, money power, sex, the machine and the like," says R.W.B. Lewis in **The American Adam** (2). The intellectual history of a nation, exposes not only the dominant ideas of a period, or of the nation, but more importantly, the dominant clashes over ideas. No wonder, many critics were able to perceive an "American Myth" at work, while studying American Literature of the nineteenth century. Virgil's **Aenid** did this in Rome, establishing a Roman Myth, a myth of the "city" or the "republic," with all human concerns subordinated to the political and moral (Lewis 2). But, the American Myth, unlike the Roman, was not fashioned ultimately by a single man. It reflects a collective effort on the part of many creative writers.

This collective effort was instrumental in the introduction of a new "'hero," who represented the embodiment of a new set of ideal human attributes. He was

> a radically new personality, the hero of the new adventure; an

> individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race, an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources. (**The American Adam** 5)

He was called the "American Adam." Hawthorne's **The Marble Faun** and Melville's **Billy Bud** are instances for this. While Henry James named his protagonist "Adam" in **The Golden Bowl**, Emerson argued in favour of a plain old Adam, who could pose himself as the genuine simple self against the whole world. Almost a similar type of a hero was introduced into the tragedies, whose innocence and newness happened to be the cause for his tragedy. This was widely accepted as a pattern for American fiction of the period too.

"Heroism" has been a term of fascination for writers of all times. Whether it is the abstract heroism of traditional literature, or the more concrete one of modern literature, the term is of considerable interest. The American dream of success was a by-product of the heroic ideal prevalent in the nineteenth century, and Mark Twain was definitely attracted by this dominant theme.

But he made deliberate attempts to deviate from the accepted pattern of fiction by introducing the unpromising hero motif in literature. He seems to have had no faith in the glorified antics of the heroes, celebrated in the fictional works of this period. He felt that such books gave a distorted vision of the world of fantasy, which can never be found in the ordinary world. The heroes created by the volatile imagination of Twain were entirely different from their contemporaries. "The hungry need for heroism" (Gross 7) was felt by Twain who also was an American. But he was equally aware of the need for a deviation from the accepted idea, which happened to be one of the chief attractions of his novels.

Twain hated the cultural pretensions of European society, which claimed a greater history and heritage. When writers like Cooper and Henry James were writing about the European influence on American fiction, we see a shift of interest in Twain. "Mark Twain was an actor," observes Edward Wagenknecht, "who appeared beneath the proscenium arch of the heaven in many different roles. He was Tom Sawyer (with a touch of Huckleberry Finn); he was Colonel Sellers, he was the Connecticut Yankee; he was Joan of Arc" (**Cavalcade** 109). To put it briefly, one who goes through the works of

Twain is capable of knowing not only the author, but also the representatives from various classes of society. Like Walt Whitman, Twain celebrated America and the Americans, but it was with a deliberate difference. As a result, his fictional works and his heroes look entirely authentic and, at the same time, fresh and vital. He was able to identify himself with the common man, and made it a point to write for him.

Perhaps, this is why he never wanted his heroes to be persons endowed with superhuman qualities. The heroism he advocated was the heroism of the common man without much valour, but who is driven to undertake acts of courage. His unceasing attraction to the myths of America and the unpromising hero motif in many of them, paved the way for the introduction of humane and simple characters like Huck in **Huckleberry Finn**, Wilson in **Pudd'nhead Wilson**, Tom in **Tom Sawyer** and Hendon in **The Prince and the Pauper**.

Fiction, in his hands, was a powerful weapon for social criticism. We find scathing attacks on the frivolous and the selfish nature of the American society in his novel, **The Gilded Age**, which was written in collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner. Colonel Sellers, like Twain, remains a dreamer with a great faith in his novel ideas which were supposed to make him a fortune.

Philip Sterling alone is allowed to be prosperous at the end. It is as if he was pronouncing the fact that success is not very easy, and it is not enjoyed by many, though they can still dream of it.

Twain's use of the word "hero" itself shows an equally radical departure from the ordinary. For him, the hero is apparently a man, limited in his social and humanitarian usefulness by "consideration of self" and "narrow feelings" (**Unpromising Heroes** 87). This does not, in any way, mean that Twain despised heroes. On the contrary, he worshipped General Ulysses S. Grant as a great hero. But while analysing his literary contributions, we come to realise that he was against the idea of traditional heroism, which dragged the heroes away from the common man, putting him on a high pedestal. All his protagonists -- Huck in **Huckleberry Finn,** Tom in **Tom Sawyer,** Prince Edward and Tom Canty in **The Prince and the Pauper**, Wilson in the **Pudd'n head Wilson**, Hank Morgan in **A Connecticut Yankee** and Joan in **Joan of Arc** -- all offer a firm foundation for a study on Twainian heroism.

Partaking in the American dream, Twain allows many of his heroes to be successful at the end. The idea of gaining popular respect without sacrificing self-respect happened to be the enigmatic question of the American hero. This

kind of winning popular respect is one of the themes of **Tom Sawyer** and **Huckleberry Finn**. Tom is interested in maintaining the social status, whereas, Huck is not. Tom secures the community's approval on his own terms. When Tom gets the hidden treasure, it's value for Tom is not as wealth for its own sake, but for the occasion it affords for the big scene, the heroic gesture, the dramatic revelation before the assembled townsfolk. This is Twain speaking directly to the readers on his concept of heroism, in a wider sense.

Heroism for Twain does not mean a deliberate physical action, it is rather an intuitive and unconscious one. The reward expected by the heroes has nothing to do with the material gains. For Tom, his reward is glory, whereas for Huck it is happiness through freedom: for Wilson it is recognition of his potential, and for Joan it is the liberation of France.

There is a basic difference between Tom's heroism and the heroism of Huck. If Tom's actions are motivated by glory, Huck demonstrates that heroism is possible without the antics of heroism. Hank Morgan's heroism is of the former kind whereas Wilson's and Joan's belong to the latter. Little Satan's heroism stands apart. He is more interested in revealing the truth behind the darker issues of life. Twain presents a sardonic commentary on human society

in general, wherein one does not have much scope for true heroism. However, one does not have to try hard to perceive the complete negation of the traditional concept of heroism in his works.

In Narayan, we can see an equal disinterestedness in depicting his protagonists as real heroes. All of them are essentially average and inconsequential. The ancient classical categorization found in **Daśarūpa**, a treatise on dramaturgy, can well be taken as a guideline for arriving at a concrete idea regarding their heroism. The term **dhira** is common to all the four sects -- **dhīrodatta**, **dhiroddata**, **dhiralalitha** and **dhirasanta** -- though the individual characteristics may differ. But on a close analysis one is tempted to trace the influence of the **dhirasanta** nature of the heroes in his delineation, though the identification stands incomplete.

Whatever might be said of the basic nature of these protagonists of Malgudi, they are never highly ambitious. According to Hariprasanna, Narayan's vision is characterized by a unique Indian sensibility. And his adherence to the ancient Indian tradition - as reflected in his fictional world - a tradition which is deeply rooted in the beliefs of the transmigration of the soul, **karma**, reincarnation and renunciation, becomes clear through a perceptive study of

his fiction (**The World of Malgudi** 15).

This observation is quite relevant, considering Narayan's ability to bring in various myths and legends drawn from **The Mahābharata, The Bhagavada** the **Panchathanthra** and **Jataka Tales** into his novels. There is, definitely, an improvisation of the legends in his works. One does not fail to notice the author's deep knowledge in classical Sanskrit Literature too, which again points to his preference for **dhirasanta svabhava** of his heroes, which is a unique feature of Narayan as a novelist.

Taking all these points into consideration, it is only natural for a writer like Narayan to have been influenced by the ancient literary dogmas that classify the heroes and heroines of literary works under the four classes, based on their individual nature or **svabhava**. As we all know, Narayan's protagonists are famous for their moderation in action. **Swami and Friends**, like **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** and **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**, is a remarkable novel written from the child's point of view. Though a world of amusement and joy, the children have their own troubles and tribulations. There are parallel themes of loneliness, protest against authority, the desire for glory and the aversion to politics, which are deftly handled by the authors

under reference. Narayan's **The Bachelor of Arts** is another story of growth from adolescence to maturity. **The Vendor of Sweets, The Financial Expert, The Guide** and **The World of Nagaraj** deal with grown-up heroes who exhibit the principle of moderation in everything.

Comedy is a forte shared by both the authors. While Narayan shows amused tolerance towards society's members, Twain is ruthless in his attacks. However, this comic element in the novels acts as a decisive factor in moulding the character of the protagonists. The life depicted in the novels of Twain is a bleaker one compared to the novels of Narayan. Jayanth K. Biswal points out that Narayan's characters, like "caravans journeying along life's varied experiences complete their journey of life from innocence to experience and then to wisdom." (**A Critical Study of R.K. Narayan** 26)

Twain's **Joan of Arc** and Narayan's **The English Teacher** do not come directly under the comic vision of these writers. The atmosphere, to a large extent, is charged with intense emotions and the Maid of Orleans and the English teacher wait for their final call from God. But the fact that these two novels show a considerable similarity, cannot be denied.

Far from having thwarted Twain's natural genius, Industrial Capitalism seems to have stimulated him both to criticism and satire, on the one hand, and to the proclamations of the humane, democratic values, on the other. Maybe, that is why **A Connecticut Yankee** remains a defence of industry and machine and a satire on romantic feudalism, which reveals the withering blight that an exaggerated property consciousness casts over civilisation. Moreover, it flays the concept of divine right of Kings who enslave the common people and withhold from them the technological advances by which their lot might be improved.

Twain's novels reflect his views of man as an almost helpless, and therefore, comic free agent in a still incompletely formed society uncertain of its direction. Civilisation seems to be a vulgar parade of hypocrisy and scheming pretence and his novels mirror these aspects truthfully. Naturally, this does not give much room for the portrayal of heroism in its conventional and traditional form. All that he could do was to approach even that with a comic attitude, giving birth to books that treat gloomier aspects of life in a deceptively lighter fashion. Mark Twain, like Philip Traum in **The Mysterious Stranger**, is found to ridicule "the pride of man in their warlike deeds, their heroes, their

kings, aristocrats and history" and asserts, "In self-deception, man thinks that he is gold, but actually, he is brass" (**The Mysterious Stranger** 247).

The Indian counterpart likes to view the sardonic aspects of life in a milder manner. He is quite conscious of the pride and greed of men. But the people of Malgudi have an unwritten code of conduct to be followed. Those who try to go against it are harshly punished by nature. Raju and Rosie in **The Guide** try to do it; so are Ramani in **The Dark Room**, Vasu in **The Man-Eater of Malgudi**, Balu in **The Financial Expert**, Mali in **The Vendor of Sweets** and Tim in **The World of Nagaraj**.

The protagonists of Narayan are engaged in diverse professional pursuits like printing, teaching, film making, banking, politics, performing arts, and journalism. They at time have to act as confidants, tricksters and fixers of all kinds. But each individual consciously or unconsciously is guided by the invisible concept of "**purushartha**" (the objectives of life) and, hence, they have to act out different roles, ranging from **dharma** to **moksha**. The Hindu traditional concept of the four **arthas** or **purusharthas, dharma, artha, kama,** and **moksha** -- are found to be followed by the protagonists of Narayan. **Dharma** refers to the duty of any individual in life ranging from filial duty to

professional duty. **Artha** manifests itself in the individual's desire to make money, and Kama exhibits insterests of man starting from romantic involvement to repulsive lust. **Moksha** is the last stage for which every Hindu is to aspire, to get salvation, so that the **jeevatma** (individual soul) could be united with the **paramathma** (the supreme soul). In Narayan's novels, **dharma** is found to be followed by all the characters at some time or the other, whereas, **kama** predominates in **Mr. Sampath** and in a considerable parts of **The Guide** and of **The Painter of Signs**. **Artha** is the governing motive in **The Financial Expert**. Towards the end of **The Guide**, Raju is waiting for Moksha which again is the ultimate aim of Jagan in **The Vendor of Sweets**.

In a country where such moral and ethical codes of law are irrevocable, it is difficult for the individual to go astray. Narayan, who had a deep and unfailing faith in the basic goodness of man, was always careful to bring the wayward souls back to the warmth and security of puranic thought. He, then, makes many of his protagonists follow the principle of **nishkama karma** (action unconcerned of results) by the end of the story. We have the examples of Jagan in **The Vendor of Sweets**, Margayya in **The Financial Expert** and Nagaraj in **The World of Nagaraj**. Even Raju, the likeable rascal, in the course of his enforced fast, decides to follow this path.

Turning to the American author, we can see him also highlighting some of the moral lapses of man, prominent among them, being his greed. He presents some of his characters as mean and unscrupulous in money transactions. Although he has faith in the prosperity and happiness of man, Twain does not compromise on morals. He rejects easy money, like Huck. **The Gilded Age** exposes man's greed and dishonesty. Along with speculation, it shows how greed for money turns man into a swindler, and how he tries to enslave his fellow human beings on the flimsiest grounds of colour, race, and rank. In **Huckleberry Finn, A Connecticut Yankee**, and **Pudd'n Head Wilson**, we have ample instances for this.

The American hero can make money and enjoy his life, but it should not be through fraudulence. He is an advocate of honesty and truthfulness and hence exposes fraudulence relentlessly. Such honest and truthful individuals who people St. Petersburg and Dawson's Landing refuse to be "heroic" as there is no meaning in heroism devoid of truthfulness. To Twain's characters, being truthful, at least to one's own self, is the highest point of heroism. They can be heroic enough to accept their frailties and follies and can refine themselves to be better citizens of a great nation that requires true, and patriotic men. An

analysis of Twain's novels gives us a profile of his "ideal hero": his beginning will be modest; he will suffer scorn and derision, with some degree of patience; he will rise high not by seeking applause or position but merely by working with noble kindness to advance the interests of his fellow men.

Coming to **The Prince and the Pauper**, we can see Twain creating three heroes: Prince Edward, the pauper Tom Canty, and the Prince's protector Miles Hendon. One cannot fail to observe that boy-heroes of the novel combine attributes of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, and that they both, progress from a vision of life typical of Huck. Prince Edward is forced to see the life of Offal Court, which eventually will help him to become a better ruler. Tom Canty is made to see that his royal state, in actuality, is a kind of slavery and there are moments when he dreams of being back in Offal Court. Miles Hendon is made to help the real Prince Edward, not out of any desire for glory at a later period, but out of sheer sympathy towards the Prince in rags. All the three become successful at the end, though without much effort. Twain had only contempt for the opportunists and the utilitarians and, hence, he cannot let his heroes be like that.

Another important factor about the worlds of Narayan and Twain is the depiction of evil in them. The boy's world in **Swami and Friends** is devoid of evil, but in Twain, in the course of Tom's adventures, we are shocked to see the dark side of society represented by Injun Joe and the murder of Dr. Robinson. In **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**, the frightening presence of Pap and the fraudulent Duke, and the Grangerford feuds remind the reader of the hidden darkness behind the apparent joviality in the world of the children.

Narayan's child characters are kept off from serious and philosophical musings. If at all there is some kind of a serious thought on the part of child characters, it goes well with their nature as Narayan puts himself into their personalities and understands them fully. We can see Swami pondering over the position of Europe in the world atlas thus:

> It puzzled him how people managed to live in such a crooked country as Europe. He wondered what the shape of people might be, who lived in places where the outline narrowed as in a cape, and how they managed to escape being strangled by the contour of their land. And then a favourite problem began

> to tease him: how did those map makers find out what the shape of a country was ? How did they find out that Europe was like a camel's head? Probably they stood on high towers and copied what they saw below. He wondered if he would be able to see India as it looked in the map if he stood on the top of the town hall ? (60)

Such characters with this kind of naiveté and simplicity can never be expected to perform real deeds of heroism. All that we could expect of them is mock-heroic acts, for which we have ample evidences in the works of Narayan. To consider the case of the grown-up heroes of Narayan, as mentioned earlier, they are essentially average, but positive and their sphere of action is not one in which deeds of heroism are called for. They are heroes with **dhirasanta** or **dhiralalita svabhava**, and as Gunachandra explains, they are all "easy-going and straightforward, endowed with gentlemanly qualities. He is modest, yet a diplomat, he is kind and gentle" (qtd. in **The Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama** 206). If we extend the classification further, we can see that the taxidermist Vasu in **The Man-Eater of Malgudi**, can be categorised under the term **uddhata** as his character is dominated by self-conceit. He is presumptive,

treacherous, vehement, and deceitful. It is not to say that Narayan consciously adhered to the dictum in **Dasarupa** or any of the other ancient aesthetic texts. Such dictums, of course, were formulated for the purposes of dramatic performances, since novel as genre is of later origin. The same theory could be extended without marring the clarity and integrity of the work. Regarding his affinity to classical literature, Narayan himself writes:

> For an Indian classical training begins early in life. Epics, mythology and Vedic poetry (of Sanskrit origin and of tremendous antiquity) are narrated to everyone in childhood by the mother or the grandmother in a cosy corner of the house when the day's tasks are done and the lamps are lit. Later, one reads them all through one's life with a fresh understanding at each stage. Our minds are trained to accept without surprise characters of godly or demoniac proportions with actions and reactions set in limitless worlds and progressing through an incalculable time-scale. (**The Writerly Life** 466)

Twain liked the unpromising hero motif: he liked success also. But the problem with Twain was to strike a balance, to achieve a synthesis of these

two apparently contradictory ideas. This again is a recurrent theme in American Literature. That is why, we are able to find through the innocent eyes of Huck Finn, a glimpse into the soul of Tom Sawyer and see an appalling relationship between Tom and Colonel Sellers. American Literature has the parallel stories of George Babbit and Willy Loman who, actually, have their origins, as Tom has, in the American myth of success. Huck, through his story demonstrates that heroism is possible without heroics. He also shows that it is not cheap; that it is not easy too. Huck's heroism lies in his uneasy and courageous struggle with the values of St. Petersburg.

If this is the case with the heroes of the American author, his heroines are definitely different from the male characters with regard to their mental make-up. Compared to his male characters, the female characters are very few and, to many critics, less convincing. But a close analysis of a novel like the **Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc** will reveal the unpromising hero motif accepted by Twain in the delineation of his protagonists. Joan of Arc is represented as a lonely child with a rare capability for intuition. But Roxana of **Pudd'n head Wilson** is a very strong character, who remains a pathetic woman whose sacrifices for the welfare of her only son are proved worthless. Ruth,

Alice and Laura in **The Gilded Age** are depicted as women who try to escape from the restraints of the American society of the nineteenth century.

Narayan's women characters offer wide variety. Bharati in **Waiting for the Mahatma** is the idealist and Rosie in **The Guide** is the romantic and Daisy in **The Painter of Signs** is the libertarian. Characters like Savitri in **The Dark Room**, Susheela in **The English Teacher**, Malathi in **The Bachelor of Arts**, and many others too are etched neatly and convincingly. The only difficult thing is that they do not have to do much. Narayan is more at home with the portrayal of men than women. But all of them are bold characters who function with a greater conviction than many of his male protagonists. Perhaps Savitri is an exception to this. In spite of Twain's ardent admiration for women and their capacities, he was not much inclined to depict the psychological or social problems confronted by women. But all those he has drawn in his fictional world are lifelike. Twain's own words give us a clear notion regarding the relevance of heroes in one's practical life, which in turn is reflected in his literary output. Mark Twain himself admits his own fascination for heroes thus:

> Our heroes are the men who do things which we recognize,

> with regret, and sometimes with a secret shame, that we cannot do. We find not much in ourselves to admire, we are always privately wanting to be like somebody else. If everybody were satisfied with himself, there would be no heroes. (qtd. in Regan 66)

Any work of Literature, however, embodies the wish fulfillment of the author. Twain, who was an earnest hero-worshipper tried his best to draw characters who emblematically embody the concept of a hero and heroism without the so called "heroics." Narayan has had nothing to complain of. In fact, he is quite satisfied with the kind of literary works he has contributed to Indian English Literature and to World Literature at large:

> All that I am able to confirm, after nearly thirty years of writings is that it has served my purpose admirably, of conveying unambiguously the thoughts and acts of a set of personalities, who flourish in a small town named Malgudi supposed to be located in a corner of South India. (**The Writerly Life** 468)

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Works by Mark Twain

Twain, Mark. **Following the Equator.** New York: Harper, 1925.

- - -. **The Gilded Age.** New York: Harper, 1896.

- - -. **Life on The Mississippi**. Boston: James R.Osgood & Co., 1882.

- - -. **Mark Twain: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Prince And The Pauper, Puddn'head Wilson, A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court.** New York: Exeter Books, 1986.

- - -. **Mark Twain's Letters**. New York: Harper, 1917.

- - -. "Mark Twain to Mrs. Fairbanks: Jan. 18, 1893." **Mark Twain to Mrs. Fairbanks**. Ed. Dixon Wector. New York: Marino, 1949.

- - -. **The Mysterious Stranger.** New York: Harper, 1916.

- - -. **Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc.** New York: Harper, 1897.

Works by R.K.Narayan

Narayan, R.K. **The Bachelor of Arts.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1985.

- - -. **The Dark Room.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1986.

- - -. **The English Teacher.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1985.

- - -. **The Financial Expert.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1999.

- - -. **The Guide.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1993.

- - -. **The Man -Eater of Malgudi.** Delhi: Hind, 1979.

- - -. **My Dateless Diary.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1964.

- - -. **My Days: A Memoir.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1975.

- - -. **The Painter of Signs.** London: Penguin, 1985.

- - -. **Swami and Friends.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1988.

- - -. **The Vendor of Sweets.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1981.

- - -. **Waiting for The Mahatma.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1984.

- - -. **The World of Nagaraj.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1990.

- - -. **The Writerly Life.** New Delhi: Penguin, 2001.

Secondary Sources

Works on Mark Twain

Adams, Richard P. "The Unity and Coherence of **Huckleberry Finn." The Nineteenth Century Novel.** Ed. Arnold Kettle. London: Heinemann, 1972. 283-301.

Baldanza, Frank. "The Structure of **Huckleberry Finn**." **The Nineteenth Century Novel**. 274- 282.

Blair, Walter. "Tom Sawyer." **Mark Twain: A Collection of Critical Essays**. Ed. Henry Nash Smith. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall. 64-82.

Breton, Maurice Le. "Mark Twain: An Appreciation." **Mark Twain: A Collection of Critical Essays**. 29-39.

Brooks, Van Wyck. **The Writer in America**. New York: Avon, 1964.

Carlyle, Thomas. **On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History**. London: Chapman and Hall, 1841.

Chase, Richard. **The American Novel and Its Tradition**. Ludhiana: Kalyani, 1973.

Cox, James M. "**A Connecticut Yankee**: The Machinery of Self- Preservation." **Mark Twain: A Collection of Critical Essays**. Ed. Henry Nash Smith. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963. 117- 129.

- - -. **Mark Twain: The Fate of Humour**. Princeton: New Jersey UP, 1974.

De Voto, Bernard. Introduction. **The Portable Mark Twain**. New York: Penguin, 1946. 10- 34.

- - -. **Mark Twain's America**. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1951.

- - -. **Mark Twain at Work**. Harvard: Harvard UP., 1942.

Fiedler, Leslie. "As Free As Any Cretur." **Mark Twain: A Collection of Critical Essays**. Ed. Henry Nash Smith. Englewood: Prentice Hall, 1963. 130- 139.

Foster, Richard. Introduction. **Six American Novels of the Nineteenth Century: An Introduction**. Ed. Richard Foster. Ludhiana: Liall, 1970. 3- 9.

Geist, Stanley. "Melville's Tragically Great Hero." **Herman Melville: The Tragic Vision and the Heroic Ideal**. Cambridge: Harvard UP,1939. 80- 98.

Gilman, William. "The Hero and the Heroic in American Literature: An Essay in Definitions." **Patterns of Commitment**. Ed. Marston La France. Toronto: Toronto UP., 1966.3- 17.

Gross, Theodore L. **The Heroic Ideal in American Literature**. New York: The Free Press, 1971.

Harris, Susan K. **Mark Twain's Escape From Time: A Study of Pattern and Images**. Columbia: Columbia UP., 1982.

Hook, Andrew. **American Literature: In Context III: 1865- 1900**. London: Methuen, 1983.

Ilyin, Vladimir. "How Fedya Came to be Called Tom." **Misha** July 1983: 19- 20.

Kar, Prafulla C. " Mark Twain in His Time." **Mark Twain: An Anthology of Recent Criticism**. Ed. Prafulla C. Kar. Delhi: Pencraft, 1992. 7- 16.

Kastely, James L. "The Ethics of Self- Interest: Narrative Logic in **Huckleberry Finn**." **Mark Twain: An Anthology of Recent Criticism**. 142- 166.

Leary, Lewis. "Mark Twain." **Six American Novelists of the Nineteenth Century: An Introduction**. Ed. Richard Foster. Ludhiana: Lyall, 1970. 118-154

Lewis, R.W.B. **The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century**. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1955.

Lynn, Kenneth. "Roughing It." **Mark Twain: A Collection of Critical Essays**. 40- 46.

Martin, Jay. **Harvests of Change: American Literature: 1865-1914**. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1966.

Paine, A.B. **Mark Twain: A Biography**. New York: Harper, 1912.

Ramaswami, S. "Mark Twain's **What is Man**: An Indian View." **Mark Twain and Nineteenth Century American Literature**. Ed. Nageswara Rao .E. Hyderabad: American Studies Research Centre, 1993. 27-35.

Regan, Robert. **Unpromising Heroes: Mark Twain and His Characters**. Los Angeles: California UP, 1966.

Robinson, Forrest G. "Social Play and Bad Faith in **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.**" **Mark Twain: An Anthology of Recent Criticism**. 104- 126.

- - -. "Patterns of Consciousness in **The Innocents Abroad.**" **Mark Twain: An Anthology of Recent Criticism**. 73- 89.

Rubin, Louis D. Jr. "Mark Twain: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer." **Landmarks of American Writing**. Ed. Henning Cohen. Voice of America Forum Lectures, 1970. 177-191.

Salomon, Roger B. **Twain and the Image of History**. New Harem: Yale University, 1961.

Smith, Henry Nash. **Mark Twain: The Development of a Writer**. Princeton: Princeton UP 1984.

- - -. **The American Novel.** Princeton: Princeton UP, 1967.

Stone, Albert E, Jr. "Mark Twain's **Joan of Arc**: The Child as Goddess." **On Mark Twain: The Best From American Literature**. Ed. Louis J. Budd and Edwin H. Candy. Durham: Duke University, 1987. 71-90.

Stonely, Peter. **Mark Twain and The Feminine Aesthetics**. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1982.

Trilling, Lionel. Introduction. **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**. Ed. Lionel Trilling. New York; Rinehart, 1948. 1-16.

Wagenknecht, Edward. **Cavalcade of the American Novel**. Calcutta: Oxford UP, 1969.

Works on R.K.Narayan

Biswal, Jayant K. **A Critical Study of The Novels of R.K.Narayan**. New Delhi: Nirmal, 1987.

Campbell, Joseph. **The Hero with a Thousand Faces**. 1949. London: Paladin, 1988.

Dhanañjaya. **Dasarūpa: A Treatise On Hindu Dramaturgy**. Trans. George C.O. Haas. New York: Columbia UP, 1912.

Greene, Graham. Introduction. **The Bachelor of Arts**. Mysore: Indian Thought, 1992.

Grover, Gurudayal. **Mark Twain: The Advetures of Huck Finn.** New Delhi: OUP, 1976.

Hariprasanna, A. **The World of Malgudi: A Study of R.K.Narayan's Novels.** New Delhi: Prestige, 1994.

Harrex, S.C. "R.K.Narayan: Malgudi Maestro." **The Fire and the Offering: The English Language Novel of India: 1935-1970.** Vol.2. Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1978. 8-41.

Holmstrom, Lakshmi. **The Novels of R.K.Narayan.** Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1973.

Iyengar, K.R.Srenivasa. **Indian Writing in English.** New Delhi: Sterling, 1983.

Kandaswami, S. "Vision and Design in R.K.Narayan's **World of Nagaraj**." **Indian English Fiction: 1980-1990.** Ed. Nilufer E. Baracha. Vilasarang: R.B.Publishing, 1994. 207-217.

Krishnaswami, Shantha. **The Woman in Indian Fiction in English, (1950-1980).** New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1984.

Mehta, P.P. **Indo-Anglian Fiction: An Assesment.** Baraily: n.p., 1968.

Mukherjee, Meenakshi. **The Twice-Born Fiction.** New Delhi: Heinemann, 1971.

Murti, Satyanarayana. **Kohinoor in the Crown: Critical Studies in Indian English Literature.** New Delhi: Sterling, 1987.

Nair, Pandit P. Gopalan. Ed. **Sreemat Bhagavat Gīta.** Kozhikode: P.K.Brothers, 1968.

Namputhiri, D.Sriman . ed. "Chāndogyopaniṣad." **Upaniṣad Sarvasvam.** Trichur: Samrat Publishers, 2003. 5.3

Nene, Gopal Sastri Ed. **Manusmriti.** Kashi Sanskrit ser. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan, 1970.

Raghavacharyalu, D.V.K. "Small-Scale Reflection on a Great House of Fiction: R.K.Narayan's Chronicles of Malgudi." **Perspective of Indian Fiction in English.** Ed. M.K. Naik. New Delhi; Abhinav Publications, 1985. 21-48.

Saxena, O.P. **Glimpses of Indo-English Fiction.** New Delhi: Jainsons Publications, 1985.

Shastri, Surendranath. **The Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama.** Varanasi: Chawkhamba Sanskrit Samsthan, 1961.

Sundaram, P.S. **R.K.Narayan.** New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1973.

Taranath, Rajiv. "The Average As The Positive: A Note On R.K. Narayan." **Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English.** Ed.M.K.Naik. Delhi:Macmillan, 1976. 307-319.

Trivedi, Harish. "Narayan, Narayan: Review of **The World Of Nagaraj**" **Times of India** May 13 1990: 4.

Viswanatha. **Sahityadarpana.** Ed. Acharya Krishnamohan Sastri. Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series. Varanasi: Chawkhamba Sanskrit Samsthan, 1985.

Walsh, William. **Indian Literature in English.** London: Longman, 1990.

- - -. **R.K.Narayan: A Critical Appreciation**. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1982.

- - -. "Sweet Mangoes and Malt Vinegar: The Novels of R.K.Narayan." **Indo-English Literature**. Ed. K.K.Sharma. Ghasiabad: Vimal, 1977. 76-94.

William, Haydn Moore. **Studies in Modern Indian Fiction in English**, Vol 2. Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1973.

CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN AND R. K. NARAYAN

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

By

P. M. Sakina

Department of English
University of Calicut
Kerala
March 2005

Works Consulted

Works by Mark Twain

Twain, Mark. **The American Claimant**. New York: Charles L. Webster and Co., 1892.

- - -. **Eves' Diary**. New York: Harper, 1906.

- - -. **Extracts From Adam's Diary**. New York: Harper, 1904.

- - -. **The Innocents Abroad or The New Pilgrim's Progress**. Hartford: American Publishing, 1869.

- - -. **The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg and Other Stories**. New York: Harper, 1900.

- - -. **Mark Twain's Autobiography**. New York: Harper, 1924.

- - -. **Mark Twain's Letters**. 2 vols. New York: Harper, 1917.

- - -. **Mark Twain's Note Book**. New York: Harper, 1935.

- - -. **Mark Twain's Sketches: New and Old**. Hartford: American Publishing, 1875.

- - -. **The £ 1,000,000 Bank Note and Other Stories**. New York: Charles L. Webster, 1885.

- - -. **The Stolen White Elephant etc**. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1882.

- - -. **Tom Sawyer Abroad, Tom Sawyer, Detective and Other Stories.** New York: Harper, 1896.

- - -. **A Tramp Abroad.** Hartford: American Publishing, 1880.

Works by R.K. Narayan

Narayan, R.K. **An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1968.

- - -. **Grandmother's Tale.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1992.

- - -. **A Horse and Two Goats.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1982.

- - -. **Lawley Road and Other Stories.** Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1982.

- - -. **Malgudi Days.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1986.

- - -. **Reluctant Guru.** New Delhi: Orient, 1974.

- - -. **Mr. Sampath.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1985.

- - -. **Talkative Man.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1983.

- - -. **A Tiger for Malgudi.** Mysore: Indian Thought, 1983.

- - -. **A Writer's Nightmare: Selected Essays 1958-1988.** New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1990.

Works on Mark Twain

Ade, George. **One Afternoon with Mark Twain.** Chicago: Mark Twain Society, 1939.

Anderson, Frederick. **Mark Twain: The Critical Heritage.** Ed. Frederick Anderson. London: Routledge, 1971.

Andrews, Kenneth R. **Nook Farm: Mark Twain's Hartford Circle.** Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1905.

Asselineu, Roger. **The Literary Reputation of Mark Twain.** Paris: Libraire Marcel Didier, 1954.

Bellamy, Gladys C. **Mark Twain as a Literary Artist.** Norman: University of Oklahama, 1950.

Benson, Ivan. **Mark Twain's Western Years.** Stanford UP, 1938.

Blair, Walter. **Mark Twain and Huck Finn.** Berkeley: California UP, 1960.

Berkove, Lawrence I. "A Difficult Case: W.D. Howell's Impression of Mark Twain." **Studies in Short Fiction** 4 (1994): 7-8.

Branch, Edgar M. **The Literary Apprenticeship of Mark Twain.** University of Illinois, 1950.

Brooks, Van Wyck. **The Ordeal of Mark Twain.** New York: Dutton, 1933.

Budd, Louis J. **Critical Essays on Mark Twain.** Ed. Louis J. Budd. Boston: Hall and Co., 1982.

- - -. **Mark Twain: Social Philosopher**. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1962.

Canby, Henry Seidel. **Turn West, Turn East: Mark Twain and Henry James**. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951.

Clemens, Clara. **My Father, Mark Twain**. New York: Harper, 1931.

Covici, Pascal Jr. **Mark Twain's Humour: An Image of the World**. Dallas: Southern Methodist UP, 1962.

De Voto, Bernard. "The Symbols of Despair." **Mark Twain: A Collection of Critical Essays**. Ed. Henry Nash Smith. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963. 42-56.

Egan, Michael. **Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn: Race, Class and Society**. London: Sussey UP, 1977.

Eluefarb, Sam. **The Escape Motif in the American Novel: Mark Twain to Richard Wright**. Ohio: Ohio State UP, 1972.

Ferguson, J. Delancey. **Mark Twain: Man and Legend**. Indianapolis: Bobbs Merril, 1943.

Fraiberg, Louis. **Psycho-analysis and American Literary Criterion**. Detroit: Wayne State University, 1960.

Geismar, Maxwell. **Mark Twain and the Three R's: Race, Religion, Revolution and Related Matters**. Ed. Maxwell Geizmar. Indianapolis: Bobbs, 1973.

Hemminghaus, Edgar H. **Mark Twain in Germany**. Colombia: Colombia University, 1939.

Hill, Alison Friesinger. "Getting to be Mark Twain." **The New York Times Book Review** 7.4 (1991): 22.

Howells, William Dean. **My Mark Twain.** Ed. Marilyn Austin Baldwin. Baton Rouge: Louisiana University, 1967.

Kaul, AN. **The American Vision: Actual and Ideal Society in Nineteenth Century Fiction.** New Haven: Yale UP, 1963.

Leary, Lewis. **A Casebook on Mark Twain's Wound.** New York: Crowell, 1962.

Long, E. Hudson. **Mark Twain Hand Book.** New York: Hendricks House, 1957.

Manning, Susan. "Literature and Society in Colonial America." **American Literature: The New Pelican Guide to English Literature.** Vol 9. London: Penguin, 1990. 3-26.

Maritain, Jacques. **The Rights of Man and Natural Law.** New York: Scribners, 1943.

Mottram, Eric. "Mark Twain." **American Literature : The New Pelican Guide to English Literature.** Ed. Boris Ford. Vol. 9. 166-212.

Pellowe, W.C.S. **Mark Twain: Pilgrim from Hannibal.** New York: Hobson Books, 1946.

Praz, Mario. **The Hero in Eclipse in Victorian Fiction.** London: Oxford UP, 1969.

Rourke, Constance. **American Humour.** New York: Harcourt, 1931.

Rowlette, Robert. **Twain's Pudd'nhead Wilson: The Development and Design**. Bowling Green: Ohio, n.p., 1971.

Smith, Henry Nash. **Mark Twain's Fable of Progress: Political and Economic Ideas in A Connecticut Yankee**. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1964.

Smith, Janet. **Mark Twain on the Damned Human Race**. Ed. Janet Smith. New York: Hill and Wang, 1962.

Tuckey, John S. **Mark Twain and Little Satan: The Writing of the Mysterious Stranger**. Westport: Green Wood, 1972.

Wagenknecht, Edward. **Mark Twain: The Man and his Work**. Yale: Yale UP, 1935.

Wecter, Dixon. **Sam Clemens of Hannibal**. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952.

Works on Narayan

Agnihotri, G.N. **Indian Life and Problems in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R.K. Narayan**. Meerut: Shalabh, 1984.

Alphonso, Karkala John B. "Symbolism in **The Financial Expert**." **Indian Writing Today**. 11 Jan -March. 1970: 14-18.

Bande, Usha. **Mothers and Mother Figures in Indo-English Literature**. Jalander: n.p. 1994.

Girla, Shiv K. **R.K. Narayan: His World and His Art**. Meerut: Saru, 1984.

Gokak, V.K. **English in India: Its Present and Future**. Bombay: Asia Publishing, 1964.

Gowda, Anniah. "The Comic Muse and R.K. Narayan." **Indian Fiction in English**. Ed. P. Mallikarjuna Rao. New Delhi: Atlantic, 1999.

Goyal, Bhagvat S. **R.K. Narayan: A Critical Spectrum**. Meerut: Shalabh, 1983.

Gupta, Balram G.S. **Studies in Indian Fiction in English**. Gulbarga: JIWE Publication, 1987.

Harrex, S.C. "R.K. Narayan's **Grateful to Life and Death**." **The Literary Criterion** (Winter 1968): 52-64.

Jha, Pashupati. "The Protector and Preserver: Mothers and Mother Figures in R.K. Narayan." **Mothers and Mother Figures in Indo-English Literature**. Ed. Usha Bande. Jalandar: A.B.S. Publications, 1994. 108-117.

Karanth, K.S. "How Deep is Western Influence on Indian Writers of Fiction?" **The Literary Criterion (Summer 1966)**: 7-8.

Kaul, A.N. "R.K. Narayan and the East-West Theme." **Considerations**. Ed. Meenakshi Mukherjee. New Delhi: Allied, 1977.

Kumar, Shiv K. "Some Indian Writers of English Fiction." **Modern Indian Languages**. Ed. Gokak. New Delhi: n.p., 1957.

Mehta, P.P. **Indo Anglian Fiction: An Assessment**. Bareily: n.d., 1968.

Mujeebuddin, Syed. "R.K. Narayan's **The Man-Eater of Malgudi**: Problematising the Nation." **Indian Fiction in English**. Ed. P. Mallikarjuna Rao and Vimala Rao. New Delhi: Atlantic, 1999. 72-83.

Naik, M.K. **Perspectives on Indian Fiction in English**. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1985.

- - -. **The Ironic Vision: A Study of the Fiction of R.K. Narayan**. New Delhi: Sterling, 1983.

Narasimhaiah, C.D. "R.K. Narayan's **The Guide** with a Note on the Sahitya Academy Award to the Novel." **The Literary Criterion**, 4.2, (1961): 50-51.

- - -. **The Swan and the Eagle**. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1969.

Parameswaran, Uma. **A Study of Representative Indo-English Novelists**. New Delhi: Vikas, 1976.

Patil, Z.N. **Style in Indian English Fiction: A Study in Politeness Strategies**. Delhi: Prestige, 1994.

Radhakrishnan, N. **Indo-Anglian Fiction: Major Trends and Themes**. Madras: Emerald, 1984.

Radhakrishnan, S. **The Principal Upanishads**. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974.

Raizada, Harish. **R.K. Narayan: A Critical Study on His Works**. New Delhi: Young Asia, 1969.

Ram, Atma. **Perspectives on R.K. Narayan**. Ghaziabad: Vimal, 1981.

Rao, Krishna A.V. **Indo-Anglian Novel and the Changing Tradition**. Mysore: Rao and Raghavan, 1972.

Sarma, Gobinda Prasad. **Nationalism in Indo-Anglian Fiction**. New Delhi: Sterling, 1978.

Sharpe, Patricia. "The Challenges to the Indian Writers Today." **Quest** 59 (1960): 31-39.

Shirwadkar, Meena. **Image of Woman in the Indo-Anglian Novel**. New Delhi: Sterling, 1979.

Sinari, Ramakant A. **The Structure of Indian Thought**. Delhi: Oxford University, 1984.

Singh, R.S. **Indian Novel in English**. New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1977.

Walsh, William. **A Manifold Voice**. London: Chatto and Windus, 1970.

- - -. **Commonwealth Literature**. Oxford: Oxford University, 1973.

Williams, Haydn Moore. **Indo-Anglian Literature, 1800-1970: A Survey**. Madras: Orient Longman, 1976.