Average and Unpromising Warriors

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Chapter 3

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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, even though 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 "\textit{dhisanta svabhava}" (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 \textit{lalita} (simple) and \textit{santa} (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 dhāra santha nature of
Raju is being converted into dhirodātta (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 destroy Merlin's tower. But he is finally caught and is forced to admit 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 up to 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
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 loyalty 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.