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# Mark Twain: The Reflection of American Civil War and the Spirit of the Postwar Period in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Mark Twain: Reflexe americké občanské války v tvorbě Marka Twaina  
(Dobrodružství Huckleberryho Finna)

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## **Poděkování**

Zde bych ráda poděkovala vedoucí své bakalářské práce PhDr. Alici Sukdolové, Ph.D. za výběr sekundární literatury, cenné rady a za všechnen čas, který mi věnovala při zpracování práce.

## **Anotace**

Hlavním předmětem zkoumání bakalářské práce bude literární analýza Twainova románu Dobrodružství Huckleberryho Finna jako odrazu společenské atmosféry americké občanské války a období rekonstrukce amerického Jihu. Práce se v úvodu soustředí nejprve na charakteristiku poválečného období rekonstrukce a na společenskou situaci amerického Jihu v období konce občanské války Jihu proti Severu. Dále představí Marka Twaina v kontextu prózy amerického Jihu v období druhé poloviny 19. století a pokusí se zhodnotit jeho význam jako jednoho z prvních autorů moderní americké literatury s ohledem na jeho styl, vypravěčské umění a na vliv regionálního kontextu (tzv. tall tale). Motivy historického kontextu a realistické pojetí poválečné situace v regionu státu Missouri pak budou v rámci literární analýzy předmětem zkoumání bakalářské práce zejména v Twainově románu Dobrodružství Huckleberryho Finna (téma lidské rovnoprávnosti, otroctví a vnitřní svobody jednotlivce). Jádrem práce bude interpretační analýza románu s odkazem na úlohu společenské satiry a tragikomických prvků románu.

## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to analyze Mark Twain's novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as a reflection of social attitudes during the American Civil War and the period of reconstruction in the American South. The first part of the thesis will focus on the characteristics of the postwar Reconstruction period and the social atmosphere of the South at the end of the Civil War. Secondly, the thesis will introduce Mark Twain in the context of Southern prose of the second half of the 19th century and evaluate the significance of Mark Twain as one of the first authors of modern American literature regarding his style, narrative, and inspiration by regional context (so-called tall tale). The motifs of the historical context and a realistic depiction of the postwar period in the Missouri region will be the object of the thesis analysis, especially in Twain's novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, concentrating on themes of equality, slavery, and inner freedom of an individual. The core of the thesis will focus on the interpretative analysis of the role of satire and tragicomic elements in the novel.

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# 1. Introduction

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is one of the first major American novels written in vernacular English, set on the Mississippi River and its shorelines, depicting the real life of people living in the South. This thesis aims to analyze Mark Twain's portrayal of postwar Southern society in *Huckleberry Finn* and capture his use of satire attacking the society's defectiveness.

The first part of the thesis will shortly characterize the social aspects of the Civil War and the postwar Southern society, concentrating mainly on whites' portrayal and treatment of African Americans during and after the war. Whites' hunger for supremacy and their fear of African Americans will be depicted in the Ku Klux Klan and minstrel shows, reflecting white man's feelings about blacks.

The following part will introduce Mark Twain as a realist writer and shortly outline his life and literary work. Mark Twain's revolutionary dialect writing, literary style, narrative, and inspiration by tall tales will be described in the context of the Local Color regionalism, comparing his style with the style of his Local Color contemporaries.

The second part of the thesis will analyze *Huckleberry Finn's* reflection of Southern society, examine the novel's characters for their racist behavior and convictions, and distinguish different perspectives of freedom for both whites and freedmen.

The core of the thesis will analyze Twain's satire and humor in *Huckleberry Finn*, decoding the deeper meaning behind his humor, attacking the Southern society in its religious hypocrisy, slavery mindset, and stereotypes, as well as mocking romantic literature for its false depiction of the world.

## 2. Society and the American Civil War

The racial stereotypes and discrimination were long present in American society, way earlier than the Civil War began. Such issues prevailed and sustained even through the Reconstruction Era and have influenced American society to this day.

### 2.1 Civil War Society

The course of the war and the Union's approach to African Americans already determined the future development of the society. During the war, the Union was unwilling to use African Americans in combat as much as the Confederacy was. Indeed, black soldiers were hired to serve in the army; however, they only performed second-rate and non-military tasks, which only helped the white soldiers to fight. African American soldiers adapted to work mainly as shoemakers, cooks, ditch diggers, and launderers. As the war was coming to its end, both the Confederacy and the Union realized they need to use African American soldiers as a military force.<sup>1</sup>

With the oncoming emancipation, the Northerners began to worry. They were mainly concerned about the migration of African Americans to the northern region. Such migration might Northerners cost their jobs and pose new job competition. However, the concern declined after the emancipation was signed on January 1, 1863. At that point, the Union's aim had become to put an end to slavery. African Americans began to form their own regiments under the command of white commanders. Nonetheless, the Confederacy did not allow the black soldiers to join the front liners as they believed blacks to be cowards to the core and, therefore, unable to fight. Blacks fighting for the Northern army were forced to constantly face discrimination from their white counterparts and constant white anti-immigrant standpoint.<sup>2</sup>

The war also largely influenced both Northern and Southern economics. Due to Norths' great economically developed industry, the war did not have such a disastrous impact on its economic welfare as it had on the South. It is no surprise that the South was in poor economic condition even before the war began. During the war, the

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<sup>1</sup> Trevino, 2009, p. 44

<sup>2</sup> Trevino, 2009, p. 44-45



Southern families suffered, unable to obtain food and necessities such as clothes and medicine. Such conditions even strengthened the already present resentment toward the Northerners. Many wealthy Southern planters refused to plant the food that was needed. Instead, they chose to put their resources into more profitable businesses rather than support the Confederacy. At the end of the war, there was no doubt that the newly reunited United States will have to deal with the problem of blending races, social classes, and different economies.<sup>3</sup>

## **2.2 Social Reconstruction of the South**

The Reconstruction attempted to reunify the nation raptured by the Civil War. The primary task of the Reconstruction was to integrate African Americans into society the new united society. The former slaves were supposed to build their new lives in highly hostile conditions. Society did not see African Americans as equals, regardless of the Emancipation Proclamation. Social prejudice and racism shut down all the social and political efforts to ease freedmen's integration into the white society. And thus, Reconstruction carried a spirit of Civil War and even prewar carved mindsets of white man's supremacy.<sup>4</sup>

Southerners had a hard time accepting the emancipation of their slaves. Those who accepted them as freemen did see the African Americans primarily as inferior citizens of the labor class. Most of the Southerners still treated their former slaves as servants regardless of the proclamation.<sup>5</sup> Emancipation declared slaves free but did not put any precautions or plans to provide them with social and political security. The Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves but did not make them equal to whites.

Southerners were terrified by the idea of racial equality. They assumed the "Negro Rule" would occur if the white Southerners did not stay in high political and social posts. African American public schools, run mainly by northern teachers, were met with Southerners' resentment. Southerners believed blacks were naturally incapable of performing mundane tasks and thus were unsuitable to become rightful citizens.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Trevino, 2009, p. 46

<sup>4</sup> Trevino, 2009, p. 47

<sup>5</sup> Trevino, 2009, p. 48

<sup>6</sup> Trevino, 2009, p. 49

The newly freed African Americans were overwhelmed with feelings of confusion, fear, as well as joy, and hope. Naturally, they aimed to obtain a social position as far from the slavery status as possible. Many freed African Americans wanted to rejoin their families and achieve complete economic independence. To achieve it, they sought to get their own farms, land as well as proper education. Many of them continued to work on farms with their former owners, executing the same tasks they did before the Emancipation. Some freedmen refused to live in organized living spaces and sign harsh labor contracts demanded from the Conservative Southern employers. Soon enough, African Americans realized the promised idea of political, economic, and social equality and freedom was a lie. Meanwhile, white Southerners attempted to do quite the opposite, employing them in positions as close to slavery as possible.<sup>7</sup>

As much as the Southerners feared the potential educated "black barbarians," they were as fearful of their "Yankee" teachers embedding a sense of equality in freedmen's minds and threatening whites' position in the society. As white supremacy was endangered, whites created secret societies to ensure their rights stay intact. One of them was the infamous Ku Klux Klan (KKK) which, like many other secret societies, used violence to keep former slaves "in the place they belong."<sup>8</sup>

### **2.2.1 The Ku Klux Klan**

The Ku Klux Klan, also known as the Invisible Empire, was founded by a group of Confederate veterans in 1866, Tennessee. KKK quickly spread throughout the South, gaining a high political and social role in the society. They aimed to keep and defend the white supremacy against the freedmen, whom they considered undeserving of righteous treatment or equality with whites. The KKK members spread many lies and common stereotypes of African Americans to get whites' support. They violently prosecuted not only the African Americans but also the Northern Republicans and Southern freedmen supporters. Riding horses at night, dressed in long white robes with pointed hoods, they burnt houses and beaten their victims. The KKK members wished to rob African Americans of their promised rights and keep them as low in the social hierarchy as possible. Local law enforcement did not make any effort to stop their

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<sup>7</sup> Trevino, 2009, p. 49-50

<sup>8</sup> Trevino, 2009, p. 49

activities, and neither did the public. In 1870, as Congress passed a series of Force Bills "against illegal armed organizations," hundreds of clan members were arrested, and the organization almost dissolved. However, the clan never dissolved entirely and is still present in today's society.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.3 Minstrel Shows

The minstrel shows became popular in the 1830s. They remained until the beginning of the twentieth century, usually involving a small group of white men painted in blackface makeup, playing an instrument such as banjo or a tambourine, imitating black humor, speech, and music.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the racist gibes presented in the blackface minstrelsy, it had some positive aspects as well, one of them being a depiction of white men's perception of blacks. Being black was somehow appealing as well as threatening to white men. In the minstrel shows, the depiction of lower-class white men and black men was oddly similar, as Mark Twain pointed out in his work. Such similarity and fascination by blacks was mostly hidden behind the racist context of the show.<sup>11</sup>

Blackface minstrelsy tried to deny any similarity between whites and blacks. The racist jokes and acts perceived slavery as highly entertaining, natural, and rightful. Blacks were portrayed as dirty frauds and idiots. At the time, minstrel shows were a part of the entertainment, reflecting white working-class men's hostility towards black men.<sup>12</sup>

The minstrel shows were mocking the black men to ground white men's upper position in society. White working-class men were insecure about their status of whiteness. They feared becoming slaves to society as black men. As the industrial revolution began, the work conditions for white working-class men were terrible and steadily worsening, putting men into a vulnerable position, threatening their independence and livelihood. Such men were termed as 'wage slaves' and therefore were getting closer to the position of black slaves. Naturally, the white wage working

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<sup>9</sup> Trevino, 2009, p. 50

<sup>10</sup> Lott, 2003, p. 129-130

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Lott, 2003, p. 130-131

men started to worry about their status in society. Blackface minstrelsy was founded based on such social fears.<sup>13</sup>

Society wanted to keep white people in a superior position, making blacks somehow similar to them but never be like them. Thinking of blacks and whites as equals threatened white supremacy. The colonial mentality, strengthened by whites' anxiety, established a need to preserve blacks in a position of difference, doing so through blackface acts. Twain dealt with the American dilemma by boldly displaying it and therefore creating obvious criticism of it. He captured all the feelings of insecurity, envy, jealousy, and a fascination that white people felt for blacks. In *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain exploits racism in order to address the issue and fight against it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Lott, 2003, p. 130-131

<sup>14</sup> Lott, 2003, p. 140-141

### 3. Mark Twain and Local Color

Mark Twain was a Missouri born novelist, humorist, journalist, lecturer, and one of the most influential American realist writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most known for his novels *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

As a representative of the 19th century American prose, Mark Twain wrote various types of realistic fiction. Twain wrote in a style of sentimental realism, local color realism, social realism, and naturalism throughout his life. However, one of Twain's most dominant modes of fiction was a local color movement. Twain responded to the readers of the time craving to experience regional peculiarities, publishing the sketch *Old Times on the Mississippi*, depicting the ideal antebellum South. Later in his career, Twain switched from sentimental fiction to social realism, depicting current social problems and possible solutions. Such shift in his fiction is noticeable comparing sentimental *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and somewhat darker *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Unlike *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn* does not depict the past in idealized nostalgia or provides a happy ending. In one of his last works, Twain touches upon literary naturalism in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.<sup>15</sup> Despite the variety of fiction included in Twain's work, Twain found his inspiration mostly in local color realism and tall tales.

#### 3.1 Mark Twain's Life and Work

Mark Twain was born Samuel Langhorne Clemens on November 30, 1835, in Florida, Missouri as a sixth child of seven children. At age 4, he and his family moved into a town on the banks of the Mississippi River, Hannibal. Twain's family owned a few household slaves, and thus, from his early childhood, Twain had a chance to get acquainted with tall tales and racial issues. At age 11, his father died, forcing Twain to leave school and work as a printer's apprentice for the local newspaper. Such job allowed him to read the newspaper while working and sparked his interest in journalism.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 480-485

<sup>16</sup> A Life Lived in a Rapidly Changing World: Samuel L. Clemens, 1835-1910. The Mark Twain House & Museum. Retrieved June 12, 2021, from <https://marktwainhouse.org/about/mark-twain/biography/>

After his eighteenth birthday, Twain set himself in New York City and Philadelphia, where he wrote his first successful articles while working for several newspapers. By 1857, he had returned to Hannibal and took a career as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River. However, the Civil War's oncoming in 1861 stopped the river traffic, and Twain had to end his pilot career. Instead, Twain joined a Confederate volunteer unit. He left only two weeks after joining and followed his brother, Orion, to the Nevada Territory in the hope of getting rich during Nevada's silver rush.<sup>17</sup>

In 1861, after Twain's travels across the frontier, he settled himself in Virginia City, Nevada, where he worked as a journalist. Twain became an editor of the *Territorial Enterprise* newspaper and began writing under his pseudonym 'Mark Twain,' which stemmed from the times working as a Mississippi steamboat pilot. The meaning of the pseudonym is 'two fathoms,' which represents the depth of the river safe for a steamboat to pass. Before becoming a journalist, he also worked as a minor and got more familiar with vernacular and tall tales.<sup>18</sup>

In 1864, Mark Twain moved to San Francisco, where he wrote for *Californian* and started writing his first tall tales. There he met another storyteller and journalist, Bret Harte. However, Harte's work was more popular than Twain's. Harte wrote stories only in standard English, used colloquial speech only in dialogues, and did not share Twain's attraction to tall tales and vernacular.<sup>19</sup>

In Twain's first successful publication called *Jim Smiley and his Jumping Frog* (1865), Twain used characteristic features of a tall tale. After publishing the short story, Twain's popularity allowed him to establish himself as a writer and a stage performer.<sup>20</sup> In his later publication, *Roughing It* (1872), he portrayed his travels across Nevada Territory. In addition, *Roughing It* expressed his fascination with tall tales, depicting a story of a missionary and his wife being eaten by cannibals.<sup>21</sup> Twain's travel writing

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<sup>17</sup> A Life Lived in a Rapidly Changing World: Samuel L. Clemens, 1835-1910. The Mark Twain House & Museum. Retrieved June 12, 2021, from <https://marktwainhouse.org/about/mark-twain/biography/>

<sup>18</sup> Quinn, 2016, p. 119 - 120

<sup>19</sup> Quinn, 2016, p. 120

<sup>20</sup> A Life Lived in a Rapidly Changing World: Samuel L. Clemens, 1835-1910. The Mark Twain House & Museum. Retrieved June 12, 2021, from <https://marktwainhouse.org/about/mark-twain/biography/>

<sup>21</sup> Quinn, 2016, p. 119 - 120

bloomed as he was hired by *Alta California* and continued to realize his travel writings in the East, signing up for a steamship tour in Europe.<sup>22</sup>

In Twain's later works, the features of a tall tale seem to diminish, but they never disappeared completely. His subsequent work, *Innocent Abroad* (1869), displays features of journalism. Twain was instructed to write a series of letters describing his steamboat tour to Europe. In those ironic letters created for the *Alta California*, *New York Tribune*, and *Herald* newspaper, Twain mocked the European mentality. He described Europe from the perspective of a xenophobic American, perceiving Europe as undemocratic and degraded land.<sup>23</sup>

By 1873, Twain's literary interest has changed, and he began to concentrate on social realism newly. Such change was apparent in a novel he co-wrote with Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* (1873), where he attacked political corruption and the American obsession with money.<sup>24</sup> After publishing *The Gilded Age*, his first satirical novel, he decided not to publish any more satirical content. He looked for inspiration in his childhood adventures on the Mississippi River. His first book from the 'Mississippi era' was called *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). Aside from *Tom Sawyer*, Twain's childhood on the Mississippi was realistically reflected in his memoir *Life on the Mississippi* (1883).<sup>25</sup>

In 1884, Twain published *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, instantly becoming one of his most favorable novels. The novel captured the local dialect and lifestyle of people living alongside the Mississippi riverbank.<sup>26</sup> Simultaneously, *Huckleberry Finn* attacks the institution of slavery and the failure of the Reconstruction, addressing the poor treatment of African Americans.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> A Life Lived in a Rapidly Changing World: Samuel L. Clemens, 1835-1910. The Mark Twain House & Museum. Retrieved June 12, 2021, from <https://marktwainhouse.org/about/mark-twain/biography/>

<sup>23</sup> Quinn, 2016, p. 121

<sup>24</sup> A Life Lived in a Rapidly Changing World: Samuel L. Clemens, 1835-1910. The Mark Twain House & Museum. Retrieved June 12, 2021, from <https://marktwainhouse.org/about/mark-twain/biography/>

<sup>25</sup> Quinn, 2016, p. 122

<sup>26</sup> Quinn, 2016, p. 122-123

<sup>27</sup> A Life Lived in a Rapidly Changing World: Samuel L. Clemens, 1835-1910. The Mark Twain House & Museum. Retrieved June 12, 2021, from <https://marktwainhouse.org/about/mark-twain/biography/>

Twain's inclination towards social criticism is manifested in his novels *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881) and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), where Twain concentrates on class relations and social oppression.<sup>28</sup>

As Twain experiences financial bankrupt in 1894, his literary work gets darker. Due to Twain's debts, he and his family are forced to move to Europe. After Twain's publishing company fails, Twain goes on a worldwide lecture tour to provide for his family. His travels throughout the world inspired his next naturalistic novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), and social commentary *Following the Equator* (1897). Finally, in 1900, Twain's economic situation stabilized, allowing Twain to return to the United States, where he remained until his death in 1910.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.2 Mark Twain's Style

Mark Twain's style is one of the most influential legacies in American culture and literature. However, it is crucial to mention that Twain's style is vibrant and different in every book, making his style highly flexible. For example, the English used in his book *The Prince and the Pauper* is very different from the Missouri slang he used in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Although both are characteristic of Mark Twain and deal with many of the same themes, topics, and concerns, they are very different stylistically. The same applies to his books *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, and *Those Extraordinary Twins*.<sup>30</sup>

Mark Twain was hardly interested in literary theory beyond the necessary practicalities concerning his writing. However, he spent much time choosing the right words to use in his writings. Twain was well acquainted with the slang and jargon of many professions and thus mastered his vocabulary through reading and listening to thousands of people from various social backgrounds. By doing so, he became an expert on "sentencing" them without being explicitly connected to their background. Such skill made him a revolutionist in the language of fiction.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> A Life Lived in a Rapidly Changing World: Samuel L. Clemens, 1835-1910. The Mark Twain House & Museum. Retrieved June 12, 2021, from <https://marktwainhouse.org/about/mark-twain/biography/>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 574-576

<sup>31</sup> Gibson, 1978, p. 4-5, 13



Twain's variety in language also stems from the significant number of books he had a chance to read, absorbing many writers' styles. Spending months on the Mississippi river traveling<sup>32</sup> allowed him to learn a lot about language variation and create his literary style. He paid attention to the language of African Americans, miners, and tradesmen and thus adopted the regional vernacular as well as the standard literary language. Such experience with language inspired him to make it the center of his writings.<sup>33</sup>

Twain was particularly attracted to the cacophonical and musical properties of the words. Such interest presented itself in his love for the spoken word on stage, where he was reading out literary works and burlesquing the style of many writers. Twain's burlesquing skills were efficient when attracting the nineteenth-century readers obsessed with burlesque. However, it was Twain's grasp of vernacular that made him stand out from the other writers. His literary talent lies in the ability to put spoken colloquial words and phrases onto the paper and do so with astonishing accuracy that no one else could present.<sup>34</sup>

### **3.2.1 Specifics of Twain's Style and Narrative**

Twain's literary style includes many features and new inventions specific to his writings. His biggest concern was to preserve the sense of the spoken word as accurately as possible and thus create an illusion of speech. Twain used many means such as dashes, square brackets, and rows of dots to alternate the story to his needs. In addition, he imposed his own punctuation rules to play with the power of pause in the writings. For accent and emphasis, Twain used calculated oral effects, such as italicizing words in dialogue. These components allowed Twain to create the right rhythm, emphasis, and sense, making the storyline alive.<sup>35</sup>

Twain had also used a specific sentence structure. The sentences often repeat the same words, phrases, or clauses, with the excessive and repetitive use of the conjunction "and." Aside from repetitive use of "and's," he also frequently uses "for's" and "then's" in his simple dialogues. Dialogues are usually short and consist of verbs and

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<sup>32</sup> Gibson, 1978, p. 6

<sup>33</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 324-325

<sup>34</sup> Gibson, 1978, p. 5, 7

<sup>35</sup> Gibson, 1978, p. 20-21

nouns predominantly. Adjectives are rarely used but well-chosen to capture the specific meaning. Such structure is prominent throughout the whole story of *Huckleberry Finn*. Twain manipulated word classes such as compounds, adjectives, and participles to create his own humorous and colorful meanings and achieve the rhetorical effect.<sup>36</sup> His vernacular language is characterized by the constant use of double negative and grammar errors accompanied by confusion of verb tenses.<sup>37</sup> He often created neologism that would fit perfectly to his writings. He was also quite experimental with using superlatives such as "foolishest," "carelessest," "blessedest," "splendidest" and many more.

Twain developed *Huck Finn's* vernacular for years, adjusting his language according to the dialect in Huck's time and place. He also aimed to differentiate the other characters based on their dialects, creating different pronunciations and grammatical inflections for each character. Twain worked hard to capture the Missouri dialect as accurately as possible by working with a variety of spellings.<sup>38</sup>

Through *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain completely rebuilds the language system and creates a new literary form. By creating the vernacular, he exposed English in its naked form.<sup>39</sup> Such writing style was uncommon, considering other writers did not display such vulgarity and honest depiction of the local speech and life. Twain's unique literary style depicted real people and their authentic way of life.<sup>40</sup>

### **3.2.2 Twain's Inspiration: Tall Tales**

Mark Twain's narrative and humor were deeply inspired by tall tales. Southwestern humor gained popularity in the middle of the nineteenth century due to its reflection of the social class distinction issues and the transformation of the frontier into a new "civilization." The significant inspiration for such humor was a tradition of folk tales and folk mythology created on the frontier during the migration to the Wild West. The boomers from the East were confronted with an inhospitable western landscape leading them to create storytelling capturing the shock and terror of

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<sup>36</sup> Gibson, 1978, p. 23, 25

<sup>37</sup> Cox, 1966, p. 182

<sup>38</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 10-11

<sup>39</sup> Cox, 1966, p. 168-169

<sup>40</sup> Jehlen, 2003, p. 93

migrating to the wilderness. Such folk stories presented heroes with incredible strength and talent, which became even grander in the heroes' bragging. The tall tales are deceitful in their core and encourage the reader to be skeptical and find pleasure in finding deceptions.<sup>41</sup>

The tall talk is full of jokes, ambiguous meanings, and irony, using absurd or comical metaphors often escalating into hyperboles. They are characteristic of its extensive use of quantifiers. In a speech, parts of fiction and reality are mixed, making it uneasy for the listener to recognize the difference between truth and lie. As a result, tall talk can describe relatively small and manageable tasks as nearly impossible to perform. The tall tale attempts to convey the truth; however, doing so by exaggerating and dramatizing the actual events and, hence creating a lie. Although the tall tale did not originate in America, its full potential was mostly realized there, using humor as psychological support and help for the settlers surviving and adapting to the harsh reality.<sup>42</sup>

Twain's interest in the vernacular was deeply rooted in the Southwest tall tales. Tall tales often formed a frame story with a clear distinction between the formal speaker and the vernacular character. Such contrast allowed the tall tale to create a dramatic effect. The narrator of the tall tale is often an upper-class gentleman, and the vernacular dialect-speaking character is a low white Democrat countryman. This tall tale structure was characteristic for most English and American novelists of the early nineteenth century, especially local colorists.<sup>43</sup>

### **3.3 Local Color**

Twain's style and taste for vernacular stems from authors using framed dialect. Those authors were part of the local color movement, depicting peculiarities and dialects of inhabitants coming from specific regions. Twain was a local colorist himself and managed to free the regions' unique vernacular, depicting regional lives with astonishing accuracy.

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<sup>41</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 560-561

<sup>42</sup> Quinn, 2016, p. 118 - 119

<sup>43</sup> Gibson, 1978, p. 29

Local color fiction is characterized by its emphasis on the area and dialect of its setting, preserving the peculiar landscape, customs, and vernacular of the characters in their original form. This approach distinguished local colorists from authors writing in the standardized cultural language. The Local Color authors were often influenced by the earlier Down East humorists and the traditional tall tales of the frontier.<sup>44</sup>

The local color was predominantly represented in sketches. Before the Civil War, sketches mainly concerned traveling. However, after the war, when America's economic, political and social situation was poor, sketches started to depict the "perfect" antebellum South. Such literature supported the post-war political movements fighting for the previous decentralized government instead of the centralized one.<sup>45</sup>

One of the local color writers is Joel Chandler Harris (1845 – 1908), a journalist of the *New South* newspaper. His work was inspired by the black folklore of Georgia. In his book series *Uncle Remus stories*, Harris recreates the image of African Americans shaped by their dialects and storytelling tradition.<sup>46</sup> Harris' folktales deeply motivated Twain, mainly in creating the dialect of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Twain was inspired by his effort to capture the language of African Americans in particular regions as accurately as possible.<sup>47</sup>

Another local colorist is Harriet Beecher Stowe, a passionate abolitionist known as an author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). A regionalist, Sarah Orne Jewett (1849 – 1909), is an author of numerous tales, sketches, and novels about her native Maine. Other local color writers are Mary Wilkins Freeman (1852 – 1930) and Kate Chopin (1850 - 1904), who are considered early feminist writers.<sup>48</sup>

The southwestern humorists such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Bret Harte, Mary E Wilkins Freeman, Josh Billings, Sarah Orne Jewett, Artemus Ward, Johnson J. Hooper,

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<sup>44</sup> Local color. Oxford Reference. Retrieved 11 Jun. 2021, from <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100111333>.

<sup>45</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 480-485

<sup>46</sup> Quinn, 2016, p. 123

<sup>47</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 253

<sup>48</sup> Quinn, 2016, p. 123

Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, Thomas Bangs Thorpe, and V. Nasby were also local colorists, writing their dialect humor framed by a standard literary narrative.<sup>49</sup>

The dialect used by mid-nineteen-century local colorists played a significant role in Twain's literary work. Some local color writers used "low style" dialect to denigrate characters, while others used slang and vernacular to display class and regional dialects. One of the writers experimenting with the dialect of the characters was James Russell Lowell. In his *Biglow Papers*, where he opposed Mexican American War, he used the characters to depict fundamental political ideas using "low style" dialect. Similarly, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe uses comic slang to capture the lower-class origin of the characters and thus uses dialect to depict moral class hierarchy.<sup>50</sup>

On the other hand, local color writers often depicted dialect-speaking characters as kind-hearted people. This behavior is present in Bret Harte's book *The Luck of Roaring Camp* or Stowe's *Life Among the Lowly*. In the late nineteenth century, dialect became a tool to capture the regional peculiarities and thus improved the general perception of dialect. Nevertheless, the dialect is still closed in the frame narrative. A typical example of such approach is Joel Chandler Harris' *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*. Harris collected the folktales of African Americans and proceeded to present them to the white audience. However, to do so, he created a typical plantation black man telling his tales to a white boy whose accent Harris deformed into standard English. Thus, Harris' framed use of dialect continues to condescend. As Camfield points out, "Unless the frame disappears or is set up to cast doubt back on the frame narrator's authority, dialect supports, rather than bridges, class distinctions."<sup>51</sup>

Local color writers often used "eye dialect," spelling the words in ways that leave a reader clueless about the word's pronunciation. Dialect writing forced the reader to use his imagination in order to be able to read the story. In *Sut Lovingood Yarns*, George Washington Harris used a dialect forcing the reader to learn a whole new set of spelling and pronunciation. By doing so, Harris challenges readers' assumed superiority of his

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<sup>49</sup> Cox, 1966, p. 167

<sup>50</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 163-165

<sup>51</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 165-166

"standard" dialect. It could have been George Washington Harris who inspired Twain to reduce the frame dialect and later free the dialect altogether.<sup>52</sup>

In *Huck Finn*, Twain omitted the frame narrative completely and provided the character with total freedom of expression. As Twain let the vernacular characters speak for themselves, he became the most influential late-nineteenth-century writer.<sup>53</sup>

Apart from tall tales, Twain also had another source for creating his vernacular characters, Christy's minstrel shows. In such shows, blackface musicians talked in a broad black dialect, while the interlocutors of the show used a strictly grammatical form of speech to represent the flawless white society. For Mark Twain, the minstrel shows' vernacular humor of his youth was still popular with the readers.<sup>54</sup> Aside from minstrel shows, Twain also adopted his unique style and humor from Down East humorists.

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<sup>52</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 166-167

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Gibson, 1978, p. 30-31

## 4. Analysis of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

### 4.1 Introduction to *Huckleberry Finn*

Only a month after publishing Mark Twain's novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the book was banned by the committee of the Concord public library. The reason for such action was the novel's coarse language unsuitable for young readers, possibly undermining their moral codes. According to the Concord critics, the book was too rough, raw and featured a hero who was a liar and a thief. Nevertheless, the *Huckleberry Finn* later became the American classic, necessary for every child to read. The book was praised for its disregard for elegance and its unique local dialectic narration. Such writing style was uncommon, considering other writers did not display such vulgarity and honest depiction of the local speech and life presented by Twain.<sup>55</sup>

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are controversial even today. This time, for its portrait of slavery in Jim's character. The entire novel is displaying disharmony in nineteenth-century America, addressing the social contradictions inside the American culture. However, such message is a bit blurred in the contradictory nature of the book itself. Therefore, it might be failing to address the presented issues coherently enough for the reader to notice. *Huckleberry Finn* represents an ideal image of individual freedom. Twain depicts the conflict between this ideal, an indispensable part of America, and the nation's simultaneous tolerance of slavery. The tolerance of slavery was adjusted after the legal emancipation of slaves after the Civil War. However, the efforts for achieving total freedom have been impaired by the era of Reconstruction. The government failed to establish the proper conditions for successful emancipation. This mistake resulted in former slaves returning to their former duties. *Huckleberry Finn* concentrates on the issue of slavery itself as well as on the dilemma of the Reconstruction.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Jehlen, 2003, p. 93

<sup>56</sup> Jehlen, 2003, p. 96-97

## 4.2 *Huckleberry Finn* and the Mind of the Postwar South

In *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain depicts the race relations between the white Southerners and the freedmen of the post-war period. Twain does not address the issue directly but manages to capture the society through the lenses of the antebellum Old South.

Aside from racial issues, Huck and Jim's adventure depicts the ideal image of freedom. The novel presents the concept of freedom from vastly different perspectives and makes an important point; freedom for freedmen is not the same as freedom for whites. Whites were terrified to liberate African Americans since their freedom would pose a risk of racial equality and thus threaten white supremacy. Huck and Jim's journey on the Mississippi River captures both sides of this battle for freedom.

At the beginning of the novel, freedom presents itself as a single concept. As Huck runs from his Pap, Jim runs from being sold to a plantation down the river. Both strive for a place that would not restrain or endanger them. Finally, Huck and Jim unite on Jackson Island, where they enjoy a short time of bliss. However, their differences in the conception of freedom become evident soon after leaving the island and proceeding down the Mississippi River. According to Jim, a wrecked steamboat encountered on their path down the river seemed better left alone. However, in the eyes of Huck, the wrecked steamboat called for an adventure:

I wanted to get aboard of her and slink around a little, and see what there was there.

So I says:

"Le's land on her, Jim."

But Jim was dead against it at first. He says:

"I doan' want to go fool'n 'long er no wrack. We's doin' blame' well, en we better let blame' well alone, as de good book says. Like as not dey's a watchman on dat wrack."

"Watchman your grandmother," I says;<sup>57</sup>

Despite Jim's objections, Huck persuaded Jim to head onto the wreck where they happen to meet two robbers trying to silence their partner. In the meantime, the raft

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<sup>57</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 57-58



floats away, leaving Huck and Jim to use the robbers' boat to get away from the wreck. The stop at the steamboat might threaten Jim's life. However, Huck cannot miss any adventure. Jim's inability to defend his own decision indicates his willingness to go along with anything Huck plans. Jim is aware of many of Huck's crazy ideas but always gives in to them. He is not doing so for no reason. Instead, he is aware of Huck's superiority and power to take away his freedom. Although Huck is not aware of such power, his perpetual conviction to report him endangers Jim and puts him at the mercy of Huck's conscience. Nonetheless, the adventure at the steamboat is the first sign of Jim and Huck's conflicting ideas of freedom, and their unavoidable clash as Huck's freedom enslaves Jim. For Huck, freedom is a society without restrictions, while Jim's freedom is being a rightful member of society.

Jim is a perfect representative of the newly "freed" African Americans, attempting to build their new lives among the whites. Most whites refused to treat freedmen any different from the pre-Emancipation era, which forced the freedmen to behave as if they were still slaves. The prevailing mindset of white supremacy enslaves the freedmen once again, spinning them in a vicious cycle of perpetual "liberation." Such dynamic is depicted in a manner that Jim speaks to whites.

Whenever Jim is in the presence of whites, his English changes to overly formal, expressing his subservience to the whites present. Naturally, as Jim and Huck become acquainted with each other, Jim's peculiar English loosens, and the two communicate freely, making jokes and relaxing together. However, immediately after Tom Sawyer joins the two, Jim returns to his original position. In chapter 38, Tom created a wild plan full of unnecessary obstacles to free Jim enslaved on the Phelps' farm. As Tom explains Jim's escape plan, Jim humbly opposes his ideas:

"Well, then, let it go, let it go, if you're so bull-headed about it. We can get you some garter snakes, and you can tie some buttons on their tails, and let on they're rattlesnakes, and I reckon that'll have to do."

"I k'n stan' *dem*, Mars Tom, but blame' 'f I couldn' get along widout um, I tell you dat. I never knowed b'fo' 't was so much bother and trouble to be a prisoner."

"Well, it *always* is when it's done right. You got any rats around here?"

"No, sah, I hain't seed none."

"Well, we'll get you some rats."

"Why, Mars Tom, I doan' *want* no rats..."<sup>58</sup>

Jim repeatedly addresses Tom "sir" and "Mr." while Tom speaks plainly, and gently forces Jim to oblige his plan arrangements. Jim is visibly unable to reject Tom's ideas he finds unnecessary. When Jim finally gets the courage to confront Tom about his crazy ideas, he only apologizes soon after, even though his arguments were rightful. Similarly, Phelps' farm slave Nat is demonstrating the same behavior when communicating with whites. Such communication style was expected from freedmen after the Emancipation, regardless of the formal change of social hierarchy.

Post-war social conscience rooted in antebellum Old South was preventing the society from uniting. The implemented standard of slavery made it difficult for people to accept the Emancipation and cultivate their outlooks, behaviors, and beliefs. Most importantly, change of conscience is easier said than done, leaving most people stagnant in their convictions. Throughout the novel, Huck is constantly struggling whether to listen to his conscience or the social one.

While Huck is undeniably getting closer to Jim, his racial prejudices and attitudes prevail. Huck repeatedly underestimates Jim's logical thinking and even feeling human emotions. Huck often says Jim is brilliant for a "nigger": "he was most always right; he had an uncommon level head for a nigger"<sup>59</sup>. His frequent use of the word "nigger" also shows his ingrained racism. When Jim and Huck have a conversation about why French people do not talk like English people do, Huck reacts to Jim's lack of understanding with: "I see it warn't no use wasting words-you can't learn a nigger to argue. So I quit." Huck does not see Jim as his intellectual equal, although Jim is a grown adult man.

Similarly, Huck is immensely surprised by Jim's profound worry and care for his family since those feelings only belong to whites. Such racist driven conclusions are typical for Huck as well as for the South postwar society. Needless to say, as their friendship develops, Huck's racist behavior towards Jim loosens despite his ingrained beliefs.

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<sup>58</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 223

<sup>59</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 66

Another representation of Huck's prevailing racial attitudes is seen in the jokes he plays on Jim. One of Huck's cruelest jokes is when he claims that their separation in the fog never happened and makes fun of Jim's desperation experienced during their separation. When Jim looks around and finds out the separation did happen, he feels deeply hurt. Even though Huck experienced similar feelings of loneliness and despair as Jim did, he makes Jim profess his feelings and mock them rather than uncover his own. As he realizes the pain he has caused, he prepares his apology. However, this act is not an easy task for him: "It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger-but I done it."<sup>60</sup> Luckily, Huck feels shameless for his apology and promises to never hurt Jim like that again. However, his promise does not signify a change in his racial thinking but rather a developing friendship between the two.

However, Huck's racism strengthens in the presents of other whites. When Huck shows up at the Phelps' farm pretending to be Tom Sawyer, he tells a false story describing why he came late to the farm. Supposedly, there was an explosion on the riverboat he arrived on. When Aunt Sally asks whether someone got hurt, Huck states: "No'm. Killed a nigger."<sup>61</sup> To which Aunt Sally responds with: "Well, it's lucky: because sometimes people do get hurt."<sup>62</sup> Huck's racist response is not a mere pretend; it is his honest conviction as it is Aunt Sally's. Huck's behavior parallels the racial thinking and behavior of many Southerners postwar. The sudden emancipation of the slaves did not make the Southerners think of them any different. Not only would the reform of racial thinking take a significant amount of time, but it would also require an active effort from the government authorities, and most importantly, the inhabitants of the South themselves.

Meanwhile, Jim continuously surprises Huck with his fragile humanity. He laments over the loss of his family and regrets how he treated his daughter, whom he had beaten for disobedience, not realizing she was deaf to hear his instructions. Jim constantly watches out for Huck, not letting him see a dead body in a house floating on the river that belongs to his father. He allows Huck to win arguments and carry on with his wild ideas, although he is aware of their silliness. At the end of the novel, Tom Sawyer gets shot as the two attempt to free Jim from the Phelps' farm. As they get safely to their

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<sup>60</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 74

<sup>61</sup> Twain, 20016, p. 188

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

canoe and strike out towards the island, Jim and Huck notice Tom's injured leg. Although Tom is considerably happy about a bullet in his calf, his leg is bleeding vigorously and needs to be treated. Jim knows he will be enslaved again but sends Huck to get a doctor and stays with Tom. Jim's sacrifice still does not make Huck change his mind about Jim's status as a barbarian, and he rather states: "I knowed he was white inside..."<sup>63</sup>

Needless to say, Huck does not stay put and attempts to save his friend whenever his conscience allows him to. Surprisingly, Huck's idea to save Jim is not condemned by Tom. It is rather met with enthusiasm causing Huck's amount of regrets and self-blame to decrease. Tom happily agrees to save Jim, which Huck finds astonishing. He could not believe how a good Southern boy wants to save a runaway slave. Unfortunately, Tom has no intention to liberate a slave. Not only Tom knows Jim is a freeman already; he uses Jim as a play toy and character in his made-up adventure. Tom treats Jim with hidden cruelty and sees nothing wrong with his doings. When Huck learns that Tom knew Jim was free all along, he is most grateful about Tom, not being the one helping a slave to escape. He finally understands how Tom could want to save Jim considering his upbringing. What may be shocking is Huck's prevalent racism after all of the adventures and built friendship with Jim. Huck's racism towards freedmen is almost untouched from the beginning to the novel's end, making the whole journey for freedom look ludicrous.

Before the events on the Phelps' farm, Huck experiences a moral revolution. When the Dauphin sells Jim to the Phelps' farm, Huck quickly decides to write a letter to Tom, so he would inform Miss Watson where her runaway slave is. However, after a quick moment of relief over making "the right decision," he decides to "go to hell"<sup>64</sup> by rescuing Jim and tears up the letter. Huck's choice not to report runaway Jim to Miss Watson rebels against the social conscience. Such decision leads him to think he is deserving of damnation since he robbed a kind white woman of her slave. Without fully realizing his right choice, Huck feels utterly guilty for his decision. Twain shows Huck's mind burned with a social conscience, but he also implies Huck can execute the right decision, as much as the Southern society can.

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<sup>63</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 234

<sup>64</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 183

However, Huck's sudden rebellion against slavery supporting society is not conscious or intended. Huck is metaphorically engaging in the Civil War on the raft, running away from his Southern conscience and hopefully escaping to his internal Northern one. However, Huck is evading this inner conscience instead of mastering it since improving something is simply uncomfortable. For Huck, pleasure is his central concern, and such pleasure does not include fighting for the rights of African Americans.<sup>65</sup> Aside from Huck's preoccupation with pleasure and boundless freedom, he thrives to fit in the society, no matter how violent it might be. One reason why Huck did not report Jim to Miss Watson was simply out of shame and fear. Right after Huck was done with worrying about Jim's reputation back home, he began to worry for himself:

"And then think of *me*! It would get all around that Huck Finn helped a nigger to get his freedom; and if I was ever to see anybody from that town again I'd be ready to get down and lick his boots for shame."<sup>66</sup>

Huck's statement proves that the only part of Jim he is willing to save is Jim as his friend, not Jim as a slave. Similarly, when Jim is enslaved after escaping from the Phelps farm, Huck is glad Jim pretends they do not know each other. Thus, while Jim is being scolded for running away, Huck's reputation stays intact. Jim and Huck's friendship is strong but not strong enough to endure the beliefs held by society, and Huck is not proactive enough to change it.

In chapter 16, as the two are unsure whether they missed Cairo to get into the free states, Huck goes out on the canoe to find out while planning on reporting Jim. Meanwhile, Jim is praising him for his doings:

"Pooty soon I'll be a-shout'n' for joy, en I'll say, it's all on accounts o' Huck; I's a free man, en I couldn't ever ben free ef it hadn' ben for Huck; Huck done it. Jim won't ever forgit you, Huck; you's de bes' fren' Jim's ever had; en you's de *only* fren' ole Jim's got now."<sup>67</sup>

Jim's proclamation makes Huck uncertain of the righteousness of his actions. However, he remains rather determined to report him even after Jim calls him "de on'y

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<sup>65</sup> Cox, 1966, p. 177-179

<sup>66</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 181

<sup>67</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 77

white genlman dat ever kep' his promise to ole Jim. "<sup>68</sup> By this comment, Jim indicates Huck was the first person who treated him as an equal. Huck feels sick for attempting to report his friend and eventually rescues him from the slave hunters.

In *Huckleberry Finn*, Cairo and the Mississippi and Ohio River fork represents a choice between American individualism and exemplary citizenship. As Huck's character displays, one cannot have both.<sup>69</sup> The whites of the postwar South faced the same issue. They could either stand by and watch the chaos performed on the freedmen or strike and change society for the better.

For Huck, the only place he does not have to face the difficult question of slavery is the raft, where he cohabits with Jim in peace, observing the banks of the chaotic and dangerous society from the safety of the raft. The peace persists until they are separated by the "white fog" that distinctly reminds us of white supremacy. White supremacy is visible, especially in the relationship dynamics between Huck and Jim. Huck consistently controls Jim's life in many ways. He is the one going onshore and attaining the needed information. Most importantly, Huck faces many opportunities to report a runaway slave while Jim has no other choice but to trust their friendship. Jim is dependent on Huck and any other white man he encounters, be it the Duke, Dauphin, Tom, or Miss Watson, without whose regrets for wanting to sell him to a plantation he would not have been emancipated.

In the novel, the color white is often negatively referred to. For example, when Huck describes Pap's face, he says his face was "white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl—a treetoad white, a fish-belly white."<sup>70</sup> The Duke, Dauphin, and the Grangerfords are also a toxic reflection of the white color. Many other characters are white but not depicted as evil representations of white supremacy but rather as an illustration of the hidden hypocrisy of society. For example, Miss Watson and Aunt Sally are undeniably good people, although they own slaves. Similarly, the new judge in St. Peterburg refuses to make Judge Thatcher and Widow Douglas Huck's guardians since

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Jehlen, 2003, p. 103

<sup>70</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 18

he does not want to separate families. His standpoint is, of course, hypocritical since the black families stay separated.

Twain depicts the corruption of the white society on Pap, Huck's racist and brutal alcoholic father. The whole persona of Pap and his cruel behavior towards Huck parallels how slave owners treated their slaves and how much violence has been inflicted upon them. Pap's disgust over blacks' voting rights closely reminds of Southern governments' discrimination and denying freedmen the right to vote. White Southerners tried to manipulate the election to purge the black voters. Pap's long furious monologue about how the government is not free since it "got to set stock-still for six whole months before it can take a hold of a prowling, thieving, infernal, white-shirted free nigger"<sup>71</sup> depicts the white's man perception of freedom and its realization through oppressing of freedmen.

Another representation of the pervasive white supremacy is the Duke and Dauphin's arrival onto the raft. The two remind Huck and Jim of their powerlessness as they, two adult white men, can turn in both of the escapees. Huck nor Jim tries to oppose them and let them have their way. They are led astray by Duke and Dauphin's vicious plans even though they both realize their wickedness. The Duke and the Dauphin destroyed Huck and Jim's perfect world of peaceful coexistence and brought the antebellum South onto the raft. Huck and Jim's bliss on the raft represents a peaceful union of races in the postwar South that is destroyed by white supremacy and hypocrisy. Huck and Jim let their dream be put aside and follow the tyrants of the corrupted society. They are not the only ones giving in; all of the Duke and Dauphin's victims, including the Wilks sisters, cannot defend themselves against it.

The Wilks sisters blindly believe the Duke and the Dauphin to be their uncles who are supposed to inherit the Wilks' property after their deceased father, Peter Wilks. The sisters are convinced of their legitimacy by the Duke and Dauphin's fake British accent, sign language, and basic knowledge of the Wilks' family. Huck is utterly disgusted by their behavior but plays along. Finally, as he gets closer to one of the sisters, Mary Jane, he cannot take it any longer and says to himself: "I'm a-going to chance it; I'll up and tell the truth this time..."<sup>72</sup>. By this decision, Huck steps up against the Duke and the Dauphin, steps

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<sup>71</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 25

<sup>72</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 159

out of himself and executes what is inherently right. Although Huck tells Mary Jane the truth only to stop her from worrying about the separated slave family he does not truly care about, he is on a good path to improve his moral compass.

One of the characters directly addressing the Southern hypocrisy and deceit is Colonel Sherburn. After he shoots and kills an innocent drunk Boggs, he is persecuted by the witnessing crowd to his house. From the roof, Sherburn mocks the crowd and attacks the Southerners and their attitude:

"Why don't your juries hang murderers? Because they're afraid the man's friends will shoot them in the back, in the dark- and it's just what they would do. So they always acquit; and then a man goes in the night with a hundred masked cowards at his back, and lynches the rascal."<sup>73</sup>

He later adds: "If any real lynching's going to be done, it will be done in the dark, southern fashion; and when they come, they'll bring their masks, and fetch a man along."<sup>74</sup> While this scene concerns the lynching of a white man, it reminds us of the Ku Klux Klan night raids on the African Americans and their supporters during the Reconstruction Era. Even though Sherburn criticizes the society that he supposedly cannot stand, he makes no effort to reform it. It seems he does not want to do so and is more comfortable with standing by and judging it.

Contrary to Sherburn, Huck did take action and attempted to do what he thinks is right. Although Huck did not get rid of his beliefs, his actions challenged the racial prejudices and fought against them to save his friend, Jim. Surely, Huck would be able to gradually reform his outlooks if he put his mind to it.

Twain shows that reform in society is possible but requires an honest effort and willingness to overcome the ingrained racism. Twain shows that the failure of the Reconstruction Era was not only the fault of the vicious and more forceful individuals but also the onlookers refusing to push through and change their mindsets.

The end of the novel fiddles viciously with the concept of freedom. Somehow, the novel slowly comes back to a place where it began. Jim is put back into slavery, and Huck is Tom Sawyer's companion once again. Huck and Tom attempt to free Jim

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<sup>73</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 125

<sup>74</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 126



enslaved on the Phelps farm. Huck's plans of freeing Jim seem far more logical than Tom's, which seem mad and mostly unnecessary. Huck wants to steal the key from Jim's door and run away with him down the river. However, Tom craves to be a bit more "traditional." He suggests that Jim should be dug out of the hut of his enslavement by the kitchen knives. Huck protests saying Jim is too old to dig out himself that way, to which Tom replies:

"Yes he will *last*, too. You don't reckon it's going to take thirty-seven years to dig out through a *dirt* foundation, do you?"<sup>75</sup>

Tom implies it should take 37 years to free him, which seems as if he wanted to make Jim's escape as long as possible. His attitude reminds of post-antebellum Southerners attempting to keep their white supremacy and make it difficult for freedmen to integrate into the society as rightful citizens.

Nevertheless, Tom persuades Jim to cooperate by telling him he will eventually begin to like this game. Similarly, white Southerners hoped blacks would accept their status as second-class citizens. Tom Sawyer is not utterly evil, but he shows some of the mindsets typical for the people of the postwar South.

After Tom gets shot during the escape from the Phelps' and the whole mission fails, injured and unconscious, Tom is brought back to Aunt Sally to the Phelps farm. Meanwhile, Jim is put back in chains as he is being scolded for attempting to escape. When Tom wakes up and finds out Jim has been enslaved again, he shouts out in anger that Jim is "as free as any cretur that walks this earth"<sup>76</sup> and explains that deceased Miss Watson freed Jim two months ago in her last will. Aunt Sally proceeds to ask probably the most critical question in the whole novel: "Then what on earth did you want to set him free for, seeing he was already free?"<sup>77</sup> At this point, Twain directly attacks the happenings during the postwar era. The Phelps' farm and Tom treated Jim as if he was still a slave, similarly as the Southerners treated their former slaves after emancipation.

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<sup>75</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 208

<sup>76</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 245

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

## 5. Analysis of Satire and Humor in *Huckleberry Finn*

In *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain mocks numerous aspects of the Southern society, including religion, superstitions, racial stereotypes, white supremacy, slavery, minstrelsy shows, and romanticism. Huck Finn manages to entertain the reader by the ridiculous events he experiences on his adventures with Jim and depict the disturbing condition of the Southern society.

### 5.1 Religion and Superstitions

The first aspect of the Southern society Twain attacks is religion in its logic and morality. Huck Finn is not the most religious character in the novel. With Miss Watson, Huck constantly shows his dislike for the Bible and its teaching about heaven. His first concern with religion begins with learning about Moses, who does not spark his interest as Huck "don't take no stock in dead people."<sup>78</sup> As he is restless with Miss Watson during studying, she threatens him with ending up in the "bad place" if he does not behave himself. Huck is not scared of the "bad place" and instead says he would be glad to be there rather than study, making Miss Watson exceedingly angry. At this point, Huck's daring and hilarious attitude mocks the idea of religious intimidation, forcing the believers to behave accordingly to the Christian moral code and threatening them with hell in case of disobedience.

Miss Watson then proceeds to tell him about the good place where he would "go around all day long with a harp and sing, for ever and ever."<sup>79</sup> Huck seems to be unimpressed by the idea of heaven and is more curious whether Tom Sawyer will be there. Miss Watson vehemently denies that possibility, satisfying Huck as he only wanted to be with his friend. Heaven for him seems boring and would only be full of people like Miss Watson with whom he certainly does not want to share eternity. The depiction of heaven as a place full of harps and endless singing mocks the whole concept of such place.

Prayers seem to have negative effects on Huck's well-being, expressing its toxicity rather than a benefit. After the collective prayer with the slaves and Miss Watson, Huck

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<sup>78</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 4

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

comes back to his room feeling "lonesome I most wished I was dead."<sup>80</sup> Later on, Huck is told to pray every day under the promise of his wishes coming true. In hope, Huck attempts to wish for hooks for his fish line. As the prayer proves ineffective, he asks Miss Watson to pray for him only to have Miss Watson laugh at him. Such treatment is ironic since Miss Watson convinced Huck of the truthfulness and goodness of prayers. However, Huck uses his logic and finds out the statements about prayers are inconsistent even from Miss Watson, leaving him confused.

Huck continues to contemplate over the effectiveness of the prayer, unable to understand why it does not work until he concludes that "there ain't nothing in it."<sup>81</sup> After telling the Widow Douglas about his conclusion, she tells him that praying is meant for the "spiritual gifts" and that he must help people around him, in which Huck sees no advantage. As Huck believes prayers do not work, Widow Douglas tells him prayers work only under certain circumstances and for specific purposes, mocking the logic of prayer even more.

Later in the novel, as Huck had run away from his father pretending to be dead, he is starving on Jackson Island. Luckily, Huck manages to capture a loaf of bread floating by the shore. As he is happily eating the bread, he realizes Widow Douglas must have prayed for him; otherwise, he would not have been so lucky. He concludes that prayers only work for people that are "just the right kind,"<sup>82</sup> and such kind does not include him. Thus, by Widow Douglas and Miss Watson's Christian moral teachings, Huck was successfully convinced of his wickedness and undeserving of luck and happiness. His hilarious attitude towards the concept of heaven, hell, and prayer attacks the Christian belief system and society clinging to it. Twain portrays Christianity as unrighteous for judging its believers based on their good deeds. Nevertheless, Huck's moral decisions are always in contrast with the religious teachings he has been taught.

The embodiment of religious hypocrisy is, without a doubt, the Grangerfords family. After a steamboat destroys Jim and Huck's raft, the two get separated. Huck swims to the shore, where he encounters a group of dogs belonging to the Grangerford

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<sup>80</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 5

<sup>81</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 11

<sup>82</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 33

family. Grangerfords accept Huck and treat him as a family right after making sure he is not part of the Shepherdsons family with whom they are in a great feud. Shepherdsons and Grangerfords crave to kill each other for years, but they sit peacefully next to each other in a church. Huck said they kept the guns "between their knees or stood them handy against the wall."<sup>83</sup> The comicality of the situation is escalated by a sermon preaching about brotherly love. Everyone loves the sermon and ultimately agrees with it. Huck seems to be a bit put off by it as the families" talked it over going home, and had such a powerful lot to say about faith and good works and free grace and preforeordination.... "<sup>84</sup> The families' blindness to its hypocrisy is highly disturbing. They go to church only to appear as good citizens in society and still attempt to kill each other later. Twain humorously mocks the Christian faith as the family clans forget everything they were taught in church right after leaving it and do not realize that their everyday lives contradict their religious conviction.

Even though Huck and Jim are not religious, they are strongly superstitious, especially Jim. Huck's superstitiousness shows right at the beginning of the novel when a spider gets lit in his candle, to which Huck reacts with fear of bad luck. Jim seeks bad luck everywhere he goes. On Jackson Island, Huck wants to catch a bird to get something to eat for the two. Jim stops him from doing so, saying it was death to catch a bird like that since "his father laid mighty sick once, and some of them caught a bird, and his old granny said his father would die, and he did."<sup>85</sup> Jim proceeds to list all kinds of superstitions that are supposed to bring bad luck. Of course, such claims are untrue, but not all of Jim's superstitions are illogical.

At the beginning of the novel, Tom plays a trick on Jim, hanging Jim's hat on a tree while Jim sleeps underneath it. When Jim wakes up, he concludes he was bewitched and put into a trance by witches. He then proceeds to tell the story wherever he goes, naturally adding a few details, such as witches riding on his back, forcing him to take them all around the world. The story spreads around other black slaves who become eager to meet Jim to hear more about his encounter with the witches. However, Jim's belief in superstitions has some truth in it. Superstitions about witches attacking blacks at night were very common among the black community. Such stories represented night

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<sup>83</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 94

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 40

rides done by whites or Ku Klux Klan members dressed in robes and masks attacking blacks, sometimes presenting themselves as ghosts. Similarly, when Huck and Jim first meet on the island, Jim thinks he is seeing Huck's ghost and screams out in fear:

"Doan' hurt me—don't! I hain't ever done no harm to a ghos'. I alwuz liked dead people, en done all I could for 'em. You go en git in de river agin, whah you b'longs, en doan' do nuffn to Ole Jim, 'at 'uz awluz yo' fren'."<sup>86</sup>

Even though superstitions are foolish, Twain implies that sometimes they might have a more logical explanation and sense than religion itself. Besides the comical depiction of superstitions, Twain addresses the real issues behind them. Superstitions indicate that Huck and Jim are constantly put in danger and can be captured any minute. Religious life is depicted as useless and even damaging to the believers. By humorously depicting religious life and belief in superstitions, Twain addresses the hypocrisy and perversion of Southern society.

## 5.2 Southern Hypocrisy and Stereotypes

Twain uses humor to point out the most disturbing aspects of the antebellum and post-antebellum South, especially the racial stereotypes of African Americans and white society's hypocrisy.

One of the first characters Twain mocks to address the societies' ingrained issues is Miss Watson and Widow Douglas. Aside from their religious hypocrisy, they present probably the most ignored part of slavery. The women are visibly good-spirited, as they adopted and take care of Huck, teaching him proper manners. However, they still own slaves as they proclaim themselves to be righteous Christians. Indeed, they do not treat slaves as masters on the deep South plantations, but they still neglect them as human beings.

Twain satirizes women's hypocrisy as they "fetched the niggers in and had prayer."<sup>87</sup> When Huck asks Jim how he ended up on the Jackson Island, Jim says he overheard Miss Watson considering to sell him down to New Orleans for a "big stack o' money she couldn'

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<sup>86</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 37

<sup>87</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 5

resis"<sup>88</sup> so he ran for his life. As a kind Christian woman, Miss Watson was willing to sell Jim to a plantation where she knew there was no hope for humanity, separating him from his family and getting a good amount of money for doing so. Although she would be feeling guilty for doing so, she seriously considered it. Twain mocks not only her religious ideas but also the society leaning onto those ideas as a whole. Miss Watson's decision shows society's unawareness of its cruelty and flawed thinking.

Twain harshly depicts such thinking on Aunt Sally. As Aunt Sally hears Huck, whom she thinks is Tom, telling his story about a wrecked steamboat and a dead black man, she comments on his death with "sometimes people do get hurt."<sup>89</sup> Her lack of awareness about the hideousness of her comment is astonishing. Twain attacks her supposed "goodness" and slavery at its core. Later on, as Tom is waking up after his time unconscious due to his injured leg, he asks for Jim. As Tom tries to find out whether Jim managed to escape, Aunt Sally talks about Jim with disturbing enthusiasm:

" Deed he hasn't. They've got him back, safe and sound, and he's in that cabin again, on bread and water, and loaded down with chains, till he's claimed or sold!"<sup>90</sup>

Aunt Sally is sure of Jim's rightful place and treatment, which is in chains and ready to be sold as an object. Soon after, as Jim is proclaimed to be free by Miss Watson's letter, he is "out of the chains in no time," and he is given "all he wanted to eat, and a good time, and nothing to do."<sup>91</sup> Suddenly, Jim is treated as a human being right after being proclaimed to be so by a piece of paper, although he was close to getting sold a few minutes ago.

The situation satirizes the whole idea of slavery as a construct and the hypocrisy of Miss Watson, who was consumed by her feelings of guilt and set Jim free in the end. The idea of Reconstruction is mocked for its sudden decision to make an enslaved man a free man in a few seconds. Reconstruction cannot happen in one step by the publication of the Emancipation Proclamation but by a whole set of reforms.

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<sup>88</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 38

<sup>89</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 188

<sup>90</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 245

<sup>91</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 247

At the beginning of the novel, Pap's behavior demonstrates the worst kind of whites, fighting to keep their white supremacy and preventing African Americans from obtaining equal rights. One evening, when Pap got to Huck's room, he interrogated him about who taught him to read and write. He is unhappy about Huck's new abilities and forces Huck to drop out of school:

"you drop that school, you hear? I'll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to be better'n what *he* is. You lemme catch you fooling around that school again, you hear?"<sup>92</sup>

Although Pap is uneducated, he prevents Huck from studying and learning the things he never learned. Pap is afraid of Huck being more educated than him and thus having a specific power over him. Huck continues to go to school, so Pap decides to kidnap him and lock him up in a secluded cabin in the woods. There, during one of Pap's drunk escapades, Pap mocks the government for taking "a man's son away from him— a man's own son, which he has had all the trouble and all the anxiety and all the expense of raising."<sup>93</sup> Pap sees Huck as his property and demands his right to control him, although he did not take proper care of him as a father.

Through Pap, Twain satirizes the white man's hypocrisy and craving for his supremacy. During Pap's drunken speech about the government denying him his rights, he describes a free black man from Ohio as "most as white as a white man,"<sup>94</sup> and Pap adds he "had the whitest shirt on you ever see."<sup>95</sup> Pap shows contempt and fear over the freedman being in a higher social position than him, and at that point, having higher rights than he has.

When Pap continues his drunken speech, he reckons he asked people around him why the black man is not sold yet. They replied that he can only be sold after a six-month stay in the state and that "he hadn't been there that long yet."<sup>96</sup> Such a statement's logic is ridiculous as only a matter of days or months decides whether a man is free or

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<sup>92</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 18

<sup>93</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 24

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 25

not. Once again, Twain mocks the institution of slavery from the white man's perspective.

Society's ingrained racial stereotypes are well depicted in Huck's narrative and behavior. Like other characters, Huck shows how unaware and ignorant the Southern society was. Huck believes slavery is legitimate and correct in the eyes of God as he was taught to believe in the antebellum South. Huck perceives Jim as less than a human being, often hurting him without realizing Jim has usual human emotions.

Twain uses Huck to mock racial stereotypes still held in the postwar South. At the beginning of chapter 14, Huck comments that Jim has "an uncommon level head for a nigger"<sup>97</sup> because he seems to be always right. Huck's comment indicates that he thinks blacks cannot be as intelligent as whites.

Soon after, the two argue about French people not talking the same as they do. Huck undermines Jim's intellect again, claiming that "you can't learn a nigger to argue."<sup>98</sup> Although Jim did not understand the logic behind why the Frenchmen talk differently, he made a correct point. He attacked Huck's analogy, comparing human speech to cows' and cats', proving he is not as unintelligent as Huck thinks. Huck's behavior satirically mocks the typical stereotypes of African Americans.

Not only is Huck not convinced of Jim's intelligence, but he is also unaware of his capability to feel human emotions. The cruelest joke and gamble with Jim's emotions Huck plays after their separation in the fog. Huck makes Jim believe he was only dreaming of their separation and makes him question his judgment. After Jim is done describing his dream, which he does not forget to rearrange a little, Huck tells him it was all a joke, and they indeed did separate for the night. Jim is deeply hurt beyond Huck's understanding and calls him "a white trash" for humiliating his friend, who was deeply worried for him. Huck needs some time to get the courage to humble himself "to a nigger"<sup>99</sup> but eventually manages to do apologize. Huck perceives such deed as apologizing to a black man as shameful even though he did wrong. In this situation,

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<sup>97</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 66

<sup>98</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 69

<sup>99</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 74



Twain shows how whites felt about displaying any weakness or wrongdoings to the African Americans.

Similarly, in chapter 23, Jim misses his family and mourns over being away from them for so long. Huck is surprised by Jim's sadness and thinks to himself: "I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for their'n. It don't seem natural, but I reckon it's so."<sup>100</sup> Once again, Huck did not think blacks could feel the same love for their family as whites do. In Huck's narrative, Twain depicts the comicality of ingrained slavery mindset, including stereotypes of slaves not feeling, thinking, and perceiving the world as whites do.

### **5.3 Twain's Mockery of Romanticism**

As a realist writer, Twain was strictly disapproving of the romantic depiction of the world. As in poetry, Twain saw no bits of reality in romance novels does not see them as a proper representation of life experience on earth. Instead, through his writings, Twain wanted to connect the reader with the society, and the world people truly live in.<sup>101</sup> In *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain's attack on romantic literature and its unrealistic depiction of reality is profoundly illustrated in the character of Tom Sawyer. Tom is deeply inspired by romantic adventure novels, which he brings to life everywhere he goes.

At the beginning of the novel, Tom establishes a gang of robbers, including Huck and Tom's friends, and makes up all kinds of rules needed to be obeyed. The boys must write an oath in blood, promising they keep all the group's secrets to themselves. Whoever betrays the group must be killed along with his family by the "Tom Sawyer's Gang." When Tom is asked how he came up with all the rules by himself, he says he mostly got it "out of piratebooks and robber-books, and every gang that was high-toned."<sup>102</sup> The boys were then contemplating the punishment for those who would tell the group's secrets. They thought it would be wise to kill the boy's family; however, Huck does not have a family to kill, and his father is hard to find. Huck gets almost excluded from the gang because "every boy must have a family or somebody to kill, or else it wouldn't be fair and square

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<sup>100</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 133

<sup>101</sup> Camfield, 2003, p. 520-521

<sup>102</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 8

for the others."<sup>103</sup> Huck is about to cry out of desperation when he thinks of Miss Watson as a replacement for his absent family. Boys seem to be satisfied with such offer, and Huck is accepted to the gang.

Tom's behavior is based on the adventure books he reads. The whole situation is comical as Huck offers his caretaker as a pledge. Naturally, the boys would never kill each other or each other's families. Nevertheless, Twain uses Tom to mock the romantic literature by setting it into a real-life situation.

Later on, the gang agrees on killing people traveling on the roads and robbing them of their money. Tom states an exception for specific people whom he wants to put in the cave for ransom. When Tom is asked what "ransom" is and why they have to do that, he casually replies: "I don't know. But that's what they do. I've seen it in books; and so of course that's what we've got to do."<sup>104</sup>

Tom does not have a rational reason to follow his favorite adventure novels. He blindly follows them because he believes them to be an accurate representation of everyday life. Twain humorously points out that romantic literature is far from the reality and reflection of society.

It was the thought of Tom that brought Huck to the idea to inspect the abandoned wreck. This idea endangered both Huck and Jim. Although Huck is a bit more logical than Tom, he is infected by Tom's love of adventure. As the two were escaping the sinking wreck, they steal the robbers' boat and flow down the river. However, Huck begins to worry for the robbers and thinks of how uncomfortable the situation must be "even for murderers, to be in such a fix"<sup>105</sup> and decides to get someone to rescue them.

On the nearest occasion, Huck gets on the shore and wakes up a guard of a ferry boat to tell him his family is stuck on a wreck and needs rescue. Huck finds out the wreck is called "Walter Scott," which closely reminds of romantic writer Sir Walter Scott. Twain

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<sup>103</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 9

<sup>104</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 9

<sup>105</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 62

portrays the wreck and romanticism as deceitfully depicting reality and implies that expecting such greatness from a real-life adventure can be dangerous.

The climax of Tom's blindness caused by the romantic adventure novels is manifested in his plan to save Jim enslaved on the Phelps farm. Tom complains that saving Jim is "just as easy and awkward as it can be,"<sup>106</sup> craving the rescue plan to be as tricky and adventurous as possible, including watchman and watchdogs. Tom suggests that Jim should use a saw to saw off a leg of his bed to get himself out of the chains. At the same time, Jim can easily lift the bed and free his chained leg.

Although Huck protests many ideas Tom brings in, they still save Jim in the most challenging way possible. Tom thinks there is honor in rescuing Jim overcoming numerous difficulties and refers to heroes such as Giacomo Casanova and Henri IV as inspiration for Jim's escape plan. Those heroes are Tom's authorities, and he is willing to act according to their stories, totally ignoring the nonsensicality of such thinking. At this point, Twain's mockery of romantic literature is painfully apparent as Tom shows that romantic ideas of rescue have no use in reality.

Apart from Tom, The Grangerfords and Shepherdsons' family feud also depicts the dangers of romanticism. After Huck and Jim get separated during an accident tearing their raft apart, Huck gets shelter in the Grangerfords mansion, where he befriends Buck Grangerford. One day, Huck and Buck go hunting in the woods when they encounter Harvey Shepherdson. Buck attempts to shoot him in the head but misses and shoots off only Harvey's hat. Harvey proceeds to chase after them as they run back to the mansion. When they arrive home safely, Huck is curious whether Harvey ever did any harm to Buck as he was trying to kill him. Buck replies, saying Harvey has never done anything wrong to him, but there is a family feud between them. He also adds that no one exactly remembers the reason for the feud or who started it. He only recalls the feud starting about 30 years ago. When Huck asks whether someone died because of it this year, Buck replies:

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<sup>106</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 203

"Yes; we got one and they got one. 'Bout three months ago my cousin Bud, fourteen year old, was riding through the woods on t'other side of the river, and didn't have no weapon with him, which was blame' foolishness,...."<sup>107</sup>

Buck casually describes his defenseless fourteen-year-old cousin being murdered without him showing any sorrow. Buck or any other clan family member do not question the rationality of the feud and continue to hunt each other out of habit. Instead, the clans mindlessly endanger their children and themselves to preserve their family honor, consequently slaughtering each other in the end.

The Grangerfords episode mocks romantic literature for its flawed depiction of reality and Southern society for its habitual and nonsensical battle against racial equality and peace.

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<sup>107</sup> Twain, 2016, p. 94

## 6. Conclusion

The first part of the thesis characterized society's attitude towards African Americans during and after the Civil War as well as Southerners' approach to the idea of Reconstruction. Post-war Southern society was described as full of uncertainties and fears of newly freed slaves, threatening their white supremacy. Southerners' ingrained prewar mindset prevailed, preventing African Americans from fully immersing themselves into the newly united society, often forcing them to stay in their former positions. White man's fear of equality was well demonstrated in Ku Klux Klan activities and minstrel shows, which aimed to keep African Americans in the position of difference.

The following part of the thesis introduced Mark Twain as a prose writer of many styles, including sentimental and social realism, naturalism, and local color regionalism. His life journey reflected his transformation into different types of realism. Description of Mark Twain's style was fairly expressed in *Huckleberry Finn*, capturing Twain's love for vernacular and his effort to provide the reader with a realistic reading experience by alternating English linguistics. Twain's style inspiration was found in tall tales and Local Colorists, whose style he developed and freed the vernacular language framed by standard English. His vernacular revolution was manifested by presenting other Local Color writers' use of vernacular.

The second part of the thesis presented *Huckleberry Finn* as an exceptional novel addressing controversial issues. The analysis captured white and blacks' inherently different perceptions of freedom in the postwar period, one being boundless freedom and the other a mere social equality. The analysis also illustrated characters' ingrained prewar thinking persistent in both races and their inability to overcome it. In the novel's storyline and characters, Twain captured the postwar Southern society craving to keep slavery and white supremacy. However, Twain also emphasized Southerners' free choice and ability to change such mindset.

The last part of the thesis analyzed *Huckleberry Finn's* satire and humor, depicting religious hypocrisy, meanings behind superstitions, slavery mindset, and typical Southern stereotypes. Lastly, the satire analysis focused on Twain's criticism of

romantic literature displayed in *Huckleberry Finn*, showing the danger of falling into the trap of trusting romanticism its depiction of reality.

To sum up, Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* managed to present not only the Missouri vernacular of the Mississippi River shorelines but also colorfully depict social attitudes of the antebellum and post antebellum South, drawing attention to the society's defectiveness and need for reform.

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