

**An attempt to depict the concept of slavery in The adventures of  
Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain**

*Project submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of*

**Bachelor of Arts**

**in**

**English and History**

**By**

**Abhinav S**

**CCASADER12**



**March 2021**

**Department of B.A English & History  
Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda**

**Kerala-680125**

## Declaration

I, **Abhinav S**, hereby declare that this project entitled **An attempt to depict the concept of slavery in *The adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain**, submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English and History, is a research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of, **Miss. Ansiya T.A** Assistant Professor, Department of English & History, Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda.

Irinjalakuda

March 2021

**Abhinav S**

Department of B.A. English & History

Christ College (Autonomous)

Irinjalakuda-680125

## Certificate

This is to certify that this project entitled **An attempt to depict the concept of slavery in *The adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain**, a record of research work carried out by **Mr. Abhinav S** under my supervision and guidance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English and History submitted to the University of Calicut.

**Mr. George Alex**

Coordinator, Dept. of English & History

Christ College (Autonomous)

Irinjalakuda

**Miss. Ansiya T.A**

Dept. of English & History

Assistant Professor

(Supervising Teacher)

## **Acknowledgement**

I owe my gratitude to God for his endless blessings and intervention in helping me complete my project without any hassles and on time. I am indebted to my supervising teacher, **Miss. Ansiya T.A** Assistant Professor, Department of English & History, Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda, for guiding me throughout the project and for the countless hours and efforts she put in to help complete my project.

I thank Mr. George Alex, Coordinator, Department of B.A. English & History, for the timely help and generous encouragement.

I am eternally grateful to Rev Fr. Jolly Andrews, the Principal, Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda for the congenial research he has always tried to foster.

I owe my thanks to my parents, my teachers, my friends and all those who have helped me indirectly and indirectly, in the successful completion of the project work.

**Abhinav.S**

## Contents

Chapter Number	Contents	Pages
	Introduction	1 - 6
Chapter 1	Brief introduction to Slavery	7 - 11
Chapter 2	Slavery in huckleberry Finn	12 - 16
Chapter 3	Other major aspects in the novel	17 - 22
	Conclusion	23 – 25
	Works Cited	26

## Introduction

Literature is referred to any collection written work, but it is also used more narrowly for writings specifically considered to be an art form, especially prose fiction, drama, and poetry. In recent centuries, the definition has expanded to include oral literature, much of which has been transcribed. Literature is a method of recording, preserving, and transmitting knowledge and entertainment. Literature, as an art form, can also include works in various non-fiction genres, such as autobiography, diaries, memoir, letters, and the essay. Within its broad definition, literature includes non-fictional books, articles or other printed information on a particular subject. Definitions of literature have varied over time. In Western Europe, prior to the 18th century, literature denoted all books and writing. Then, during the Romantic period, a more restricted sense of the term emerged that emphasised the idea that "literature" was "imaginative" writing. Contemporary debates over what constitutes literature can be seen as returning to older, more inclusive notions, so that cultural studies, for instance, include, in addition to canonical works, popular and minority genres. The word is also used in reference non-written works: to "oral literature" and "the literature of preliterate culture".

A novel is a narrative work of prose fiction that tells a story about specific human experiences over a considerable length. Prose style and length, as well as fictional or semi-fictional subject matter, are the most clearly defining characteristics of a novel. Unlike works of epic poetry, it tells its story using prose rather than verse; unlike short stories, it tells a lengthy narrative rather than a brief selection. There are, however, other characteristic elements that set the novel apart as a particular literary form. For the most part, novels are dedicated to narrating individual experiences

of characters, creating a closer, more complex portrait of these characters and the world they live in. Inner feelings and thoughts, as well as complex, even conflicting ideas or values are typically explored in novels, more so than in preceding forms of literature. It's not just the stories themselves that are more personal, but the experience of reading them as well. Where epic poetry and similar forms of storytelling were designed to be publicly read or consumed as an audience, novels are geared more towards an individual reader. There are many types or genre of novels like mystery, sci-fi, fantasy, thriller, horror, romance, historical fiction etc

The picaresque novel is a genre of prose fiction. It depicts the adventures of a roguish, but "appealing hero", usually of low social class, who lives by his wits in a corrupt society. Picaresque novels typically adopt a realistic style. There are often some elements of comedy and satire. This style of novel originated in Spain in 1554 and flourished throughout Europe for more than 200 years, though the term "picaresque novel" was only coined in 1810. It continues to influence modern literature. The term is also sometimes used to describe works which only contain some of the genre's elements, thus it becomes evident that picaresque novel is the life-story of a rogue or picaro, a clever and amusing adventure of low social class who earns his livelihood by tricks and roguery rather than by honourable industry. The story is usually told by the picaro in the first person, as an autobiography. Episodic in nature, the plot consists of a series of thrilling incidents only slightly connected and strung together with organic relationship. They are without patten, if at their best the picaresque stories had a beginning, they had no end. They were published in parts and the main aim of the novelist was to introduce adventure after adventure in the life of the picaro. The hero wanders from place to place as well as from job to job. The adventures and wanderings in different social settings permit the picaro to meet

people of all classes- bankers, politicians, the clergy, doctors, lawyers, actors and society-folk. He is thus provided with the opportunity of satirizing corruption and hypocrisy of a whole society and epoch. The picaresque novel is in consequence a study of manners. In picaresque novel, the 'rogue' is the hero. The rogue may be defined as one who lives by his wits. Living by wits implies knowledge of the world, a sharp insight into responses that may be played upon advantageously, a mastery of the techniques of playing upon them, if not total elimination of emotional depths and moral concern. The rogue is without conscience of the inhibitions created by the community's sense of right or wrong; not so much that his is the enemy of these or falls short of an expectable standard by which we judge him, as that he lives in another world from them. He lives outside the 'ordinary' feelings of the community; his hypertrophy of practical intelligence replaces a full emotional development. Not that the picaro is entirely 'heartless' or without feelings; it is aesthetically necessary that he be not a monster. His self-love gives him some link to the rest of mankind; he can fear; he may have transient fidelities. But if he is afraid, his fear does not deepen into terror. He may experience disgust, but not horror. He is likely to be well-endowed with sex, but he hardly experiences passion or serious jealousy, and least of all love. He may find people difficult, objectionable, or annoyingly sceptical, but he does not hate.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (November 30, 1835 – April 21, 1910), known by his pen name Mark Twain, was an American writer, humourist, entrepreneur, publisher, and lecturer. He was lauded as the "greatest humourist the United States has produced," and William Faulkner called him "the father of American literature". His novels include *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), the latter often called "The Great



American Novel". Twain was raised in Hannibal, Missouri, which later provided the setting for Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. He served an apprenticeship with a printer and then worked as a typesetter, contributing articles to the newspaper of his older brother Orion Clemens. He later became a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River before heading west to join Orion in Nevada. He referred humorously to his lack of success at mining, turning to journalism for the Virginia City Territorial Enterprise. His humorous story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County", was published in 1865, based on a story that he heard at Angels Hotel in Angels Camp, California, where he had spent some time as a miner. The short story brought international attention and was even translated into French. His wit and satire, in prose and in speech, earned praise from critics and peers, and he was a friend to presidents, artists, industrialists, and European royalty.

Twain began his career writing light, humorous verse, but he became a chronicler of the vanities, hypocrisies, and murderous acts of mankind. At mid-career, he combined rich humour, sturdy narrative, and social criticism in Huckleberry Finn. He was a master of rendering colloquial speech and helped to create and popularize a distinctive American literature built on American themes and language. Many of his works have been suppressed at times for various reasons. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been repeatedly restricted in American high schools, not least for its frequent use of the word "nigger" which was in common usage in the pre-Civil War period in which the novel was set.

A complete bibliography of Twain's works is nearly impossible to compile because of the vast number of pieces he wrote (often in obscure newspapers) and his use of several different pen names. Additionally, a large portion of his speeches and

lectures have been lost or were not recorded; thus, the compilation of Twain's works is an ongoing process. Researchers rediscovered published material as recently as 1995 and 2015.

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a novel by Mark Twain, first published in the United Kingdom in December 1884 and in the United States in February 1885. Commonly named among the Great American Novels, the work is among the first in major American literature to be written throughout in vernacular English, characterized by local colour regionalism. It is told in the first person by Huckleberry "Huck" Finn, the narrator of two other Twain novels and a friend of Tom Sawyer. It is a direct sequel to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. The book is noted for its colourful description of people and places along the Mississippi River. Set in a Southern antebellum society that had ceased to exist over 20 years before the work was published, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is an often-scathing satire on entrenched attitudes, particularly racism. Perennially popular with readers, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has also been the continued object of study by literary critics since its publication. The book was widely criticized upon release because of its extensive use of coarse language. Throughout the 20th century, and despite arguments that the protagonist and the tenor of the book are anti-racist, criticism of the book continued due to both its perceived use of racial stereotypes and its frequent use of the N-word. Throughout the story, Huck is in moral conflict with the received values of the society in which he lives. Huck is unable consciously to rebut those values even in his thoughts but he makes a moral choice based on his own valuation of Jim's friendship and human worth, a decision in direct opposition to the things he has been taught. To highlight the hypocrisy required to condone slavery within an ostensibly moral system, Twain has Huck's father enslave

his son, isolate him and beat him. When Huck escapes, he immediately encounters Jim "illegally" doing the same thing. The treatments both of them receive are radically different, especially in an encounter with Mrs. Judith Loftus who takes pity on who she presumes to be a runaway apprentice, Huck, yet boasts about her husband sending the hounds after a runaway slave, Jim.

The first chapter explains about a brief introduction to slavery.it explains about the history and the origin of slavery .The second chapter explains how slavery can be found in the novel written by Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885).and in the third and final chapter explains about the other aspects and relevant topics that are found in the novel

## Chapter 1

### Brief introduction to Slavery

Slavery, condition in which one human being was owned by another. A slave was considered by law as property, or chattel, and was deprived of most of the rights ordinarily held by free persons. There is no consensus on what a slave was or on how the institution of slavery should be defined. It has characterized its history since its discovery and is based on white superiority and black inferiority. Slavery found its way in American literature, mainly in the narratives of former slaves. However, many white novelists of the nineteenth century cared about black people's suffering and focused on the issue of slavery such as Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), and Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885). Nevertheless, there is general agreement among historians, anthropologists, economists, sociologists, and others who study slavery that most of the following characteristics should be present in order to term a person a slave. The slave was a species of property; thus, he belonged to someone else. In some society's slaves were considered movable property, in others immovable property, like real estate. They were objects of the law, not its subjects

The slave auctions were elaborate markets in which the prices of the slaves were determined. The auctions told the captains and their superiors what kind of cargo was in demand, usually adult males. Credit almost always was part of the transaction, and inability to collect was one of the major reason's companies went bankrupt. After the auction the slave was delivered to the new owner, who then put him to work. That also began the period of "seasoning" for the slave, the period of about a year or so when he either succumbed to the disease environment of the New World or survived

it. Many slaves landed on the North American mainland before the early 18th century had already survived the seasoning process in the Caribbean.

The rapid expansion of the cotton industry in the Deep South after the invention of the cotton gin greatly increased demand for slave labour, and the Southern states continued as slave societies. The United States became ever more polarized over the issue of slavery, split into slave and free states. Driven by labour demands from new cotton plantations in the Deep South, the Upper South sold over 1 million slaves who were taken to the Deep South. The total slave population in the South eventually reached four million. As the United States expanded, the Southern states attempted to extend slavery into the new western territories to allow proslavery forces to maintain their power in the country. By 1850, the newly rich, cotton-growing South was threatening to secede from the Union, and tensions continued to rise. Slavery was defended in the South as a "positive good", and the largest religious denominations split over the slavery issue into regional organizations of the North and South.

The issue of slavery played a key role in pushing America towards a bloody war fought between brothers wearing opposite uniforms known as the Civil War. During the years leading to the Missouri compromise, tensions began to rise between proslavery and antislavery groups within the U.S. Congress and throughout the country

When Abraham Lincoln won the 1860 election on a platform of halting the expansion of slavery, seven slave states broke away to form the Confederacy. Shortly afterward, the Civil War began when Confederate forces attacked the US Army's Fort Sumter. Four additional slave states then joined the confederacy after Lincoln

requested arms from them to make a retaliatory strike. Due to Union measures such as the Confiscation Acts and the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the war effectively ended slavery, even before the institution was banned by constitutional amendment. Following the Union victory in the Civil War, slavery was made illegal in the United States upon the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in December 1865.

Slavery has been a major concept in the American society since its very first times in the United States. But it was not a theme in literature until literary Realism was in its zenith. Realist writers aimed at treating the material of slavery in a realistic fashion. The literatures tackling slavery consist of a sympathetic description of the enslaved and the brutality they endure. Slave narratives, however, were much more insightful when it comes to slavery as a theme. African-American writing has tended to incorporate oral forms, such as spirituals, sermons, gospel music, blues, or rap.

African-American literature has both been influenced by the great African diasporic heritage and shaped it in many countries. African American literature dates back to African slaves' earliest arrival in the New World in 1639, when they forged a language and literature of their own. At the heart of this body of work lies the African American vernacular tradition. This tradition includes oral forms of expression existing prior to African slaves' abilities to read and write in the English language. It has been created within the larger realm of post-colonial literature African-American oral culture is rich in poetry, including spirituals, gospel music, blues, and rap. This oral poetry also appears in the African-American tradition of Christian sermons, which make use of deliberate repetition, cadence, and alliteration. African-American literature—especially written poetry, but also prose—has a strong tradition of incorporating all of these forms of oral poetry. These expressive forms were not originally produced for mass circulation. They were ingroup forms of expressing the

realities of their daily lives in America. These forms often included coded or secret messages of enduring the ills of slavery. The African American vernacular tradition informs African American literature of slavery and freedom. Major themes during this period are resistance to tyranny and dedication to human dignity. African American authors during this period questioned the institution of slavery as they became increasingly familiar with the teachings of the Holy Bible. These writers equated literacy with freedom. With their growing literacy, African American authors appealed to the traditional Christian doctrine of a universal brotherhood of humanity as a way of challenging the morality of slavery. Slave narratives became an important form of literary expression before the Civil War. Slave narratives were mostly autobiographical in nature and gave an account of the person's experiences, their escape from slavery, and their lives after slavery.

The hardships, the inhumanity, oppression, distress, racism and slavery were excellent motivations behind the birth of the slave narratives by black educated former slaves. The rising tensions between the anti-slavery north and the proslavery south that have been taking place in the years prior to the Civil War provided realist novelists with unprecedented materials for the white abolitionist writers such as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Twain to write about. They paved the way for the following generation of novelist to make a space for the theme of slavery a relevant theme in literature. Twain remains the best example of those who deal with the issue of slavery in their writings.

Although Twain wrote the novel after slavery was abolished, he set it several decades earlier, when slavery was still a fact of life. People were still struggling with racism and the aftereffects of slavery. By the early 1880s, Reconstruction, the plan to put the United States back together after the war and integrate freed slaves into

society, had hit shaky ground, although it had not yet failed outright. As Twain worked on his novel, race relations, which seemed to be on a positive path in the years following the Civil War, once again became strained. The imposition of Jim Crow laws, designed to limit the power of blacks in the South in a variety of indirect ways, brought the beginning of a new, insidious effort to oppress. The new racism of the South, less institutionalized and monolithic, was also more difficult to combat. Slavery could be outlawed, but when white Southerners enacted racist laws or policies under a professed motive of self-defence against newly freed blacks, far fewer people, Northern or Southern, saw the act as immoral and rushed to combat it.



## Chapter 2

### Slavery in huckleberry Finn

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a novel that speaks about an important period in the American history. Mark Twain in his novel focuses on the ignorance of southern society and southern people in their support to slavery. He uses characters to embody real issues that blacks suffered from. Mark Twain as one of the great American novelists of the nineteenth century gives us a glimpse on life in the 1840s in America.

The novel was published in 1885, it aims at reflecting the darker side of the American society and the evil of slavery during the 19th century. The book was set during the 1840s where slavery was not abolished, throughout the novel Twain speaks about families that owned slave in America. Slavery is one of the key thematic elements in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The novel takes place in Missouri in the 1830s or 1840s, at a time when Missouri was considered a slave state. Soon after Huck fakes his own death, he partners with Jim, a runaway slave from the household where Huck used to live. Although the book purports to be about Huck's "adventures," the story is driven by Jim's attempt to achieve freedom and safety for himself, and ultimately for his wife and children. Huck is, in a sense, just along for the journey; however, it is Huck's perspective on Jim's struggle that allows the author to address the topic of slavery in a unique and entertaining way. By telling the story from the point of view of a young white man, author looks at the issue from an entirely different viewpoint than previous writers: while Huck almost never fails to do the "right" thing in the eyes of the reader, because of his upbringing he cannot help but feel that his actions are actually wicked and immoral As Jim believes he is close

to achieving his own freedom, his thoughts turn toward saving his family from slavery. Huck is shocked by Jim's plans, which he relates to the reader. He was saying how the first thing he would do when he got to a free State he would go to saving up money and never spend a single cent, and when he got enough he would buy his wife, which was owned on a farm close to where Miss Watson lived; and then they would both work to buy the two children, and if their master wouldn't sell them, they'd get an Abolitionist to go and steal them. The issue of slavery plays a part in the most important events in the book. Jim runs away because he believes he will be sold to a slave trader and separated from his family. Huck lies to people he meets to hide the fact that Jim is a runaway slave; the king turns Jim in as a runaway slave—not knowing Jim actually *is* one—just to con some locals for cash. Tom and Huck help Jim escape his captors so he can again try for his freedom; Jim forfeits his freedom in order to help keep Tom alive; and finally, the pair realize that all their running and scheming was in vain because Jim is a free man after all.

Most of the themes portrayed in the novel are directly related to the issue of slavery such as: prejudice, racism, freedom and hypocrisy. The white people of this period in the south of America have many prejudices towards slaves. In his novel Mark Twain demonstrates to what extent this society is racist. This can be seen through many characters and the way they act towards blacks. The people of the towns are slave owners and they treat them with disrespect and they make them look like fools, for example when Tom and Huck trick the slave Jim and he thinks that he is bewitched. The fact that other slaves come from other part of the country to listen to his story is a kind of making fool of them “Niggers would come miles to hear Jim tell about it, and he was more looked up to than any nigger in that country” .Some characters even believe that the slaves belong to them as if they are a personal

property and if they run towards their freedom, slave-owners would hire some people to bring back those slaves. As an example, in the novel, Miss Watson plans to sell Jim down the river (chapter 8) “I hear old missus tell de widder she gwyne to sell me down to Orleans, but she didn’t want to, but she could git eight hund’d dollars for me” this is the main reason that Jim ran away

Huck is the protagonist and the narrator of the novel. From the beginnings Mark Twain makes it clear that Huck is a boy who comes from the lowest levels of white society and he therefore owns no slaves himself. In fact while we follow Huck in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* it appears that this young boy and thanks to his distance from normal society is cynical of the world around him and the ideas passed on to him particularly after he travels down the river. His experiences with Miss Watson’s slave Jim force him to question the things society has taught him. Huck owns no slaves and this pushes him to help the slave Jim to reach his own freedom because he did not have that harsh attitude towards blacks and he discovers that blacks are humans just like white people

Hucks father and the town drunken, Pap looks bad and terrible when he appears at the beginning of the novel with disgusting ghostly white skin and torn clothes. The illiterate Pap dislikes of Hucks education and beats him Pap is also a racist man, (chapter 6) “but when they told me there was a State in this country where they’d let that nigger vote, I drawed out. I says I’ll never vote again. Them’s the very words I said; they all heard me; and the country may rot for all me—”. In this situation Twain shows us to what extent Pap is racist and he refuses voting if the government gives the right of voting to a black man while in reality it is more appropriate for an educated black man to vote than for drunken Pap other situation of racism is when Aunt Sally asks Huck if anyone get hurts he says (chapter 32) “No’m. Killed a

nigger”. She replies: “Well, it’s lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt”, as if when someone black dies it means nobody is getting hurt in this case slaves are not considered to be human.

Slavery is the main theme that Mark Twain focuses on in his novel through the character Jim who suffered from mistreatment and slavery. Even though Huck was raised in a society that supports slavery and as the novel progresses, one may notice that Huck’s feelings towards the slave Jim start to change when he discovers that Jim has a family but due to slavery he is away from his wife and children. At the beginning of the novel Huck has some doubts to save Jim because of what people will say about him and due to what he learns from society about blacks and the prejudices he has about them as inferior. And just like slavery freedom is also a very important theme in the novel. Being freed Jim’s first goal is to free his family

Pap prevents Huck from educating himself and he beats him all the time, he even mocks on his son because he learns how to write and speak (chapter 5-6) “ou’re educated, too, they say—can read and write. You think you’re better’n your father, now, don’t you, because he can’t? i’ll take it out of you” . Twain is giving hints of Huck’s suffering due to his drunken father who is always beating him for the sake of taking his money from Judge Thatcher in this point Twain is focusing on the cruelty of white people and the way they treat their own sons because they did not beat only their Black slaves, and this can be seen through the character Pap who used to beat his son Huck and locks him inside the cabin in the woods. And in this case huck was the one who was being treated like a slave. Even though huck was not a slave he was considered as one by his father like an outcast.

At the end of the novel Mark Twain does not make Jim run away from slavery and reach the North in defiance of the slave holding society but rather ,he makes him free lawfully by his owner's will after her death here the author is denouncing the fact that he is totally against slavery in the south and his aim is to free the slave Jim in the South as well all the other slaves and to give them their own freedom just like Blacks who lives in the North freely, Twain focuses on the fact that slavery should be outlawed in the South. And he managed to make the death of the character hurt less in the heart of the reader.

Indeed, author openly states that he is against the concept of slavery. This is can be seen throughout the novel and especially characters' reaction towards others who support slavery. For example, the hypocrisy of Miss Watson because she preaches to Huck how she is going to live so as to go to the good place yet she owns slaves. Twain also shows his distaste for slavery by portraying Papp's ignorance. Pap, boasting his belief that he is superior to blacks, for example he did not want to vote when he hears about the free "nigger" who has the right to vote, as if he is trying to show his superiority towards blacks.

In his novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Mark Twain tries to ridicule southern society over important issues characterizing that period such as slavery and racism that black people suffered from and were considered to be inferior to whites. For this reason, he uses real events and real characteristics inspired by living persons. The novel does not support slavery but it denounces it through the society that Huck and Jim belong to and suffer from this society and the way its people behave.

## Chapter 3

### Other major aspects in the novel

The theme of slavery is perhaps the most well-known aspect of this novel but not the only one. There are many relevant themes in the novel. One of the themes of the novel is the conflict between civilization and "natural life." Huck represents natural life through his freedom of spirit, uncivilized ways, and desire to escape from civilization. He was raised without any rules or discipline and has a strong resistance to anything that might "civilize" him. This conflict is introduced in the first chapter through the efforts of the Widow Douglas: she tries to force Huck to wear new clothes, give up smoking, and learn the Bible. Throughout the novel, Twain seems to suggest that the uncivilized way of life is more desirable and morally superior. Drawing on the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Twain suggests that civilization corrupts, rather than improves, human beings.

Racism is another central theme in the novel. Racism was born because of slavery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Huck faces a conflict in his mind about freeing Jim. Huck feels that supporting a slave against his white community is a crime. Despite a few racist incidents between Jim and other characters, he achieves his freedom. Due to his skin colour, people mistreat him and believe that all the African American people are meant to be slaves. Huck believes that he has done a great job by helping Jim to free from the shackles of slavery. And this is directly connected to slavery.

Hypocrisy of the society is another important theme of the novel. When Huck plans to head west at the end of the novel in order to escape further he is trying to avoid more than regular baths and mandatory school attendance. Throughout the novel, Twain depicts the society that surrounds Huck as little more than a collection

of degraded rules and precepts that defy logic. This faulty logic appears early in the novel, when the new judge in town allows Pap to keep custody of Huck. The judge privileges Pap's "rights" to his son as his natural father over Huck's welfare. At the same time, this decision comments on a system that puts a white man's rights to his "property"—his slaves—over the welfare and freedom of a black man. In implicitly comparing the plight of slaves to the plight of Huck at the hands of Pap, Twain implies that it is impossible for a society that owns slaves to be just, no matter how "civilized" that society believes and proclaims itself to be. Again, and again, Huck encounters individuals who seem good—Sally Phelps, for example—but who Twain takes care to show are prejudiced slave-owners. This shaky sense of justice that Huck repeatedly encounters lies at the heart of society's problems: terrible acts go unpunished, yet frivolous crimes, such as drunkenly shouting insults, lead to executions. Sherburn's speech to the mob that has come to lynch him accurately summarizes the view of society Twain gives in *Huckleberry Finn*: rather than maintain collective welfare, society instead is marked by cowardice, a lack of logic, and profound selfishness.

Money or wealth also plays an important role in Mark Twain's novel. Money does nothing but cause problems in this book. Huck complains that ever since he came into a significant sum of money at the end of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, he has had to suffer attempts to educate him. In the early chapters of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the biggest problem Huck's money brings him is his father, Pap. Pap mainly wants access to Huck's money so he can buy more alcohol, and his capacity for anger and violence becomes clear when Huck refuses to hand over any cash. Further money-related problems arise following the initial appearance of the duke and the dauphin, who swindle common townsfolk out of their money. Their

scams cause anxiety for Huck and wreak havoc in all of the small towns they visit. The only time money seems like it might have a redemptive power is at the end of the novel, when Tom gives Jim forty dollars to pay his way back north. For Jim, money holds the promise of liberation. But given the many problems money has brought throughout the book, it seems unlikely that money alone will guarantee Jim his freedom. It shows how money affects every decision and outcome of a situation and how money can be considered as a good and bad thing at the same time.

Huck experiences guilt and shame at various points throughout the novel, and these feelings force him into serious questions about morality. Huck's guilt is largely tied to the religious morality he learned from Widow Douglas. Not long after he and Jim set out on their journey, Huck realizes that by helping Jim escape he has done harm to Jim's owner, Miss Watson. He explains: "Conscience says to me, . . . 'What did that poor old woman do to you, that you could treat her so mean?' . . . I got to feeling so mean and so miserable I most wished I was dead" (Chapter 16). Here Huck recognizes that he has broken the Golden Rule of Christianity, which states, *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*. Huck remains conflicted until near the end of the book. The breaking point comes in Chapter 31, when he finds himself unable to pray. Huck realizes that in his heart he doesn't believe Jim should be returned to slavery, and saying so in a prayer would result in him "playing double" and hence lying to God. When he finally resolves to help Jim escape for the last time, Huck banishes the last vestiges of guilt.

The author has put a great emphasis in showing the readers the moral development of the character throughout the story. By focusing on Huck's education, *Huckleberry Finn* fits into the tradition of the bildungsroman: a novel depicting an individual's maturation and development. As a poor, uneducated boy, for



all intents and purposes an orphan, Huck distrusts the morals and precepts of the society that treats him as an outcast and fails to protect him from abuse. This apprehension about society, and his growing relationship with Jim, lead Huck to question many of the teachings that he has received, especially regarding race and slavery. More than once, we see Huck choose to “go to hell” rather than go along with the rules and follow what he has been taught. Huck bases these decisions on his experiences, his own sense of logic, and what his developing conscience tells him. On the raft, away from civilization, Huck is especially free from society’s rules, able to make his own decisions without restriction. Through deep introspection, he comes to his own conclusions, unaffected by the accepted—and often hypocritical—rules and values of Southern culture. By the novel’s end, Huck has learned to “read” the world around him, to distinguish good, bad, right, wrong, menace, friend, and so on. His moral development is sharply contrasted to the character of Tom Sawyer, who is influenced by a bizarre mix of adventure novels and Sunday-school teachings, which he combines to justify his outrageous and potentially harmful escapades. This shows the readers about the intellectual and moral education

Given the book’s title, the theme of “adventure” in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* tends to conjure a sense of immaturity and childish make-believe. The book begins by pointing backward to its prequel, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and the boyish exploits that resulted in Tom and Huck striking it rich. Chapter 2 continues this type of adventure, with Tom and his “Gang” of highwaymen. This spirit of adventure as play follows Huck beyond St. Petersburg. But the real-life situations Huck and Jim find themselves in frequently demonstrate that adventure is not what Tom and his games have made it out to be. By the end of the book, when Tom returns and tries to enforce an overly complicated” plan for Jim’s escape, the

very foundations of adventure have come to strike Huck as childish and unrealistic. Even so, Huck retains some lust for adventure, which he demonstrates when he declares his intent to leave Pikesville and “light out for the Territory.”

A lot of superstition can be found In the novel mainly two types of believe systems can be found in this novel they are Christianity and superstition educated people like widow Douglas follow Christianity whereas un educated people like Jim and huck have many superstitions Huck and Jim read “bad signs” into everything, as when a spider burns in a candle, or Huck touches a snakeskin. Jim even has a magic hairball, taken from an ox’s stomach, that, when given money, supposedly tells the future. Huck and Jim find so many bad signs in the natural world that, whenever anything bad happens to them, they’re sure to have a sign to blame it on. However, one of the subtle jokes of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, a joke with nevertheless serious implications, is that, silly as superstition is, it is a more accurate way to read the world than formal religion is. It is silly for Huck and Jim to read bad signs into everything, but it is not at all silly for them to expect bad things to be just around the corner; for they live in a world where nature is dangerous, even fatally malevolent, and where people behave irrationally, erratically, and, oftentimes, violently. In contrast, formal religion dunks its practitioners into ignorance and, worse, cruelty.

Huckleberry Finn and his life present a natural lifestyle through his independence, uncultured manners, and plain behaviour. His desire to be free is a way of civilization because he has been raised without discipline at home. He has seen the natural behaviour of his father under intoxication and tolerated violence. Huck knows that Widow Douglas wants to make him a civilized young man, but it is at the expense of the loss of his true nature. Hence, he does not want to be civilized.

Moreover, it is his natural behaviour that he becomes Jim's friend. Huck also confronts his own community to abolish slavery because of its hypocrisy in the cultured life.

## Conclusion

In conclusion the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a novel which was courageous enough to point the arrogant belief system of white superiority of the southern American's towards the black. By reading this novel it is immediately understood that the author Mark Twain is completely against the slavery and racism. It is really evident through his satirical tone of writing and the different elements of the story such as characters for example when Pap mocks of the black man who had the will to vote, he considered him as inhuman and have no rights to vote like any other white man. Through this character we can see the foolishness and ignorance of Pap. The character of pap is representing all the foolish and arrogant racist people in America who thinks of them as superior.

The fact that the author is not racist can be seen throughout the character of huckleberry Finn in the beginning Huck is like any Southern person who sees Blacks as inferior and not human as they are only slaves and property who have no right to do anything. But when he starts his journey with the black slave Jim through the Mississippi river Huck realises that Jim protects him from many dangerous situations they encounter. All these aspects show that the slave Jim is really human being and a really sensitive person and from here Huck recognizes that Jim has the total right to live freely with his family and he merits respect and admiration. and from that point Huck's behaviour towards the slave Jim starts to change as it becomes more positive, he starts to believe in his conscience to help Jim to be free despite the fact that he will confront his society rules, showing that Twain is totally against slavery.

It appears all over the novel that Twain is against the idea of slavery and racism. He portrays the character Jim as sensitive, honest and reasonable like loyal

friend and real father who cares for his family and on the other hand, Twain makes the white character Pap who mistreats his own son Huck and his bad habits in contrast to Jim. Author also uses some white characters' behaviours to criticize the hypocrisy of society and civilization as well as to show to what extent they support slavery. For example, the King and the Duke who are frauds and they trick many innocent people, the Shepherdsons and the Grangerfords two feuding families whose main reason is to kill each other with no mercy. He wrote *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* with a negative view of society to show his real opinion that he is against the thoughts and beliefs of southern people over different issues such as slavery and racism through characters actions and behaviour. Furthermore, he portrays southern society that is filled with ill racist behaviour.

The events of the story happened before the Civil War when slavery was still legal and he focuses on slaves suffering through Jim. Twain also criticise the hypocrisy of society through Miss Watson who owned the slave Jim and Aunt Sally who believe that slavery is obligatory for life even though they are ethically correct and religious. They agree to sell Jim down the river and separate him from his family. This creates moral confusion and shows Mark Twain's view that society is full of evil and corruption. Also, when Jim is captured by the King and the Duke, they sell him without hesitation and all what they were looking for is the reward. And When Huck sees the acts of the Duke and the King and the way they treat Jim who becomes his loyal friend, he starts to have doubts about what he learns from society. He cannot understand why people treat Blacks in such bad way, then he begins to understand the injustice of society and he decides to run away from them it can also be considered a running away and breaking free from the contemporary ideology of the society.

Unfortunately, this negative racist attitude towards blacks in the United States can still be found even nowadays, two centuries after the publication of Twain's novel which proves how far sighted and visionary he was. Mark Twain denounces the social acts and values of the southern society focussing on the issue of slavery and racism during the pre-civil war era, he believes that there is no reason for the whites, whether devoted Christians or aristocracy to believe they are superior to Blacks. Twain Criticizes Southerners for not being caring and loving persons towards slaves but they are rather spoilt by their chase for money, heaven and lost honour.

## Works Cited

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1986.

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1986

“*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* slavery in American society” Spark Notes, 4 May 2021.

[www.sparknotes.com/lit/huckfinn/context/historical/slavery-and-american-society/](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/huckfinn/context/historical/slavery-and-american-society/)

“*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* themes” Grade saver, 4 May 2021.

[www.gradesaver.com/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/study-guide/bibliography](http://www.gradesaver.com/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/study-guide/bibliography)

"*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: An Overview." Gale Essential Overviews: Scholarly,

Gale, 2006. [www.gale.com/open-access/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn](http://www.gale.com/open-access/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn)

Wilson, Joshua. "*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Themes." LitCharts. LitCharts LLC, 19

Sep 2013. [www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/themes](http://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/themes)

Wilson, Joshua. "*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Themes: Slavery and Racism."

LitCharts. LitCharts LLC, 19 Sep 2013. Web. [www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/themes/slavery-and-racism](http://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/themes/slavery-and-racism)

Wilson, Joshua. "*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Themes: Society and Hypocrisy."

LitCharts. LitCharts LLC, 19 Sep 2013. [www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/themes/society-and-hypocrisy](http://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/themes/society-and-hypocrisy)