
**TWAIN'S HANDLING OF HUMOR AND SATIRE IN HIS NOVEL THE
ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN**

Jamal Nafi¹ Rashed Daghamin^{2*}

1. Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Al-Quds University, East Jerusalem, P.O. Box: 20002, Palestinian Occupied Territories.

2. Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Hail University, Hail, P.O. Box: 2152, Saudi Arabia.

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT: *The main objective of this study is to provide a descriptive account of the nature and way of Mark Twain's handling of humor and satire used in his novel, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884). The study also aims to shed light on whether Twain intended his novel to be humorous, or the humor was unconscious and unrealistic. The researcher sheds light on some major characters and scenes that exhibit the different types of humor and satire. The novel is a classic work of humor that becomes blended with satire, in which Twain became skeptic and agnostic and turned against mankind for its inhumanity. The story arouses humor in different means such as lies, deceptions, machinations of plot, prevarications of Huck and Tom, and through the superstitious beliefs of the primitive character, Jim. The study found out that the novel is a masterpiece of fun, farce and satire. The humor borders on farce; it is low and realistic. The researcher concluded that the novel is doubtlessly picaresque, farcical, comical and satirical. The chief characteristic of its humor is that it is American; the blend of different dialects, the misspellings; creating humor presupposed the correct knowledge of the spellings by the reader. This feeling creates a kind of humor that is pathetic. The frauds and the deceptions used in the incidents, the anecdotes, angularities, and the eccentricities of the characters portrayed have further enhanced the comic effect in the novel. With these traits is juxtaposed Twain's biting satire, and his work is the first of its kind.*

KEYWORDS: Mark Twain, Humor, Satire, Adventures of Huck Finn.

Introduction

Mark Twain (1835 –1910) has been regarded as the “funny man of America,” the Wild Humorist of the Pacific Slope” (Clemens, 1962, p. 129). He became the most representative writer and a great humorist in American literature in the nineteenth century. The sources of his humor were the conditions of the West which had awakened the creative genius in Petroleum V. Nasby, Orpheus C. Kerr and Bret Harte too. The goldrush in Nevada and California, the inhospitable environment and the pioneers' struggle with the awful circumstances caused tensions and repressions which found their outlet in “profaneness of language and murder.” Twain was a product of the West, the Frontier which comprised the Pacific coast and the Old South West. Cunliffe (1954) remarks about the conditions of the people in the Frontiers:

Much of it was wildness, thinly populated by Indians and white

hunters and trappers, until the first settlers came, life was hard, they survived by developing self-reliance to an extraordinary degree and developed a contempt for niceties of speech or social observances. (P. 162)

From the above words one can understand the fact that the pioneers lived in difficult circumstances, and that the life in the West turned many writers humorists. Mark Twain, Orpheus C., Kerr, Petroleum V. Nasby and Bret Harte all were great humorist of America, writing under pen names at that time.

Brooks (1886) has psycho-analyzed the causes of humor in Twain and traced them to the tensions and repressions caused in him by the Western life. The tension was due to the environment of the miner and the prospector whose instinctive life had been smothered. The reaction of the humorist was instinctive. Twain was actually aware of the battle with the environment, the dry desert, the absence of amenities and the hardships caused. According to Solomon (1961), these difficulties made human life unbearable and difficult to live. Depicting the nature of the foreboding place where the pioneers lived. Twain (1884) remarks that Nevada:

is a place where the devils would feel homesick. It never rains here and the dew never falls. No flowers grow here and no green thing gladdens the eye. Our city lies in the midst of a desert of the purest, most unadulterated and uncompromising. (P. 13)

The above words illustrate the idea that Twain realized that the greed impelled people to live in such a place unfit for human habitation. The gold seekers community lived in freedom and also under self-imposed restrictions curbing that freedom. People owed no allegiance to the social, political and religious values which were the cementing factors elsewhere. They could not conform to them, and at the same time the common aspiration uniting them had deprived them of many normal things of life.

This paper is an attempt to critically explore and analyze the humorous and satiric aspect of Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884). The critical approach was adopted by shedding light on some major characters and scenes that exhibit the different types of humor and satire.

DISCUSSION

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884) is a classic work of humor, and the humor becomes blended with satire, in which Twain became skeptic and agnostic and turned against mankind for its inhumanity (Rourke, 1953). Twain has delineated Huck's escape from the so called civilized society of his time. Huck, the white boy has developed friendship with the nigger Jim and with the help of Tom Sawyer frees him from thralldom. The story arouses humor in different means such as lies, deceptions, machinations of plot, prevarications of Huck and Tom, and

through the superstitious beliefs of the primitive character, Jim. Bercovitch (1999) states that “the story is humorous because it’s told in the quintessential American Boy, Huck Finn, and according to the American humorist, Mark Twain, the humorous story is essentially quintessentially American” (p. 8). In his late essay entitled “How to Tell a Story and Other Stories,” Twain (1897) explains this saying:

The humorous story is American, the comic story is English, the witty story is French. The humorous story depends for its effect upon the manner of telling; the comic story and the witty story upon the matter... The Humorous story bubbles gently along, the others burst. The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it; but the teller of the comic story tells you beforehand that it is one of the funniest things he has ever heard, then tells it with eager delight, and is the first person to laugh when he gets through. Very often, of course, the rambling and disjointed humorous story finishes with a nub, point, snapper, or whatever you like to call it. (P. 1)

The above words are worthy to be quoted because they distinguish the different types of comic stories and give the reader of Twain a hint on how to read his stories. As is made clear by Twain himself, a story cannot be considered humorous unless its humor is spontaneous, natural and not affected, and unless it is told seriously by the author. A humorous story, according to him, ends with a twist that creates irony in the narrative. An irony that is unexpected by the casual reader of Twain.

According to Breton (1972), two types of humor are used throughout in the novel: “One pure fantasy, completely spontaneous; the other more thoughtful and tinged with seriousness” (p. 31). Twain did not want or had no effort to diffuse his text with fantasy, and he never looked for a true originality in this genre. Twain limits himself to following the well-established tradition of the Western humorist regarding his themes and techniques, added Breton. Twain contributes to the American humor through his irresistible nerves, his boisterous high spirits and his superior handling of language. But his humor remains at heart the rough laughter of the West, the vast joking of the miner’s camp which relaxes the nerves after a hard day of labor. A humor which is often too exclusively verbal, in any case transient; a contest of absurdity in which the participants display their ingenuity in spinning fantastic yarns.

The other type of humor is altogether different. It is not affected or superficial since it emerges from the very depth of the Twain’s personality. Fantasy then becomes a comic mask for common sense, which imposes its rules on the imagination. It is no longer a matter of rough farce, but the amusing apologue which invokes laughter castigates manners and morals. Such humor already partakes of satire, which is the alleged tool used by the author to attack society’s manners and outlooks. There is bitterness and grudge in it. The complex and impassioned personality of Mark Twain can be recognized in it. In certain passages one seems to be reading Sterne: there is the same knowledge of the human heart, the same feeling for nuances. It’s like

reading Jonathan Swift. According to Baldanza (1961), “here Twain has not been able to restrain his generous indignation” (p. 12). He is still joking, but the laughter grows more bitter, indeed almost sarcastic. One understands then how such divergent judgment could have been passed on him. Both types of humor are used and should not be neglected by the reader. Twain will appear either an overgrown child who amuses himself in the simplicity of his heart with enormous lies, or an embittered sentimentalist who barely hides his deep pessimism beneath the mask of humor. “If men must laugh together in order to forget their hardships, the laughter is loud, rough and nervous, with overtones of disillusionment and bitterness: the humor of far West” (Breton, 1972, p. 35).

Tom Sawyer, a rich leader of the mischievous boys, plays tricks. He forms his own gang of robbers with Huck, Joe Harper and Ben Rogers and lets them believe that they are not the ordinary robbers, but highway men. Scott (2005) declares that “As the critical view of Tom has grown increasingly negative, interestingly, the critical view of Jim has become more complex and positive, elevating him from stage prop to active participant, even during the evasion” (p. 1). This suggests that even Jim has a big role to play in the narrative. All of them have been living in a cave and they are going to waylay and rob a party of Spanish merchants and rich Arabs. They live in a world of make-believe. The people who fall their victim in fact are not rich Arabs, but the schoolboys on a Sunday picnic party. Tom Sawyer, in one of his great lies, has asked his companions to attack the part of the rich Spanish merchants who are supposed to be carrying diamonds on two hundred elephants and six hundred camels and over a thousand mules. The party is attacked, the children run away. They simply get doughnuts and jam, “... but we never got anything but some doughnuts and jam, though Ben Rogers got a rag doll, and Joe Harper got a hymn book and a tract” (p. 22). Tom also believes that the rich party has got magic rings.

The novel has many traits of the picaresque fiction. It is like Italian novella in its realistic spirit and can also be treated as comic epic in prose. It blends laughter and villainy with the element of epic, the great moving force, the River. The following quotation best illustrates how humorous the novel is:

Further, Twain’s novel also can be called the comic epic in prose: comic, because it employs great strokes of wit and humor and the scourge of laughter-to attack the evils of mankind and the consequent sins of society; epic, because its moving force, the great River, is also a stream in time and in history, bearing its raft of Argonauts to various shores where lies the relics, wrecks and hopes of a civilization in transition...In the speech of Huck Finn, Twain fashioned a new literary language in colloquial American seen at its best in the descriptions of the River, where the cadences and the vigor of spoken language are expressed by a great artist with such authority... (Clemens, 1962, p. 9)

The above words suggest that Twain’s story is like an epic because of the many adventures it narrates. Comic because of the excessive use of wit and humor on different levels in the

narrative. The novel can be described as didactic since it teaches people how to resist and avoid the ill of a civilization that is breaking up into pieces and breaks up the soul of the individual. The language that Huck uses to address others is realistic, which gives the novel the element of realism.

Huckleberry Finn has few traits of picaresque fiction in being anti-romantic and episodic in construction, with no organic development of plot, and truthful in its spirit, and in employment of local dialects. It is also a grim satire on the evils of society. The following words from the beginning of the novel illustrate how truthful and realistic Twain has been in narrating this fictional work:

You don't know about me, without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly, or the widow, or maybe Mary. Aunt Polly—Tom's Aunt Polly, she is—and Mary, and the Widow Douglas is all told about in that book, which is mostly a true book, with some stretchers, as I said before. (P. 1)

Spoken by the narrator himself, the above words give the sense of relaxation to the reader that what he is going to read is truthful and realistic, though fictional. It's like saying to the readers that the author, Twain, would be honest and will tell what he has seen and felt. This quotation is what makes the reader identify himself/herself with the narrator for a better involvement in the story, and for a better sharing of feelings.

Trilling (1948) is of the view that the truth of honesty, which is beautiful and adequate, is what makes the novel a great text or a masterpiece in prose. The truth of moral passion is another reason why the novel is great. The novel deals directly with the virtue and depravity of man's heart, the two aspects of the human soul, which are in eternal conflict with one another. But in a society like the one depicted in the novel, the depravity of man and his excessive materialism overrides his virtues.

Tom Sawyer's fanatic and elaborate schemes prepared in a grand manner lead to Jim's freedom in the conclusive part of the novel. Tom Sawyer impersonating as Sid in Aunt Sally's farm and Huck acting as Tom Sawyer execute the plan to free Jim from his imprisonment in the Phelps' farm. They enter the room adjacent to Jim's cell and dig a tunnel to enable them to enter Jim's room. At Tom's suggestion, Jim and Tom bring a huge piece of rock into the cell to enable Jim to inscribe a journal on it. With the use onions, Jim will be made to draw tears from his eyes to water some plant grown in the darkness of the cell, acting similar to the prisoners in the romances. Jim will have a coat of arms prepared and will be provided with the company of rats, snakes and spiders in the cell. He has also got a rope-ladder sent to him backed in a pie. When Jim has lived like prisoners in the romances and the arrangement completed, he is rescued from his imprisonment amidst fighting and shooting. Mcghee & Goldsrein (1981) are of the opinion

that “Tom’s romantic and fantastic schemes have been humorously and critically portrayed” (p. 17).

Tom lives in a land of fantasy and Huck, an orphan, whose mother is dead, and further a drunkard, is Tom’s companion and finds civilization irksome. He feels uncomfortable in the clothes and prefers his rags. He is also a man of inventive mind with sound practical wisdom. He practices self-deception, lies to conceal his identity and makes false statements, and stages his own murder. Trilling ((1948)) asserts the fact that it was not possible for Twain to carry Tom Sawyer beyond boyhood-in maturity “he would lie just like all the other one-horse men of literature and the reader would conceive a hearty contempt for him” (p, 14).

All the tricks of the plot arouse laughter. He plans a scheme to create the impression on Pap and the village people that he has been murdered. He kills a hog into the forest and sprinkles blood on the floor and the door and drags a sack of rock towards the river, creating circumstantial evidence of his murder, and of the dead body having been thrown into the river. According to BOUTOUIL (2014),”Huck resembles the river in the sense that both of them have no beginning and no end” (p. 67). What is meant by these words is that there is no beginning and no end to Huck’s dislike grudge for civilization, which he considers evil, so the affinity between Huck and the River is there for a purpose. Various characters try to escape through the river, which became a symbol for independence and liberty for those chocked by civilization. The other significance of the River is that it can be associated with dictatorship, since it determines the ways of the two characters that use it to escape to other places, whether desired or not. Sometimes the two characters, Huck and Jim find themselves in places they have never wished to be in, added BOUTOUIL.

In delineating the character of Huck, Twain uses the material of the frontier realists, but unlike them, he uses humor to show how limited human reason is that it becomes difficult to discriminate between appearance and reality. A striking example of this is Huck’s trip to the circus to counterpoint through humor one of the most somber episodes of the novel. At the circus Huck comes across a drunken man whose life is endangered not by pistol fire but by his insistence to attempt equestrian acrobatics. Ultimately the drunken person is allowed by the ring master to show his feats, he mounts a horse, “his heels flying in the air every jump, and the whole crowd of people standing up shouting till tears rolled down” (p. 151). The horse, suddenly, breaks loose from the roustabouts and the drunk seems heading towards certain death. This is greatly entertaining to the audience, except, of course, Huck, who said, “It wasn’t funny to me, though, I was all of a tremble to see his danger” (p. 151). This seeming drunk later turns out to be an experienced performer. But when we recollect the behavior of the crowd at the drama of Bogg’s death, we see that though Huck is naïve, his simple compassion is preferable to the sensation seeking crowd that runs to have a look at the corpse:

but people that had the places wouldn’t give them up, and folks behind them was saying all the time, “Say, now, you’ve looked enough, you fellows; ‘tain’t right and ‘tain’t fair for you to stay thar all the time, and never give nobody a chance; other folks has their rights as well as you. (Pp. 146-147)

This scene, instead of being funny, is very somber, and it makes us grieve. There is a streak of irony discernible in the attitude of the onlookers. And when one long, lean and thin fellow performs the mock-shooting, the onlookers say, “he done it perfect” (p. 147). Then he is entertained by half a dozen people with whiskey. On the other hand, Huck is touched by the sorrow expressed by Bogg’s daughter. The other onlookers are totally detached. In reality the whole town watches as Boggs breathes his last, a weighty Bible laid upon his chest to ease his departing soul. The entire episode is a classic example of satirical humor stretched to tragic bounds.

Huck escapes with Jim and forges lies to the slave-hunter that the family is sick with smallpox. When he is introduced to the Grangerfords, he says that he is Jackson and when he wanders into the Phelps’ farm, he declares himself to be Tom Sawyer. He misinforms people about his real identity and saves himself from the predicament of the situation in which he finds himself. The humor is in his self-deceptions and in his lies. This is mixed with the pathos in the character of Huck who has slept in hogshead, is an orphan and has been cruelly treated by his father, Pap. The funny situation and some of the eccentricities and the childish pranks of the boy provide key to the humor of the book.

The third pathetic and humorous figure is Jim, the nigger, who is a slave. Smith (2014) states that “He is an agent of humor and entertainment not only for Tom and Huck but also for readers” (n. p.). The black man with a white heart is a victim of the blind superstitions. The novel has portrayed dreams, omens, and superstitious beliefs in the magic, ghosts and witches. Huck and Jim both have faith in the significance of the supernatural world and the prognostication of the future. Twain, in fact, has made Negroes, children and riff-raff as the bearers of the folk superstitions in his novel. Some of the superstitious beliefs traced to the African origin, in fact, were held by the white people and originated in Europe. Twain wrote the novel in Connecticut long after he had left the company of the superstitious people and it was by some error that in him negro slaves became synonymous with all sorts of magical practices and witchcraft.

When, in a personal interview, by Richard Ernsberger Jr. (2015) who asked how Huck’s “thinly veiled contempt” (p. 26) for parents, teachers and society reflect Twain’s own need to tweak Victorian attitudes, Levy’s (2015) reply was “A lot. But sometimes Huck was a mouthpiece, too, for what Twain imagined children thought. And sometimes Huck was the butter of the joke, and Jim, the slave escaping throughout the book, is the reflection of Twain’s own attitudes” (p. 26). This interview suggests that Twain had much grudge against society and parents, who did not raise up their children well. In the novel, Jim has been associated with the black and the white both, the superstitious and the novelist has linked the superstition, slavery, freedom and boyhood.

Jim is be-fooled by Tom when his hat is placed on the branches of a tree and he believes that the devil has given him the five-cent piece which has been left in Miss Watson’s kitchen by Tom. He tells all the niggers that he has been bewitched, placed in trance and made to ride over the whole state. Jim has a magic hair ball which has been taken out of the fourth stomach of an

ox. It is used by him to probe into the future. When Huck goes to consult Jim about his father, Jim speaks:

Yo'ole father doan' know yit what he's a-gwyne to do. Sometimes he spec he'll go'way, en den ag'in the spec he'll stay. De bes'way is to res'casy en let de ole man take his own way. Dey's two angels hoverin' round' 'bout him. One uv'em is white en shiny, en t'other one is black. De white one gits him to go right a little while, del de black one sail in en bust it all up. A body can't tell yit which one gwyne to fetch him at de las. (Pp. 26-27)

In the above quotation the author makes Jim speak in the local dialect which is understandable by his friends and those whom he is associated with. The words suggest some kind of confusion on the part of the speaker whose future is uncertain. The words also show how superstition has had a great influence on the people when this book was written. Jim communicates to Huck having consulted his magic hair-ball about the movement of his father everything appears so absurd and ludicrous, yet Jim's faith in superstitions are implicit.

Jim having run away to Jackson's island to conceal himself from the slave hunters, encounters Huck about whose murder the news is already current and the village people are making frantic efforts to make the dead body come up to the river surface by firing cannon shells into the water, Jim believes that he has met the ghost of Huck and prays not to be hurt. He bounced up and stared at me wild. Then he drops down on his knees, and puts his hands together and says:

Doan' hurt me-don't! I hain't ever done no harm to a ghos.' I alwus liked dead people, en done all I could for 'em. You go en git in de river ag'in, whah you b'longs, en doan' do nuffin to Ole Jim 'at 'us alwuz yo' fren. (P. 49)

As the above words make clear that, the absurdity and the incongruity of the situation lie in the fact that Jim who has heard about Huck's murder is convinced that he is face to face with Huck's ghost. His delusion has become intense owing to his superstitious belief in the ghosts and the witches. But Huck is very much alive and it takes little time to dispel his doubt. Smith (2014) hold the opinion that "To argue that Jim is, in fact, wearing the mask in this moment, though, places a heavy burden on Jim's ability to perceive Huck and his internal machinations" (n. p.). Behaving abnormally and against ones' nature is a burden on a human being, and this is the case with Jim, who always wanted and wished to be released from this role.

Twain's style and the art of narration has lent a unique charm to the book and enhanced the humorous effects. The author writes in the beginning of the book in the Explanatory note:

In the book a number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri Negro dialect; the extremist form of the backwoods Southwestern dialect; the ordinary. 'Pike County' dialect: and four modified varieties of this last. The shadings have not been done in a haphazard fashion, or by guesswork: but painstakingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech. (P. 10)

The above words indicate that various characters in the novel talk in different dialects. Lynn (1960) holds the opinion that "the prose of Twain with the conglomeration of the dialects becomes interesting and witty" (p. 9). Twain and Artemus Ward were lecturers and the charm of their narration in the art of telling. The use of puns, misspellings and the American Malapropisms used by them had their tremendous effect on the hearers and much of their beauty was gone in print. Today these carefully spelled out dialects may be dull enough but the subtle variation of speech in the novel are still part of the liveliness and flavor of the book. The sentence structure in this novel is simple, direct and fluent reflecting the intonations of the speaking voice and maintaining the rhythms of the word groups.

Zhong (2012) emphasizes the idea that "In *How to tell a story*, Mark Twain pointed out that the basis of American art style is to combine all the incongruous or absurd things aimlessly in the guise of sheer ignorance of it" (p. 128). Which supports the idea explained earlier, which are that an author should be careful in adopting the style suitable to achieve the objectives he/she aims at. Twain was very careful in selecting words, words that make the reader laugh unconsciously, and this what makes the humor in his novel unaffected and spontaneous. Geographical location, culture, maturity, level of education, and context all determine whether a reader finds a text humorous or not, added Zhong.

The humor of the novel is cruel and American. The two chief characteristics of this humor are its cynicism, cruelty and violence, and its delineation of the past with nostalgic memories, a sense of disenchantment in future. "I believe they are in the business of training corporate workers to be assigned to berserk corporations all over America to speed up the breaking of the human spirit." (Veron, 1976, pp. 228-229, as cited in Zhong, 2014, p. 128). Twain has portrayed the free spirit, enterprise and the adventure of his boyish days in Huck's journeys and explorations on the river. He has glorified the days of his childhood, the life of a sailor on the river, the life around, the bitterness, murders, hopes and disillusionment. Pritchett (1991) treating this novel, astonishing for its variety of force and humor, emphasizes the power of the American nostalgia:

The peculiar power of American nostalgia is that it is not only harking back to something lost in the past, but suggests also the tragedy of a lost future. As Huck Finn and old Jim drift down the Mississippi from one horrifying little town to the next, and hear the voices of men quietly swearing at one another across the water, as they pass the time of the day with the scroungers, rogues, murderers, the lonely women,

the frothing revivalists, the maundering boatmen and fantastic drunks of the river-towns, we see the human wastage that is left in the wake of a great effort of the human will, the hopes frustrated the idealism which has been whittled down to eccentricity and craft. These people are the price paid for building a new country. (P. 307)

The spectacles seen by these boys do not dishearten and disappoint. The value of Twain's humor is deep-seated in the reality of human nature: "the ability of man to adjust himself to circumstance and to live somehow" (1991, p. 309).

The element of movement introduced in the novel has softened the cruelties and is a great consoler. The novel has introduced many violent incidents and cruelties, injustices, vulgarity, deaths and murder. Allen (1954) examines the view that "there is an element of rebellion in the boy's break with the civilization" (p. 19). Pap's drunkenness, his ghastly murder, the fraudulent practices of the Duke and the Dauphin, the fights between two ancient feudal and aristocratic families of the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons, Buck's death and Bogg's murder make the novel gloomy and tragic, and it is the boy's reporting with a sense of objectivity that makes it interesting. "The sardonic and the important fact that in this book Mark Twain never forced a point nor overwrote-in the Dickens's way, for example-are of course the transfiguring and beguiling forces" (Clemens, 1962, p. 309). Twain, like Poe, revels in grim humor and satirical portrait of his character. The following quotation from the novel best illustrates how civilization is viewed by the main characters:

The Widow Douglas she took me for her son, and allowed she would civilize me; but it was rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn't stand it no longer I lit out. I got into my old rags and my sugar-hogshead again, and was free and satisfied. But Tom Sawyer he hunted me up and said he was going to start a band of robbers, and I might join if I would go back to the widow and be respectable. So I went back. (P. 2)

In the above lines, extracted from the beginning of the novel, it is very much clear that Huck is opposed to "civilizing," which seems natural for a young boy rebelling against his parents and other authorities. We may wish to laugh and make fun of the boy's request and attempt to escape from the civilized society, but when we think carefully, we realize that this decision is taken by a boy with the observation of a man, who thinks that society is worthless and mean. Tom's group of robbers seems to be made of criminals playing a game. Tom's hatred for society and civilization remained until the end of the novel and affected all major decisions he tries to make throughout his journey.

Twain was able to laugh at the Puritan way of life. At Pokeville we find the King exploiting his audience is duped not because they are not intelligent people, but because they have a penchant for romantic sensation and excitement. Here, Huck, informs us, though are listening to the King, their eyes are directed by Mark Twain towards a side where "some of the old women were

knitting and some of the young folks were courting on the sly” (p. 134). The Puritan sobriety is contrasted with the levity of the people by Mark Twain so that he could expose the absurdity of the formal attitude of the people in general.

Twain has also used parody and burlesque to undercut the conventional social values. This he does so that he could bring his readers to his side against the values of the Mississippi valley society. The Duke burlesque the soliloquy of Hamlet. On the other hand, the ritual of Tom Sawyer’s gang is a parody like Poe. Twain also used hoax to enlarge the effects of his humor. Gerber (1988) provides the following analysis of the comic pose of Mark Twain:

Fundamentally there are two ways to confront life falsely. Either one can pretend that life is more agreeable to the spirit and amenable to the will than it really is, or one can pretend that it is less so. One can exaggerate his superiority to human affairs or his inferiority to them. As the narrator ‘Mark Twain,’ Twain did both. He pretended undue superiority, for example, in posing as the gentleman, the Sentimentalist, the Instructor, and the Moralist; he assumed undue inferiority in posing as the sufferer, the Simpleton, and the Tenderfoot. (P. 7)

Twain became a satirist whose humor has become sardonic. He resembles Edgar Allan Poe whose macabre imagination made him grim in his work. He has shown contempt for humanity, and has also become violent in his criticism of man and depicted murders and death. The satire on man becomes more deadly in some of Twain’s stories.

The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn is a satire and began as a farce on the romances and the romantic life of the middle ages, the age of monarchs and the kings. Later, however, it became a serious affair, and began to move towards a tragic recognition that freedom cannot be attained in this or any other world. This tragic dilemma is not fully worked out by Twain; instead, he take shelter in a joke when he suddenly veers back towards the long ending which is a masterpiece of farce, unmatched in any literature.

Twain stresses the importance of progress in England; he indicts the harsh intellectual control of the Catholic religion and the vices of monarchy. People in the middle ages groaned under poverty and the aristocracy suffered from the vices of wealth. His nights are dishonest. Twain is also conscious of the evils which grew in the wake of the industrial expansion.

The wrecked steamboat Walter Scott with robbers inside and the books discovered in them dealing with the lives of the ancient dukes and the kings denote Twain’s attitude towards the historical romances and their subject-matter, which have been ridiculed. The Duke and the Dauphin are the satirical portraits of the ancient dukes and kings. They are the swindlers, twisters and crooks who attempt to fleece people of their money through fair or foul means, they change their role from place to place in order to conceal their identity and impersonate as the brothers of Peter Wilks to inherit his fortune. They are at last degraded, tarred and feathered.

Fishkin (1995) is of the opinion that “the blackness in Huck Finn’s language, the way in which his rhythms, idioms and syntax echo African-American voices. She is concerned to affirm the belief that literary works are multiply voiced and, more particularly, that they are multi-culturally voiced” (n. p.). What is meant by these words is that Twain deliberately did that in order to stress the fact that all Americans are brothers and should be treated on equal terms. Both, the black and white belong to the same culture and any kind of discrimination should be avoided. This is what one can call the indirect bite of the grim satire.

Twain criticized the corrupt officials and pointed out the vices of the administrators and the legislators. With the title of “general censor” he embarked upon his task of exposing the corruptions deep-rooted in the society the officials were afraid of him and created difficulties in his way. The eradication of evils from the society was not possible, because people possessed by the greed of wealth subordinated every other issue to this aspiration. They were pleased with his humor which provided the business men an entertainment. He came in clash with people and had to leave Virginia for San Francisco.

It’s worthy to give a brief background about slavery at the time this novel was written. The institution of slavery and bonded labor was a distinctive feature of the new American social life when this novel was written. There was a severe shortage of men to work on the land. Slaves and bonded laborers were imported from various poor countries of the world, especially Africa. People in Europe, too, who were anxious to go to the New World but could not pay the passage money, willingly sold themselves as bonded servants or indentured servants to work for the buyer of the land for a certain number of years, where after they became free men. Sometimes children were caught in the streets of the English ports and taken by force to America, where they became apprentices. The Portuguese had control of the great part of the African coast and were able to buy slaves from the African chiefs. Soon after the English and the Dutch also joined in this slave trade. The African slaves were sold like cattle by the nigger traders in the growing cities of America. The slaves were sold for life. They could not own property, could not carry guns, could not do any business, and could not hold meetings. Their children too belonged to the owner, not to the parents. Tom Sawyer’s romantic schemes and indulgence in fantasy is again an adverse comment on the devices adopted in romances, and were “non-existent in reality” (Wagenknecht, 1969, p. 10). There is an element of exaggeration and absurdity in the elaborate plans of Tom Sawyer, introduced at the end of the novel to get Jim rescued from slavery, which was the worst institution to exist at that time.

Twain’s most vivid picture of the Southern cruelty and feudal life is a denunciation of the barbarities and also a scathing criticism of the persisting ideals of the middle ages in the feuds of the two families, the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons. Huck is simply stunned and shocked to see the brutality and murder and wants to run away from this society to his raft in the river, a symbol of peace and tranquility in the chaos of life. This journey from place to place has mitigated his sense of suffering. This cruelty is best illustrated by the following words:

It was a close place. I took . . . up [the letter I’d written to Miss Watson],
and held it in my hand. I was a-trembling, because I’d got to decide,

forever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself: "All right then, I'll go to hell"—and tore it up. It was awful thoughts and awful words, but they was said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about reforming. (P. 217)

These lines mark the moral climax of the novel. As has been seen, Jim, who has been soled as a slave believes that to go back to his rightful owner and remain a slave and his friend Huck a captive, is better than to remain far from home. Huck writes a letter to Miss Watson, telling her where Jim is. When Huck thinks of his friendship with Jim and realizes that Jim will be sold down the river in any case, he decides to tear it up. According to Huck, "going to "hell," if it means following his gut and not society's hypocritical and cruel principles, is a better option than going to everyone else's heaven. This moment of decision represents Huck's true break with the world around him. At this point, Huck makes up his mind to help Jim escape slavery forever. Huck also realizes that he does not want to go back to the "sivilized" world. After all his experiences and psychological journey, Tom wants to move on to the freedom of the West instead rather than stay where he was.

Smith (1963) is of the view that the element of social satire of the town along the river is the second great element in the novel, Huck's and Jim's adventures in their fight toward freedom, is another element that lends greatness to the novel. The satire is often very funny, especially in episodes involving the rascally Duke and King, but it can also deal in appalling violence, as in the Grangerford-Shepherdson feud or Colonel Sherburn's murder of the helpless Boggs.

CONCLUSION

The novel is a masterpiece of fun, force and satire. The humor borders on farce. It is low and realistic. The farcical inventions of Huck and Tom arouse our guffaws of laughter. It is Dickensian, crude and meant for laymen. It is unique in many respects, because it is different from the English or the French humor. Abdullatief (2014) has stressed the fact that "The various forms of contemporary satire imply how satire is as much a common part of everyday spoken and written interaction as any of the other humour practices such as jokes, witticisms, puns, humorous anecdotes, etc. (p. 23). And all these ingredients were used by Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to achieve certain effects intended by the author.

The novel doubtlessly is picaresque, farcical, comical and satirical. The chief characteristic of its humor is that it is American the blend of different dialects, the misspellings; creating humor presupposed the correct knowledge of the spellings by the reader. Blair (1960, as cited in Zhong, 2012, p. 126) says that "When I see people of shallow understanding, extravagantly dressed, I always feel sorry---for the clothes" (p. 120). This feeling creates a kind of humor that is pathetic. The frauds and the deceptions used in the incidents and the anecdotes and angularities and the eccentricities of the characters portrayed have further enhanced the comic effects in the novel. With these traits is juxtaposed Twain's satire, and his work is the first of its kind.

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