



Racism and Fingerprint as an Iconic Tool by Mark Twain's novels

“Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” and “The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson”

Mr. C. Saravana Raja M.A., M.Phil.

Ph.D. Research Scholar [Part time]

PG & Research Department of English

Hindusthan College of Arts and Science

Coimbatore

Dr. C. Leena

Associate Professor

PG & Research Department of English

Hindusthan College of Arts and Science

Coimbatore.

Abstract:

In the world everywhere the main conflict between the people is not giving importance to another person, the reason behind this thing is racism', in the entire world, people are thought of as not giving priority to other people. Mankind needs love and peace from other people but other people don't consider their emotions in a series manner as well as in the way racism. Fingerprint identifies creatures in a very easy way, not only for creatures like humans but also, automatically detects them. One of the humans is doing any good or bad it clearly states that the individual is doing that good or bad because of the fingerprint. Mark Twain's two novels The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson have opened up controversy and invited

ensorship over its one-hundred-year history. The critics criticized his theme of violence, and rebellion and protested the moral laxity in the language and characters of the novel, in the twentieth century the controversy evolved into an issue of race. People mock others in a way by teasing and treating them of their color and they don't understand the inner feelings of other people, this is what real life and situation people feel bad and it should be a major part of society also.

Keywords: Racism, reality, mankind, identity, violence, rebellion.

The term "Racism" someone who believes that their race makes them better, more intelligent, more moral, etc, than people of other races and who does unfair or harmful things as a result. This particular part of history reviews the twentieth-century charges of racism. Twain's treatment of race in the novel is presented through irony, the reader understands the entire concept of the novel. An intensive evaluation of Twain, the racial issues, his novel enlightens the anti-racism motifs. Twain creates characters that are imprisoned by the social milieu. Huck, Jim, and the society as a whole are trapped within the confines of the existing slave system and other entrapments of culture.

The main intent of these works is to address their contemporaries. Both were unhappy living with the norms and mentality of the Gilded Age. In *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain brought up moral issues that were still alive racial issues were important even after Reconstruction. The anti-slavery advocates from the North hypocritically rejected the equality of the Black man and cringed at the prospect of the Black exodus from the South. Mark Twain reconstructed the view of race. He takes a personal interest in the problem. He became inflamed by violent injustices to black freedmen.

However, Mark Twain's pre-civil war character, *Huckleberry Finn*, is not like most children. Finn is portrayed as a rebellious, oftentimes confused, young racist child. Finn's racism would be accepted and considered admirable to most of all Twain's white readers. There is a moment on the river when the teenage Finn is completely self-absorbed with thoughts of how others will interpret his part in Jim's endeavor for freedom.

Finn's inner demons continue the ambiguous struggle between Jim the Slave and Jim the Family Man. Finn is incredulous when Jim shares the ultimate fantasy of familial reunion and kidnapping his children. His

socialization defends the reality of his heart and causes him to hear only the militant ranting of an ungrateful slave. So, like the majority of whites in the 1800's, whether young or old Finn shares the compulsion to save Jim from self-harm and does what is ultimately "best" for the poor, ignorant, African soul. Finn appears truly sorry for Jim's abolitionist rhetoric and feels as his duty to protect Jim from himself and turn him in to the authorities. After making the grown-up decision to follow the letter of the law, Finn feels immediate relief.

However, the multi-faceted nature of the issue of race and Twain's use of irony, language, and point of view in *Huckleberry Finn*. The real monster in the story is the immoral society itself for it imprisons its attempts to control their thinking. Roxy, Jim, and Henry Johnson are characterizations of black people who escape many of the established racial stereotypes and represent such characteristics as intellect, loyalty, and bravery.

Huck's inner conflict about this matter of Jim's freedom is one of the basic themes of the novel. Initially, Huck feels that as long as one knows about it. He is safe in his deviation. It is also important to note that it is only through the vision of an outcast, Huck Finn, that the realities of the hypocritical society can be exposed; the other members of society are already brainwashed and mindless parts of the total society.

In another novel *Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson*, the first part of the book satirizes racism in antebellum Missouri by exposing the fragility of the dividing line between white and black. The new Tom Driscoll is accepted by a family with high Virginian ancestry as its own, and he grows up to be corrupt, self-interested, and distasteful. The reader does not know, at the end of the story as a vindication of racism based on biological differences too subtle to be seen.

The novel features the technological innovation of the use of fingerprints as forensic evidence. The reader knows from the beginning who committed the murder, and the story foreshadows how the crime will be solved. The circumstances of the denouement, however, possessed in its time great novelty, for fingerprinting had not then come into official use in crime detection in the United States, even a man who fooled around with it as a hobby was thought to be a simpleton.

Wilson is a lawyer who came to Dawson's Landing to practice law but was unable to succeed at his law practice after alienating the locals. He establishes a comfortable life in the town, working as a bookkeeper and pursuing his hobby of collecting fingerprints. Although the title character remains in the background of the novel

until the final chapters. Each chapter begins with clever quotations from Pudd'nhead Wilson's calendar, a project of Wilson's that endears him to Judge Driscoll but further confirms everyone else's opinion of him as a pudd'nhead.

Mark Twain's Pudd'nhead Wilson is a novel about murder, slavery, switched identities, and fingerprints. Such events take place in Dawson's Landing during the mid-19th century. Hitch a ride to transverse along the Mississippi and learn more about the setting of this tale. It's a detective story in which David Wilson solves a murder case with fingerprinting technology. Although he identified the real murderer as "sold down the river" he is a black slave. The book stimulates the conflict between Whites and Blacks.

Twain's criticisms of racial discrimination are categorized in four ways. First, it's between Blacks and whites. He is white mentally and physically, except for his short-term mental change soon after he finds his mother, Roxy, a Black slave. Second, Fingerprinting technology to prove racial differences, so at the end of the 19th century, is used in this book just like the one-drop rule. However, once he is a black slave, he becomes a piece of property, whereas slaves are treated harshly. Third, Wilson's identity becomes intermingled and he takes fingerprints from anyone including Blacks. Besides, he doesn't protest against the unreasonable treatment of False Tom, which shows Twain's criticism of the South's "law and custom"

Finally, Twain himself turned from a Southerner to a Northerner after he fled from the South. However, he doesn't want to criticize American society directly because of his financial situation, his literary background, and the social situation at the end of the 19th century. As mentioned above, Twain points out the American Society for White-and-Black Society. Therefore, In Pudd'nhead Wilson lurks Mark Twain's criticism of racial discrimination with the irrational categorization of Blacks and whites succeeding from the antebellum South at the end of the 19th century.

Works Cited:

1. Bloom, Harold. ed. Mark Twain's The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn, New York Chelsa House Publishers, 1986.
2. Egan, Michael. Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn: Race, class, and society. Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1977.

3. Hamlin. Annemarie, and Constance Joyner. "Racism and Real Life: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn in the Undergraduate Survey of American Literature Radical Teacher, vol, 80 falls 2007.
4. Twain, Mark. The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson: Peacock Books, New Delhi, Delhi.

Web Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pudd%27nhead_Wilson

