

Na le

Literature, American Literature



Na Le English 101 Critical History Paper Twain started out writing light humorous stories, then added rich humor, strong narratives, and social criticism, but he evolved into a chronicler of the vanities, war, transvestism, Satan, hypocrisies, political, ethics, and stupidity and murderous acts of mankind. Twain had been known to use his real life experience to help him writes, so that was why he changed his issues and theme over time. Twain's writing style changed according what happened during each period of his life. Twain's writing perspective changed from romanticism (Tom Sawyer) 1876, to realism (Life on the Mississippi) 1883, then to naturalism (The Mysterious Stranger) 1909. Twain used theme such as: conflict between history and the modern world in The Innocent Abroad, race, religion, dreams, supernatural in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, travel in A Tramp Abroad, inequality and unfairness in The Prince and the Pauper, growth of America in Life on the Mississippi, morals and ethics, friendships, and family in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, chivalry, justice, and education in a Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, and racial inequalities in Pudd'nhead Wilson. These are changes in theme made when changes occurred during his life. Mark Twain had written essays, verses, plays, novels, poems, newspaper article, short stories, speeches, letters, and tall tales. Twain was most famous for his novels and short stories. Mark Twain is consider to be the " Father of American Literature, " but critics didn't really notice him until the last two decades of his life. Although Twain continue to publish stories and narratives in the 1870's to 1880's, but they were short sketches and anecdotes. Twain received extensive critical attention during the last two decades of his life when his mindset as pointed out by E. S.

Fussell, was " a grotesque medley of fatalism, misanthropy, and cynicism. " Most critics agreed on the point that Mark Twain's work were humorous, this was how Mark Twain became popular. A lot of critics were wondering if that was all that Twain was, just a humorist. Critics also realized that Twain had influences from European Literature. During Mark Twain's publishing years he had a lot of adoring fans. Readers loved Twain's books and short-stories long before critics gave Twain the attention he deserved. Twain was internationally known. Twain traveled the world to give speeches and lectures. Twain was a master of marketing himself, so the public loved him even more. Most critics liked Twain's work in general, because Twain's stories were comical, and that was also the reason why critics took Twain's work very lightly. A few disliked some of his work because they did not like Twain's views on certain subjects. Andrew Lang writes, " he has not the knowledge which would enable him to be a sound critic of the ideal of the Middle Ages, " in regards to A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. Critics disagreed on which of Twain's works was his best. Some said that The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and others thought that The Mysterious Stranger was better, but most critics regard The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn as the best one. Twain were not respected by some of his peers because to them he was just a humorist, and they didn't think his books were literary masterpiece. That view changed toward the end of Twain's when they began to study him. Some called him a genius. After Twain's death, even more critics began to look into his work and realized that he was a great writer. His literary reputation grew even more from then on. His importance to the world literature lies not in the genius of his ideas,

but the way he relates character's dilemmas and his accessibilities to readers of all ages. Twain also used realism to educate his readers. Twain influenced history by bringing awareness on topics like anti-slavery and pro-equalities which lead to more civil rights movement. To have so many essays written from critics all over the world, one's literature knowledge must be great. So many critics consider Mark Twain's works were and still is work of art. The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County was considered a tall tales by many critics because of the absurdities of the characters. The issues in the stories are gambling, positive and negative qualities of all Americans, stereotyping, cunning, lying, and cheating. The themes associated with this story are East vs West (people from the East are consider genteel and people from the West were considered unrefined, un-settled, and uneducated), competition, lies and deceit, and the fact that anyone can be fooled and anyone can do the fooling. Twain used framing and colloquial expression, which made the story so much better. The story appears to be a simple, funny story, but actually is a mockery of American literature and politics. The issues and themes changed over time as more critics study Twain's work. After understanding of Mark Twain himself and not just his works. Some critics said that this story was unoriginal. A Toad Story, Frog Shot Without Powder, Tricks and Defeats of Sporting Genius are three stories with similarities to The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County as Roger Cuffs pointed out, and Twain reply, " I only claim to know how a story ought to be told. " The story was first published in the Saturday Press on November 18, 1865. The reception of this story was spectacular. This story was so popular they had to reprint it ten times. Critics disagree on a few themes and

issues, but they loved the story. The public loved the story even more. They are the reason why he became popular in the first place. The story was very well known throughout America when it was first published, and people all over the world continue to read it today. After its initial publication, The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County's reputation grew. At first it was the public that loved this story, but when Mark Twain became a more respectable writer, more critics are interest in it. The critics began to see Twain's work in a new light. People can see how much everyone respects Twain's work because there are so many critical essays written about this story.