

Twain's problematic ending of huck finn

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The adventures of Huckleberry Finn is known as one novel that has brought controversy from the time it was published in the year 1884 (Pearl par 1). It was banned in major public libraries many referring to it as "trash." Currently, many regard it as a classical American novel though others still critic it in one area or the other. It is a novel from where "all modern literature" was derived and modern scholars and critics now treats it as great work of art in America (Pearl par. 1). Perhaps the greatest irony is that though it received great criticism, of all the MT's novels, it is the one that sold most immediately when it was published.

Hunk Finn, as it is commonly referred to, is set in the Mississippi river town of St. Petersburg, Missouri and the various locations along that river through Arkansas (SparkNotes, screen 21). The major conflict in the novel is portrayed as the main character (protagonist), Huck struggles with a society (antagonist) that is trying to civilize him. The conflict is also intensified as Hunk deals with Jim who is a black slave; since Hunk must decide whether to reject Jim and please the society or protect him and follow his conscience. This essay shows that Twain's ending of the novel betrays the true subject of the work.

The novel ends with the three boys Huck, Tom and Jim escaping from a shed where they had been surrounded by about fifteen farmers guarding Jim, the black slave (Twain 361). They make a hole in the wall to escape but as they does, Tom makes some noise and what follows is the shooting that leaves a bullet in Tom's leg who portrays himself a hero. However, Huck and Jim are concerned about the condition of the leg and upon Jim's suggestion; they go to look for adoctor. This only worsens things for Jim who is captured by the

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locals and is chained as they bring Tom home on a mattress accompanied by the doctor.

By this time Huck has already run home having left the two boys alone. The locals have decided to hang Jim though no one does it as they are afraid of compensating the slave owner. They are therefore left with no other option than to treat Jim roughly until the time when the doctor comes and saves him by explaining that it is him who in fact saved Tom's leg from deteriorating by nursing him (Twain 377). When Tom however learns that Jim was still in chains, he reveals to them that in fact Jim had already been set free thus was no longer a slave.

This allows the reader to glimpse the character trait of Tom. Though he had known all along that Miss Wanton who had died two months earlier had set Jim free in her will, he did not say it because he felt that they needed to devise a good plan to rescue Jim. If he had said it earlier, Jim could not have gone through the sufferings that he had experienced. Huck arrived and on enquiring from Tom what he would do if Jim was freed; he replied that he planned to repay Jim for all his troubles and sending him off as a hero.

And he said, what he had planned in his head from the start, if we got Jim out all safe, was for us to run him down the river on the raft, and have adventures plumb to the mouth of the river, and then tell him about his being free, and take him back up home on a steamboat, in style, and pay him for his lost time, and write word ahead and get out all the niggers around, and have them waltz him into town with a torchlight procession and a brass-band, and then he would be a hero, and so would we (Twain 387).

The Phelps and Aunt Polly release Jim and feed him on hearing that he helped the doctor to nurse Tom. He is also given forty dollars as a payment for all his troubles (Twain 387). Tom and Huck are not through with their adventure and plan to go for another one to the Indian territories. Huck thinks that Pap had taken all the money but it is Jim who informs him that in fact the dead man he had seen in a floating house was Pap (a cruel and drunk father).

It is clear that though the writer of the novel was initially heading to the right direction in his writing, he "loses focus" (it may have been intentionally) as he comes to end of the novel in the way he presents the relationship between Huck and Jim. All along, the two boys had been together passing through hardships and challenges during their adventure. They are seen doing different things together; for example have to hide the inheritance of the Silk sisters in a coffin away from the greedy "King" and "Duke". Huck even comes to a time when he had to decide whether to give the remaining Gherkin (food) from his provisions to Jim or take it himself (Paine Par. 20). Therefore every reader expects Huck's emotional attachment with Jim to grow. However when Tom appears, a different picture is portrayed with Huck remaining quiet when, they endanger Jim's life by not telling Phelps that Jim had already been released by the former Slave master and instead decides to device a plan as part of their adventure.

When Jim goes to get the doctor, Huck leaves and runs to his uncle's place leaving his friend. So then I crept into a lumber-pile to get some sleep; and next time I waked up the sun was away up over my head! I shot out and

went for the doctor's house, but they told me he'd gone away in the night some time or other, and warn't back yet. Well, thinks I, that looks powerful bad for Tom, and I'll dig out for the island right off. So away I shoved, and turned the corner, and nearly rammed my head into Uncle Silas's stomach! (Twain 367).

The other problem arises because though the novel's subject is directed to the theme of freedom, at the end Jim who is supposed to be free is not still free. This can be attributed to the mistake that Tom made though intentionally. Jim, who has been technically free for all that time they were in the adventure, is still bound in chains, first in the home of Phelps before the escape and then by the locals who captured him when he went to bring the doctor who would treat Tom. It is ridiculous that Miss Wanton can not set Jim free when she is alive and has to wait till she dies and does it in her will. Old Miss Watson died two months ago, and she was ashamed she ever was going to sell him down the river, and said so; and she set him free in her will. "(Twain 383) In conclusion, it is clear that the work of Mark Twain was based on the theme of racism, slavery and freedom thus different readers can critic it using different views. The plot flows smoothly from the beginning but the problem arises in the ending as the reader is left wondering why there is no development in Huck's character -who is the protagonist and who is supposed to develop in all areas as the plot develops.