The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Study Guide

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites".

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers".

BOOKRAGS

Contents

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Study Guide....1

Contents....2

Introduction....5

Author Biography....6

Plot Summary....7

Chapter 1....10

Chapter 2....11

Chapter 3....12

Chapter 4....13

Chapter 5....14

Chapter 6....15

Chapter 7....16

Chapter 8....17

Chapter 9....18

Chapter 10....19

Chapter 11....20

Chapter 12....21

Chapter 13....22

Chapter 14....23

Chapter 15....24

Chapter 16....25

Chapter 17....26

Chapter 18....27

Chapter 19....28

Chapter 20....29

Chapter 21.....30
Chapter 22.....31
Chapter 23.....32
Chapter 24.....33
Chapter 25.....34
Chapter 26.....35
Chapter 27.....36
Chapter 28.....37
Chapter 29.....38
Chapter 30.....39
Chapter 31.....40
Chapter 32.....41
Chapter 33.....42
Chapter 34.....43
Chapter 35.....44
Chapter 36.....45
Chapter 37.....46
Chapter 38.....47
Chapter 39.....48
Chapter 40.....49
Chapter 41.....50
Chapter 42.....51
Chapter 43.....52
Characters.....53
Themes.....59
Style.....62

Historical Context....64
Critical Overview....67
Criticism....69
Critical Essay #1....70
Critical Essay #2....74
Critical Essay #3....77
Adaptations....80
Topics for Further Study....81
Compare and Contrast....82
What Do I Read Next?....83
Further Study....84
Bibliography....86
Copyright Information....87

Introduction

Although probably no other work of American literature has been the source of so much controversy, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is regarded by many as the greatest literary achievement America has yet produced. Inspired by many of the author's own experiences as a riverboat pilot, the book tells of two runaways—a white boy and a black man—and their journey down the mighty Mississippi River. When the book first appeared, it scandalized reviewers and parents who thought it would corrupt young children with its depiction of a hero who lies, steals, and uses coarse language. In the last half of the twentieth century, the condemnation of the book has continued on the grounds that its portrayal of Jim and use of the word "nigger" is racist. The novel continues to appear on lists of books banned in schools across the country.

Nevertheless, from the beginning *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was also recognized as a book that would revolutionize American literature. The strong point of view, skillful depiction of dialects, and confrontation of issues of race and prejudice have Inspired critics to dub it "the great American novel." Nobel Prize-winning author Ernest Hemingway claimed in *The Green Hills of Africa* (1935), for example, that "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huck Finn* □There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since."

Author Biography

Best known as Mark Twain, Samuel Clemens was born 30 November 1835 and raised in Hannibal, Missouri. There he absorbed many of the influences that would inform his most lasting contributions to American literature. During his youth, he delighted in the rowdy play of boys on the river and became exposed to the institution of slavery. He began to work as a typesetter for a number of Hannibal newspapers at the age of twelve. In the late 1850s, he became a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi River. This job taught him the dangers of navigating the river at night and gave him a firsthand understanding of the river's beauty and perils. These would later be depicted in the books *Life on the Mississippi* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.*

After a brief stint as a soldier in the Confederate militia, Clemens went out west, where he worked as a reporter for various newspapers. He contributed both factual reportage and outlandish, burlesque tales. This dual emphasis would characterize his entire career as a journalist. During this phase of his career, in 1863, he adopted the pseudonym Mark Twain, taken from the riverboat slang that means water is at least two fathoms (twelve feet) deep and thus easily traveled.

His second book, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), a collection of satirical travel letters the author wrote from Europe, was an outstanding success, selling almost seventy thousand copies in its first year. On the heels of this triumph, Clemens married Olivia Langdon and moved to the East, where he lived for the rest of his life. In the East, Clemens had to confront the attitudes of the eastern upper class, a group to which he felt he never belonged. Nevertheless, he did win influential friends, most significantly William Dean Howells, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly.*

Clemens' first two novels, *The Gilded Age* (1873), written with Charles Dudley Warner, and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), a children's book based on his boisterous childhood in Hannibal, won Clemens widespread recognition. Shortly afterward, he began to compose a sequel to Tom's story, an autobiography of Tom's friend, Huck Finn. He worked sporadically on the book over the next seven years, publishing more travel books and novels in the meantime. When it was finally published, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was an immediate success, although it was also condemned as inappropriate for children. The book draws on Clemens' childhood in Hannibal, including his memories of the generosity of whites who aided runaway slaves, in addition to the punishments they endured when caught. In fact, in 1841, his father had served on the jury that convicted three whites for aiding the escape of five slaves.

In the 1890s, Clemens' extensive financial speculations caught up with him, and he went bankrupt in the depression of 1893-94. With an eye to paying back his many debts, he wrote a number of works, including continuing adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. He spent his final decade dictating his autobiography, which appeared in 1924. Clemens died on 21 April, 1910.

Plot Summary

Chapters 1-7: Huck's Escape

Mark Twain begins *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* with a notice to the reader. He identifies Huckleberry Finn as "Tom Sawyer's Comrade," and reminds the reader that this novel resumes where *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* left off: in St. Petersburg, Missouri, on the Mississippi River, "forty to fifty years" before the novel was written (so between 1834 and 1844, before the American Civil War) He tells the reader that several different "dialects are used," which have been written "painstakingly," based on his own "personal familiarity with these several forms of speech."

The novel's title character, Huckleberry Finn, narrates the story. He summarizes the end of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,* in which he and Tom discovered a large amount of stolen gold. He lives now with the Widow Douglas, who has taken him in as "her son," and her sister Miss Watson. His father, "Pap," has disappeared:

Pap hadn't been seen for more than a year, and that was comfortable for me; I didn't want to see him no more He used to always whale me when he was sober and could get his hands on me; though I used to take to the woods when he was around.

The widow attempts to "sivilize" Huck, and teach him religion. Huck finds her ways confining. Miss Watson nags him to learn to read, to "set up straight," and to behave. Huck remains superstitious, and he mostly resists the women's influence; after bedtime, he escapes out his window to join Tom Sawyer for new adventures. The boys meet Jim, "Miss Watson's nigger," and they playa trick on him. Jim, like Huck, is superstitious, and when he wakes up he thinks that witches played the trick.

Tom, Huck, and other boys meet in a cave down the river, and form a Gang, a "band of robbers." But Huck tires of the Gang's adventures, because they are only *imaginary.* When Pap shows up in St Petersburg, he causes Huck some *real* problems. Pap wants Huck's reward money from the end of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.* Signs of his son's increased civilization irritate him: the proper clothing, and the ability to read and write. Huck secures his money by "selling" it to Judge Thatcher. Huck's father brings a lawsUIt against the judge, but "Jaw" is "a slow business." Eventually Pap kidnaps Huck, and takes him up the river to a shack on the Illinois side of the river. At first, Huck enjoys the return to freedom, but living with his father has its difficulties; "by-and-by pap [gets] too handy with his hick'ry," and he either leaves Huck locked in the cabin alone, or beats him. Huck decides to escape, and cuts a hole m the cabin. After his father lays in some supplies, Huck lays his plans. He catches a canoe as it floats down the river. Left alone, Huck stages his own murder: he kills a wild pig and leaves its blood around the shack and on his jacket, then leaves a fake trail showing a body being dragged to the river. He then loads up the supplies and takes off down river. He stops to camp on Jackson's Island, two miles below St Petersburg.

Chapters 8-18: Down the River

On the island, Huck feels liberated. Seeing his friends search for his body troubles him only slightly After a few days, he discovers that he is not alone on the island: Jim has run away from Miss Watson, who had threatened to sell him down the river. Jim's escape troubles Huck, but together they enjoy a good life: fishing, eating, smoking, and sleeping. They find a house floating down the river, with a dead man m it, from which they take some valuables. Huck appreciates the lore that Jim teaches him, but still likes to play tricks. He leaves a dead rattlesnake on Jim's bed, and Jim gets bitten by the snake's mate. He recovers, but interprets the bite as the result of Huck touching a snakeskin—a sure bringer of bad luck. Jim suspects that there is more to come.

One night, Huck dresses as a girl and goes across to town to "get a stirring-up." He discovers that there is a reward offered for Jim and that the island is no longer a safe hiding place. He rushes back to the island, and he and Jim float down the Mississippi, sleeping by day and drifting by night. Living this way, they get to know each other, and Jim tells Huck about his children. They also have several adventures. They board a wrecked steamboat and steal some ill-gotten goods from three thieves on board, inadvertently leaving them to drown.

Huck and Jim get separated in a fog. They call out, but for hours at a time, they seem lost to each other. Huck falls asleep, and when he awakens, he sees the raft. He sneaks aboard and convinces Jim it was all a dream. When Huck points to evidence of the night's adventure and teases him for being gullible, Jim teaches Huck a lesson:

"When I got all wore out wid work, en wid de callin' for you, en went to sleep, my heart wuz mas' broke bekase you waz los', en I didn' k'yer no mo' what become er me en de raf' En when I wake up en fine you back ag'in, all safe en soun', de tears come, en I could 'a' got down on my knees en lass' yo' foot, I's so thankful. En all you wuz thinkin "bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim Wid a lie. Dat truck dab is *trash,* en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fien' s en makes' em ashamed."

. It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger; but I done It, and I warn't ever sorry for it afterwards, neither I didn't do him no more mean tucks, and I wouldn't done that one If I'd 'a' knowed It would make him feel that way.

Chapters 19-33: The King and Duke

Huck and Jim plan to drift down to Cairo, Illinois, and then steamboat North, but they realize that they passed Cairo in the fog. A steamboat crashes into their raft and separates them again. Huck swims ashore and is taken in by the Grangerford family, who are embroiled in a feud with another local family, the Shepherdsons. He lives with the Grangerfords, while Jim hides in a nearby swamp and repairs the raft. When the

feud erupts into new violence, and Huck's new friend, Buck Grangerford, is killed, Huck and Jim set off once again down the river.

Huck and Jim rescue two "rapscallions," who identify themselves as a duke and a king. They take the prime sleeping quarters on the raft and expect Jim and Huck to wait on them. They employ different schemes to make money along the river. They attend a religious camp-meeting, and the king takes up a collection for himself. In "Arkansaw," they rent a theater and put on a Shakespearean farce called 'The Royal Nonesuch." Next, a boy they meet confides that an inheritance awaits one Mr. Wilks, an English gentleman, in his town. Seeing their opportunity, the king and duke assume the identity of Mr. Wilks and his servant, and go to claim the money. Huck feels increasingly uneasy about their unscrupulous behavior, and vows to protect their victims. He hides the cash they try to steal. When the real Mr. Wilks arrives, Huck and Jim try—but fail—to escape without the rascally "king" and "duke."

Next, the king and duke betray Jim as a runaway slave, and "sell" their "rights" to him to a farmer, Silas Phelps. Huck realizes what has happened and determines to rescue Jim. He seeks the Phelps farm. By a stroke of luck, they are relatives of Tom Sawyer's, and mistakenly identify Huck as Tom, come to pay a visit. When Tom arrives a few hours later, he falls in with Huck's deception, pretending to be his brother Sid.

Chapters 34-43: Jim's Rescue

Tom agrees to help Huck rescue Jim. He insists that the escape follow models from all of his favorite prison stories: he smuggles in items past the unwitting Phelpses. He makes Jim sleep with spiders and rats, and write a prison journal on a shirt He also warns the Phelpses anonymously. In the escape: Tom gets shot in the leg. Tun and Huck each return and are caught in the act of seeking help for Tom.

Finally Tom reveals that Tun is in fact no longer a slave: Miss Watson died and set him free in her will. Tom's Aunt Polly arrives and clears up the case of mistaken identity. Huck, upset by the trick played on him and Jim, accepts Tom's explanation that he wanted "the *adventure"* of the escape. Tom gives Jim forty dollars for his trouble. Now that everyone knows he is still alive, Huck worries about Pap, but Jim tells him not to bother: Pap was the dead man in the house floating down the river. Huck ends the novel with a plan to "light out for the Territory ahead of the rest" before the women try again to "sivilize" him.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Huckleberry Finn introduces himself as one of the protagonists in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. He tells how he and Tom recovered six thousand dollars in gold and became rich. The Widow Douglas took Huckleberry as a son and tried to civilize him by subjecting him to a life of made beds, dinner bells and prayer. She also introduced him to the story of Moses, whose basket was hidden in the bulrushes, but Huck didn't think the story very practical. Her sister, Miss Watson, tried to introduce Huck to reading and manners, both of which he didn't take to easily. After having a shaking fit following his accidental murder of a spy, he heard something outside. It was Tom Sawyer.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Twain's masterful use of language in this book underscores his portrayal of an ignorant, country boy possessed by a lot of superstition and a wonderful sense of irony and adventure. Huckleberry Finn is a wonderful narrator with his own sense of humor and commonsensical attempts to accommodate himself as a young man brought up half-wild and desperately poor, who is suddenly exposed to a normal, middle-class life in the country.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Huck and Tom encounter Miss Watson's slave, Jim, sitting in the kitchen floor. They try to be quiet, but Jim hears them, but then ultimately falls asleep. Tom takes some candles from the kitchen, but leaves five cents behind. Tom takes Jim's hat off and hangs it on a tree besides him. This ultimately leads to Jim's creation of a fabulous tale of how he had been kidnapped by witches and rode until dawn, making him a kind of celebrity in regards to witchly voyages and his encounter with the Devil himself, who gave him a five cent piece to hang around his neck.

After their adventure with Jim, they find several of their friends and begin the process of starting a gang. Of course, an oath is required. If anyone tells he must be sued and then killed, along with his family. Everything is fine until they realize that Huck doesn't have a proper family. The process is stalled until they decide it is all right to Miss Watson because they doubt they will ever find Huck's Pappy who is too inaccessible to be murdered easily. They have a few scheduling problems, but realize they will finally be able to get together for their proper quotient mayhem and murder.

Chapter 2 Analysis

This chapter introduces Jim who is going to be a constant companion of Huck's for much of this book and who has his own intractable sense of ego, mostly revolving around his superior grasp of the superstitions of the times. His story about his abduction by witches is told in a droll and characteristically Twainesque way by Huckleberry. If that isn't sufficiently funny, the formation of the "gang" is incredibly funny as they debate about themselves the nature of the oath they wish to take, the meaning of the term, 'ransom,' which they fail to understand and how to integrate robbing stagecoaches and killing passengers into their busy schedules.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

When Huck got back from his adventure with the "gang," he was quite dirty, but Miss Watson didn't say anything but got him out some clean clothes and prayed with him. Huck was moved enough by the idea of prayer to go to the forest to think about it, but couldn't see a whole lot of truth in it. After all, Miss Watson couldn't put on weight and Deacon Winn couldn't get back the money he had lost on pork. He noticed a difference between Miss Watson's and the widow's idea about the after-life and wound up preferring the widow's. Some people thought a drowned man they found was his Pap's, but he was sure it wasn't. Pap beat him a lot and wasn't much fun to be with.

Tom and the boys played at being a gang, but it turns out that hogs became gold ingots and turnips became jewelry. They then decided that they would lay an "ambuscade"- or ambush- for certain Arabs who were going to be passing by, but all they found was a School picnic. But Tom Sawyer said that he thought it was a school picnic because he hadn't read a book called *Don Quixote.* There were actually hundreds of soldiers- and magicians, treasures and elephants right there in front of them. The problem was that Huck didn't have the right magic lantern or a proper ring. But Huck did get an old tin lamp and an iron ring and, after rubbing them like crazy, decided it was all a fairy tale.

Chapter 3 Analysis

You might say that this chapter is about Huck's testing of Tom Sawyer's veracity. After a fantastic experience in ambushing a school picnic- that Tom said was really a whole panoply of soldiers, magicians, elephants and treasure, Huck decides to give it a test, just like he did with Miss Watson's concept of prayer. Huck is always trying to figure out what is true in a practical way- whether he experimentally prays or rubs an iron ring in a forest. Generally, he settles on conclusions of a practical nature.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Huck goes to school and manages, after a time, to learn a little math, spelling, reading and writing. He gets used it, playing hooky only once in a while. While going outside in the snow, Huck notices somebody's tracks, someone with a cross in the left boot heel. After seeing this, he quickly runs to Judge Thatcher, who is "investing" his money. Huck has made a fair amount of money over the last year, but the Judge wants to reinvest it. Huck then does a peculiar thing. He signs over the entire amount to Judge Thatcher for the consideration of one dollar.

Huck had recognized the tracks as being his Pap's and went to Jim, Miss Watson's slave, to consult his hairball. He tells Huck that his father is going to either come or go, but it's best to leave him alone. There's both a good and bad angel hovering around the old man. Huck will marry a poor lady and then a rich one. But he should do his best to stay away from water. When Huck goes up to his room, he finds his father.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Was it seeing his father's tracks that led Huck to give away his money? It would seem that Huck gave away a lot of money that he could have used, but perhaps it seemed to interfere with the wild life that he loved- in between his flirtations with being civilized. The Hair-Ball Oracle doesn't do much for Huck either, since he finds his Pappy in his room.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Pap is back and he is not particularly happy with Huck, who he thinks is putting on airs and trying to become educated, which displeases him immensely. He is extremely ghostly in his appearance, with a face so white it would make "a body's flesh crawl," like a fish belly, dressed in rags with a long greasy beard and dark, black eyes. Naturally, after launching into a tirade about Huck's education and clothes, he turns to his money. Huck tells him he doesn't have much money, but gives him a dollar, which Judge Thatcher had given him for his entire fortune. Pap goes out and gets drunk and tries to get the widow to give Huck back to him. But a new judge derails this idea and actually gives Pap the benefit of the doubt, gives him new clothes and soon it seems that Pap is on his way to being reformed. Unfortunately, this doesn't last too long, despite his pledges to the new judge, but winds up getting drunk, after trading his new clothes for "a jug of forty-rod." But the new judge learned his lesson about Pappy.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Huck's schizophrenic life seems about to stray backwards when his Pappy appears on the scene, as mean and as drunk as before. Instead of looking at Huckleberry's progress in school as beneficial, the old man has nothing but disdain for it and makes an effort to get Huck back under his thumb again. In the midst of this, his father makes an effort to reform, backed by the new judge who has denied guardianship to Judge Thatcher and the widow. But Pappy returns to his old ways and the new judge gives up. The book is dressed up in the two sides of Huckleberry's life and the stories dance between these two very different sides.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Huck winds up going to school, partially to spite his old man, who is now seeking his money in court. Meanwhile, Huck would borrow money from Judge Thatcher and give it to Pap so that he would go get drunk instead of giving him a thrashing. Pap wound up locking Huck up in an old cabin when they were not out smoking and fishing together. Unfortunately for Huck, the carefree times were interrupted by frequent beatings. One day, Pap didn't show up for three days and Huck started to try to find a way to saw himself out of the cabin.

When Pap came back, he had the bad news that, although he might win the lawsuit in the short run, it would probably be appealed and it would be very difficult for him to win in the long run. Huck now started to make arrangements to leave altogether. Meanwhile, Pappy laments about the government and the law, especially over what he has heard about a freed slave, eventually getting very, very drunk and passing into some kind of delirium, chasing Huck around the cabin with a knife, calling him the Angel of Death. Finally, he falls asleep while Huck sits in a chair, pointing a loaded gun at him.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Huck is beginning to look for ways to get out of his relationship with his Pappy. Although there is a certain freedom in their lifestyle, his father is a drunken, dangerous man who beats him frequently and, in this chapter, actually tries to kill him. Before that happens, Huck is already scheming as to how to get out of the cabin he has been locked in for so long. After a long lamentation about government, his father gets drunk and chases him around the cabin with a knife. Huck grabs a loaded rifle and points at his father after he has passed out.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

When Pap awakes, he finds Huck holding a gun at him. Huck tells his father that there has been some kind of interloper and Huck has been waiting for him. Pap tells him to go get some fish. On the way, Huck finds a canoe and hides it. The old man comes, they find five catfish on their lines, and they have breakfast. Later on, they find nine sellable logs, but then Pap stops looking for more, even though they might do very well. He locks Huck inside and goes off to sell the logs, but Huck, using his saw, finally escapes, taking corn meal and bacon and whisky with him, along with ammunition, coffee, sugar and other things.

He finds a wild hog and kills it, cutting its throat with an axe. He plans on making it look like he was murdered, like someone dragged his body to the lake. Then smashes in the door with an ax and made more of a mess. Finally, he floated off in his canoe to Jackson's Island, passing his Pappy on his way to freedom.

Chapter 7 Analysis

By this time, Pappy has nearly beat Huck and tried to kill him, kept him locked up like a prisoner and taken away his home with the Widow, his relationship with his friends and ended his official schooling. Huck begins to plot his escape, finally deciding on arranging things to look like he was murdered. One of Huck's main character traits is his ability to assess other people's characters and to predict the outcome of his own actions. In this scenario, he very much fools the townspeople and his Pappy into thinking that he is dead.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

After taking a nap on the island, Huck rests, but suddenly hears cannon fire. The cannon is being fired to bring his dead body to the surface of the water. He then remembers that often loaves of bread, with quicksilver inside, are floated on the water to further locate the body. He dines on a double loaf for breakfast.

A ferryboat passes him by, looking for him. He can see many of the passengers, including Pap, Tom Sawyer and other of his friends, Judge Thatcher and many others of his acquaintance. They disappear at last and Huck knows he is safe. For three days he was alone- and then he discovers the remains of a still smoking campfire. After hiding all his traps and the canoe, he climbed a try to better assess the situation. After returning to the Illinois shore briefly, he returns to the island, only to find that the interloper is Miss Watson's slave, Jim.

Naturally, Jim's first through is that he is seeing a ghost. When Huck has convinced him that he is still alive, Jim is overjoyed. However, Jim's secret is more troublesome. It turns out that Jim is a runaway slave. It turns out that Jim thought he was about to be sold and he decided to leave suddenly, an event unfortunately timed with Huck's so-called death. Jim talks about his financial speculations, finally realizing is that the only thing he really owns is himself and he's worth at least eight hundred dollars!

Chapter 8 Analysis

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is one of the great American buddy stories, the story of the relationship of an adventurous young Southern boy and a runaway slave. For many generations, one of the great images of Adventure, positioned next to images of daring cowboys and careening space cadets, was Huck and old Jim floating down the Mississippi on a raft. Of course, one of the most interesting components of this story is Huckleberry's ambivalent attitude towards Jim because, despite their close friendship, Huckleberry is very pro-slavery and is conscience-ridden because of his collaboration in Jim's escape.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Jim and Huck find a cavern on the island where they decide to stash their belongings and make a secure hiding place. They eat dinner there in the midst of a furious lightening storm, which Jim predicted after watching some birds make curiously, abridged flights. Meanwhile, the river continues to rise for days on end.

One night, a frame house floats right by them in the middle of the night and they paddle over there in the canoe and decide to get some salvage. Besides old furniture and things, they find a dead body, shot in the back with the "ignorantest kind of words and pictures" on the wall. They scoop us a lantern and a broken butcher knife, tallow candles, needle and threat and a fishline and other odds and ends, returning safely home.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Among other things, Huck and Jim are sharing adventures on the river, which have a high component of danger. A house floating by on the river holds evidence of murder- with a dead body, some black masks and whisky bottles and playing cards. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is replete with adventures, always under the shadow of capture- for both Huck and Jim are renegades, Jim being one of the main suspects in Huck's death and a runaway slave.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Previously, Huck had found a snakeskin, which Jim had decreed would now bring them the worst of luck. But, fortunately, they had now found eight silver dollars in an overcoat and Huck dared to disbelieve Jim. A rattlesnake later turns up in their hideaway and bites Jim. They kill the snake and roast part of it for medicine while Jim undergoes a terrible ordeal of pain and drunkedness while he wrestles with the effect of the snakebite. Afterwards, Huck nonchalantly talks about a 200-foot catfish that he and Jim almost caught. Huck decides to slip over to the river disguised as a young girl.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Between the myth of the cursed snakeskin, Jim's brush with death and the two hundred foot catfish, it is hard to know what is true in this chapter. One thing is for sure. Conventional religion has been upstaged by the continuing and endless varieties of superstition that governs a great deal of these adventures.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Huck Finn's portrayal of a young girl seems to be making a good impression after a woman lets him into a small shanty and allows him to spin his fantasy about his mother's bad luck and how he has come to the town to visit his Uncle Abner. The woman then relates to him the story of his murder and how Jim is one of the main suspects. She thinks that she saw smoke coming up from Jackson's Island. Meanwhile, as they talk, Huck obliges the woman by throwing a bar of lead at a rat as they're talking. His manner of throwing the lead, as well as method of threading a needle, gives him away as a boy. The woman buys his next story as having run away from bondage to a mean old farmer. But now Huck knows that the authorities are after them.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Huck's adventure across the river pays off despite his ruse unraveling. He now knows that he and Jim are fugitives and that their pursuers are not far away. This discovery is the spark that ignites their next level of adventures on the river.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Huck and Jim now leave the island. Sometimes, Huck slips ashore at night and buys supplies from a little village. They pick corn and watermelons and shoot waterfowl. In general, they are having a very easy time. Eventually, they encounter some heavy rain and a grounded steamboat that had crashed into a rock. Jim says to leave it, "Better let blame well alone." But Huck won't do that. It's just too much of an opportunity.

For a time, it seems like Jim was more right than wrong, for there are murderers and thieves aboard. Jake and Bill are about to kill Jim Turner, after taking his share of their loot. Huck overhears a consultation about whether they should actually murder him or just leave him there to die, when the steamboat finally is knocked over into the river. But when the decision is made to leave Jim behind, Huck finds out that their raft is gone. They are stuck on the steamboat with the murderers.

Chapter 12 Analysis

This chapter points out the tumultuous nature and unceasing excitement of Huck and Jim's life as they encounter one hair-raising danger after another, punctuated by their moments of hunting, fishing and watching Nature as they move along the river. As with the rest of this story, one can see how Huck is a brilliant observer of the world around him, taking time to comment on the picturesque life around him.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Finally, Huck and Jim find the murderers' skiff. They are about to leave when they remember that they have forgotten to go through Jim Turner's belongings and get their share (before they leave him there to drown when the steamboat capsizes). When they left to go back to their partner, Huck and Jim jumped in the boat and cut the cord, not daring to even dip their oars, for fear of making noise. On the way, they encounter their old raft. They find that they amassed a fair amount of loot from the "Walter Scott" which they now put on the raft.

They had intended to get some help for the murderers, at least so they can be hung at the right time, but it starts to rain. Later on, Huck makes up a tall tale and gets a ferryboat captain to try and save them. But, by the time they get there, there is little doubt that the murderers are probably drowned. Finally, they watch the ferryboat slip away. They find shelter and go to sleep.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Huck and Jim, in their attempts to salvage the steamboat, had encountered some very dangerous individuals. They are stuck there until they find the murderers' skiff. After they leave the murderers, Huck has his usual strange battle with conscience. He now feels a bit sorry for the criminals, trapped as they are on a doomed steamboat- and takes on a disguised identity to encourage a ferryboat captain to rescue them. Huck's constant battle with right and wrong is one of the more charming aspects of this tale.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Huck and Jim now have a fortune in booty stolen off the steamboat- including cigars and boots, plenty of books and clothes. Huck reads to Jim about royalty and the royal lifestyle, including conveying to him the concept of a harem, which Jim particularly doesn't like. In the course of the discussion, they discuss the story of Solomon and the two feuding mothers. Jim basically thinks it is idiotic to cut up a child for any reason and doesn't get "the point" of the story.

Chapter 14 Analysis

This chapter really focuses on the extreme practicality and realism of Jim, which is prevalent throughout the entire book. But sometimes, Jim, too, kind of misses things, too. His repulsion at Solomon's story is hilarious.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

In the middle of a fog, the raft, which is being steered by Jim, is separated from Huck's canoe and the two lose each other. Finally, after a lot of disorganized "whooping," Huck finds the canoe, but Jim is now asleep. Huck decides to play a trick on him, pretending he was never lost- that there wasn't any fog or any hollering. Jim, having decided that it was a dream, decides to interpret it. But Jim then discovers some of the trash and broken oar on the raft and realizes he wasn't dreaming. Huck realizes he has gravely hurt his friend, who genuinely mourned for him when he was gone and apologizes to him, at the price of his pride.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Jim, although practical in some ways, is easily fooled by anything that caters to his superstitious nature. As the book progresses, there is the constant theme of Huckleberry continually evaluating what Jim means to him, whether just a slave or perhaps one of the best friends he ever had. His "conscience" sides with pro-slaver, but is it really his conscience. The whole story is about his constant re-evaluation of what is really good and what is really evil.

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Huck and Jim are off to a town named Cairo. When they get there, Jim will be free. And as Huck ponders this, he begins to realize that, at that point, Huck will be responsible for this "terrible crime." Worse, Jim tells him that if he can't buy his children from their new owner, he will get an abolitionist to get them back. To Huck, this is just a terrible sin. Jim has reached his morale nadir by daring to even think that. Huck decides to turn Jim in. But when the opportunity comes and some men want to search the raft, he tells them that his Pappy is sick and basically suggests that he has smallpox, thereby saving Jim. But after some further traveling and the sky become thick and gray, they realize they have probably missed Cairo. While they are still trying to figure what is happening, a steamboat crashes through the rafts and they dive off, going off in their unexpectedly separate ways.

Chapter 16 Analysis

It is fascinating the way Huck is always trying to figure out his relationship to Jim's escape to freedom. Twain is probably delighting in the strange contortions of his mind to understand where is truth conscience lies. To men and women in this century, the thought that someone would consider a man's effort to recapture his children from slave owners a scandal and, would be almost unthinkable, at least in most modern countries. And it is my idea that it was unthinkable to Twain to, in a moral sense, but he knew that there were millions of his time who did think that way. And, as a somewhat enlightened author, I think he enjoys playing with his reader's incredulity at Huck's working of conscience.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

This chapter begins one of the most touching adventures in Twain's book. It begins when Huck, now stranded after the raft accident, goes ashore, finding a double log house, where he is taken in by the owners, after a rather alarming confrontation. The chief concern of the residents, who are armed and seemingly dangerous, is whether or not Huck is a Shepherdson. Of course, he is not, anymore than he is the George Jackson he pretends to be.

He is invited in and treated almost immediately as family, soon befriending Buck Grangerford, who is about his age. He loves the food and the house décor. They buy his story of how he had to leave home after his father died. The family's house is filled with crockery and brass dog irons and a large fireplace and he feels very much at home. There are pictures everywhere of American patriots. He relates a touching story about Emily Grangerford, who died very young, but not before creating touching pictures and wrote poetry that moved Huck deeply.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Again, it seems that Huckleberry is very lucky, having stumbled on a comfortable place to stay when he has been stranded by an errant steamboat. Twain takes much care to paint the circumstances of his new home in great detail. Still, of course, the reader will not forget the strange circumstances in which he is confronted by the Grangerfords and the mysterious Shepherdsons they are so concerned about.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Huck does very well with his new family. He respects the tall, slender, head of the household, Colonel Grangerford. The whole family is extremely respectful of them, getting out of their chairs to wish them a good morning. Bob, Tom, Miss Charlotte, Miss Sophia and Buck each have their own servants and generally a good life. But there is a secret discord in this family. They have a serious feud with another family, the Shepherdsons. In fact, one day Buck shoots the hat off young Harney Shepherdson, but Harney comes back for it. The Colonel reprimands Buck for shooting behind a bush. Huck finds out that Buck doesn't even know the origin of the feuds. He just hates the Shepherdsons. Still, everyone goes to their church together.

Huck's servant takes him over to a marsh, where he finds Jim. The raft is still being fixed up. When Huck goes back home, he finds that Miss Sophia has run off with Harney Shepherdson. Huck had unknowingly delivered a message to Harney for her and now their elopement has turned into a major feud. There is a gunfight, there are several deaths, and Buck was killed. They leave in the raft, Huck glad to get out of one of the more uncomfortable adventures so far.

Chapter 18 Analysis

This is probably one of the saddest adventures of Huck's. And it makes one think again if this is really the meaningless tale it's supposed to be. There is a notice in the beginning of the book by Order of the Author. "Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot."

The fact is that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in it's own brilliant, understated way tackles many pressing moral issues and digs deep into the idea of moral conscience in the first place. In this chapter, Twain shows the consequence of clan-like, revenge thinking and the futility of this kind of warfare between families.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

Huck and Jim are having a tranquil time going up the river, when Huck paddles ashore to get some berries. There, he sees two men running, who beg him to save their lives- one is an older man with a baldhead and gray beard and another is younger, around thirty. Huck lets them climb in and the men talk about their troubles, which are mainly the result of their con games. The young man was selling a tarter removal substance that removed the tarter along with the teeth and the other was running a temperance revival while he was drinking at night. Both of them explain that they are really royalty and expect to be treated like that. The younger man is the Duke of Bridgewater and the older man is the Dauphin himself, Louis the Seventeenth. Huck does not allow himself to be taken in by any of this.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Huck is about to buy into a world of trouble when he meets the so-called Duke and Dauphin and becomes incorporated into their con games. Although he understands who they are, "low-down humbugs and frauds," he doesn't bother to tell Jim because he is afraid of stirring up trouble on the little raft. It is part of Huck's character to make "shrewd" assessments about whom he is dealing with and just how much that person is in the "need to know" or to what extent that person should be lied to. Since Huck is a fugitive in several ways, he is, of course, forced to protect his identity. In general, Huck is rather good at it, but he is about to meet his masters in the Duke and the Dauphin.

Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Huck invents a story to explain to their new companions how Jim is his slave and is legally accompanying him after his father and brother drowned after a steamboat ran into their raft. As they move into a thunderstorm, the Duke and the Dauphin basically retreat into the wigwam. The Duke shows one of his handbills about the "Dr. Armand de Montalban of Paris," a phrenology scam, as well as another in which he was represented as a great Shakespearean actor." The king visits an empty printing office while the Huck, Jim and the King go to a revival.

At the revival, the King tells a fantastic story about how he is a pirate who has reformed and takes a princely collection of eighty-seven dollars and seventy-five cents, as well as a jug of whisky he picked up from a wagon at the revival. The Duke came up with a handbill for Jim, portraying him as a runaway slave. If anyone now asks, they can point to Jim, who will be securely tied up in the wigwam. Since he has already been captured, nobody else will want him.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Huck now discovers that his new associates are professional con artists who both have many scams and many aliases. He does not particularly like them but feels forced into the association. He is amazed at the King's speech that suckers all these people into thinking he is a pirate and notes the handbill that was created to "protect Jim." Jim's assessment is that, although he can tolerate the two of them, he doesn't really want any more royalty on board.

Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

The Duke and the King now make plans for the very next show, which will be Romeo and Juliet. It turns out that Juliet will be played by the King. For an encore, the Duke decides to have the King learn Hamlet's "To Be or Not to Be" speech. After he got some more handbills printed, the Duke and the King began to practice their sword fighting.

A man named Boggs comes to the little town that the Duke and the King have selected for their show. He is a drunken, swaggering, boisterous fool who verbally attacks a Colonel Sherburn, who warns him that he better not say anything beyond one o'clock. When Boggs continues past his deadline, Sherburn quickly dispatches him, raising the crowd's ire, who now want to lynch him. They bring their clotheslines and their outrage and begin their angry walk to murder Sherburn.

Chapter 21 Analysis

The Duke and the King practice for their new show, showing a typical exuberance and commitment to their next, exciting enterprise. Although quite the criminals, they bring zest and excitement to their scams.

In this chapter, the Duke and King have barely begun to set up shop, when there is an incident that sets off a murder and a lynching. Obviously, the Duke and King have come to a rather volatile little town. Perhaps Colonel Sherburn's murder of Boggs is wrong and shocking, but it has been definitely provoked.

Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

The lynching began very enthusiastically, the crowd swarming in front of Sherburn's house as they tore up his fence, rushing into his front yard. Sherburn then stepped out, holding a double-barrel rifle, but looking collected and unafraid. Then he gave a little speech, basically calling them cowards and telling them it would have been a better strategy to come in the dead of night, with masks on. He then attacks their leader, Buck Harkness, calling him a half a man. When he finally cocks his gun, the crowd easily leaves, people flying in all directions so eager were they to leave Sherburn's company.

Afterwards, Huck goes to a circus. He loved watching the half-dressed riders, ladies with parasols, dancing horses and the amazing clown that was collapsing the audience with his antics. He watched with great pleasure as a so-called drunk taunted the ringmaster, got on a horse, weaving and almost falling, then suddenly turned into an accomplished rider. Soon after that, the Duke and the King begin their show with the prominent line in the handbill, "Ladies and Children Not Admitted."

Chapter 22 Analysis

Huck finds Sherburn to be very sure of himself and very unafraid when he confronts the mob. He is impressed by the way that Sherburn dismisses them without incident, after challenging their courage and their manhood. For him, the crowning experience of his stay in this small town is the circus, where he particularly enjoys being fooled by a so-called drunk, who turns out to be an admirable horseman. Huck is an apt observer and reporter of what he sees.

Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

When the show commences for the first night, the main attraction is the King coming out on all fours, naked, painted all over-, and doing all kinds of capers that made the audience laugh until they nearly "killed themselves." But while it was a brilliant performance, it was very brief and the audience was angry when it was over. But, when the audience is about to get very mad, a man gets up and tells them they should wait until the rest of the town comes to their play and gets angry too. So everyone is silent until after the next show. On the third night, the audience prepares a "throwing feasts" of "sickly" eggs and "rotten cabbages" and perhaps even a dead cat, but the Duke and the King get away- with four hundred and sixty-five dollars for three nights works. Huck then proves to Jim that all kings are rapscallions, his main example being Henry the Eighth. Jim tells him a sad story about how he had mistreated his child for not answering him, until he found out that she was deaf and dumb.

Chapter 23 Analysis

With all their rehearsing on the raft, the Royal Duo delivers very little to their audience. On the third night, knowing they are about to get hurt, they fly the coop with all their money. Their lack of conscience is contrasted with Jim who is stricken by his treatment of his child, who turned out to be deaf and dumb. In many ways, Jim, of all the characters in the book, is the most sympathetic and caring, despite his great hardships.

Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

In order to disguise Jim, the Duke paints Jim blue and puts him up in a calico gown. Jim now is a sick Arab and doesn't have to be tied up anymore. As they head towards the steamboat in the canoe, they come upon a young man who had been waiting for a Mr. George Wilks, whose brother, Peter, had just died. He was supposed to becoming in from England with his deaf and dumb brother, William. Therefore, the Duke learned everything he could from the young man, which they used when they visited his relatives in the town, pretending they were the deceased Peter Wilks' brothers. The men of the town sympathized with them as they lied their way into their hearts.

Chapter 24 Analysis

The Duke and the King begin one of their cruelest hoaxes as they pretend to be an English couple whose brother has died. This is accomplished almost spontaneously after they have racked their brains as to their next confidence game. Huck is disgusted with their behavior. "It was enough to make a body shamed of the human race."

Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

Word has gotten around that the King and the Duke have gotten to town and they are Peter Wilks' brothers. Her nieces are very happy to see their "uncles" and jump into their arms. Moments later, they put on a big act of crying in front of the coffin. The King invites them to a family supper, but two of his best friends, the Reverend Hobson and Dr. Robinson, were away. They are, of course, very happy to read the letter that gave them $3000 in gold as well as dividing assets amongst the rest of the family. They decide to win the girls' favor by pretending to give the girls their own money. That is, before they steal all of it. Then, Doctor Robinson comes back and calls the King an imitation and a fraud. One of the nieces responds by asking the King and the Duke to invest all their money. Doctor Robinson leaves, disgusted by the royal thieves.

Chapter 25 Analysis

Huck is disgusted as the King and the Duke carry on. Their cleverness is underscored as they give their portion of Peter Wilks' legacy back to his children. This gives them additional favor when Doctor Robinson tries to expose them. Huck and Jim have run into two of the most immoral scoundrels of their journey.

Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

That night they have a big supper with a lot of guests. Huck calls one of the nieces the Harelip. She and Huck have a long conversation about his "home" in England. Huck barely lies his way through it, making up things as he goes along. He swears to the truth of this, knowing he is laying his hands on a dictionary. Mary Jane comes in at this moment and defends Huck and demands that the Harelip treat him right. Huck decides to steal the gold that has been tucked under the bed.

Chapter 26 Analysis

Huck, who is probably as fed up with his own lies as he is with those of the royal charlatans, decides to steal the $6000 of gold. He feels too much sympathy for the nieces- in particular, with the beautiful Mary Jane not to take action, despite its potential consequences.

Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

Huck finds a hiding place for the gold in Peter's coffin. While he is near the coffin, Mary Jane comes into the room and begins to cry. He plans to leave and to write Mary Jane where the money is. The next day, people begin to come into the parlor, which show cases the coffin. They all sing together. The preacher sings, but it interrupted by a dog. The King then says a few words. Finally, they bury Peter. Afterwards, the King conducts an auction of the property, allowing the slaves to be shipped away and separated from their family. This separation offends many of the townspeople, too. Afterwards, the King finds that the money is missing and Huck blames it on the slaves.

Chapter 27 Analysis

Huck has tremendous sympathy for the family that is being swindled. He doesn't worry about the auction because he knows that, before long, he will expose their lies and the slaves and property will be returned. But now that the royal couple has found that the money is missing, Huck has to lie his way through this new problem.

Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

Mary Jane is saddened about the separation of the slave families. Huck decides to tell Mary Jane about the stolen money and his confederates and has her take an oath of secrecy. She promises to visit the Lothrops for a few days while the plan unwinds. He tells her to let the auction continue because it also will not work. He gives her a piece of paper to let her know that the money is in the coffin. He tells her sisters that she's gone to help out with the mumps. After the auction, something really strange happens. Two other gentlemen show up at the steamboat and they claim to be the brothers of Peter Wilks.

Chapter 28 Analysis

In one sense, the key question is- where is Huck's real conscience? This chapter shows how Huck, under certain circumstances, is not afraid to act. In fact, he takes a lot of risks in exposing the Duke and the King, including violence against himself and against Jim. It is obvious that he loves Mary Jane and has put her and her family ahead of his welfare.

Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

The reaction of the King and the Duke to the deceased Peter Wilks' brothers Harvey and William (who was deaf and dumb) is classic. They didn't change their behavior at all except to definitively and publicly view the new arrivals as frauds. Doctor Robinson is not convinced and asks the crowd to confront the royal couple.

They all meet in a tavern. The King tells them how the money has disappeared and how he believes the slaves had taken it. The Doctor then talks to Huck but laughs at him when he says he's English. They then do handwriting test which the King and Duke fail. Harvey then suggests that Peter has a kind of tattoo on his chest and they all start to head over to the cemetery to check the body. During a wild thunderstorm, they dig up the body and find the bag of gold! Huck takes off to find Jim and together they take off in the raft, only to find that the Duke and the King are close behind in a small boat, rowing as fast as they can.

Chapter 29 Analysis

With the appearance of the two new "brothers," much of Huck's plans come to fruition but not in the way he had intended. The gold appears not because of his letters, but because a crowd of people go and dig up the body to find an identifying tattoo on Peter Wilks' chest. The Duke and King are exposed because of a handwriting test. The wrongs are being righted immediately and for all to see. At the end, Huck is appalled, almost to tears, that the Duke and King are right behind the raft.

Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Summary

Naturally, the King and the Duke climb on board the raft. Huck tells them he had to run or might have been hung. The Duke forces the King to admit that he hid the gold in the coffin, even though it isn't true. However, the King decides to "own up" anyway. Huck's secret is protected.

Chapter 30 Analysis

Although nothing has really gone the way Huck planned and the King and the Duke are with Huck and Jim again, Fate steps in. The Duke forces the King to admit that he stole the gold and Huck's story is saved, at least as a matter of public issue.

Chapter 31

Chapter 31 Summary

The raft pushes on relentlessly until the royal couple is out of danger. They begin to pillage the villages with a temperance lecture, a dancing school, a yellocution class, telling fortunes, etc. Finally, when they came to Pikesville, the King went ashore to assess the possibilities. When the King didn't come back, the Duke and Huck went to find him. They found him in a tavern facing up to some men. When he and the Duke started to fight, Huck left to escape with Jim, but finds Jim has been stolen, thanks to the King, who sold him out. Huck has an attack of "conscience" for stealing the old woman's slave and decides to write Miss Watson about Jim. But realizing what a great friend Jim was, he tears up the letter and decides to pursue the path of perdition by trying to save Jim.

Huck meets the Duke, who promises to tell him where Jim was, lies instead. Huck goes off in the wrong direction to find Jim, knowing he will give the Duke the slip and can now formulate his own plans.

Chapter 31 Analysis

For instance, as Huck struggles over writing Miss Watson a letter, Mark Twain gives the reader, perhaps, a realistic picture of the attitudes of the ordinary Southerner towards slavery. Huck is very much pro-slavery and defines his conscience as being pro-slavery. But, in fact, when it comes to Jim, there are obviously conflicting human concerns, where friendship and the institution compete in the young boy's mind. Huck acts against his "social conscience," tearing up the letter and attempting to save Jim. But in his acting against his "social conscience," has he found his real conscience? Does Mark Twain, despite his affirmation that he has created a plotless, morale-less book, does he have a secret agenda? Is not a major part of this book a discussion of the institution of slavery?

Chapter 32

Chapter 32 Summary

Huck is now on his way to Silas Phelps' "little one-horse cotton plantation" to find Jim. He meets Mrs. Phelps, who obviously thinks he is someone named, "Tom," whose identity he immediately adapts. He tells her a story of a steamboat and its blown cylinder head to explain his delay in getting there. In the midst of their conversation, Mrs. Phelps surprises Silas with his new guest- none other than Tom Sawyer.

Huck is amazed to find that he has been impersonating his best friend who is related to the Phelps. He stays there for a while and then he hears a steamboat? Is the real Tom Sawyer coming?

Chapter 32 Analysis

Of course, it could seem a little contrived to bring Tom Sawyer come back to the aid of his friend Huck. And, of course, it is interesting and perhaps more than a little coincidental to have these two reunited. But perhaps one's concern over this seeming contrived is because one is so taken in by the reality of the characters Twain has created. In fact, with Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer, Twain has created a "franchise" that will endure into the next century and perhaps far beyond.

Chapter 33

Chapter 33 Summary

On his way to town, Huck spots the real Tom Sawyer who, at first, thinks that Huck is a ghost. Naturally, he is overjoyed to find that his friend his really still alive. Huck is amazed that, upon hearing his story, Tom immediately volunteers to help save Jim.

When the arrive at the Phelps, Tom is greeted joyfully and introduces himself as William Thompson so that Huck can remain in his pseudonym as Tom Sawyer. By mistake, he kisses his aunt on the mouth, embarrassing everyone and seeming to forget his role for a moment as a stranger. Then, while everyone is still startled, he reintroduces himself as Sid Sawyer, Tom's brother.

On the road, while they are talking about Pappy's disappearance and Jim's fugitive status, they run into a torch-carrying crowd yelling and banging tin pans as they carry out the King and the Duke, covered with tar and feathers. Huck feels surprisingly sorry and guilty for their fate.

Chapter 33 Analysis

With the introduction of Tom Sawyer, there is considerable complexity brought into the story. For Tom Sawyer, as he was in the very beginning of the book, is a lover of complexity and the following of his "traditional," self-made rules, based on his over-romantic and somewhat poorly assimilated study of knights, robbers, pirates and thieves. He, too, shares Huck's qualms about conscience, which is often a meddlesome quality that "makes no difference whether you do right or wrong."

Chapter 34

Chapter 34 Summary

Tom figures out where Jim is- in the ash hopper. Who else would they be slipping watermelon to? They decide they will dig him out. When they returned to the house, Tom enters by climbing up the lightening rod instead of going up the backdoor, a prelude to many self-created complexities. Jim is being looked over by a slave. He says he can't be there at night or he might be set upon by witches. So the slave's superstition works in their favor.

Chapter 34 Analysis

Superstition works in their favor as they keep Jim's slave attendant from bothering them while they dig out Jim at night. Jim is very happy to see them as both his friends have decided that his freedom is worth the risk.

Chapter 35

Chapter 35 Summary

The problem with Jim's captivity, according to Tom, is that it is "the stupidest arrangement I ever see. You got to invent *all* the difficulties." For instance, Tom wants to saw the leg of Jim's bed off instead of lifting it and swallow the sawdust. There isn't a moat around Jim's cabin, so Tom proposes to dig one. Of course, it might be a good thing to saw his leg off, but he probably wouldn't understand. Of course, they need to make a ladder out of sheets instead of using a rope ladder. Then, again, Jim will have to keep a journal. All kind of things are introduced into the plan to create complexity and to conform to Tom's idea of tradition. In particular, they decide to use knives instead of picks and shovels. It may take longer, but in a pinch, they can snatch him out real fast and pretend they took longer.

Chapter 35 Analysis

Although in the beginning of the book, Huckleberry seemed to see through Tom Sawyer's gang complexities, ideas that he mostly never carried out, he becomes Tom's plaything again, going along with Tom's meticulous misconceptions of how to make a "classical" escape.

Chapter 36

Chapter 36 Summary

Tom finally decides to dig Jim out with picks instead of case knives, even if they have to tell people they dug them out with case knives. So they decided to work real hard on the digging and finally came into the cabin. There they decided that they would smuggle him in the rope ladder, as well as other implements they would borrow from the household, like candlesticks and pewter spoons. When they unintentionally let a whole lot of dogs into the cabin and have to defuse Jim's slave attendant from understanding what they are up to.

Chapter 36 Analysis

The complexity goes deeper as Huck tries to maneuver within Tom's sensibilities. Even after they decide that they will use picks and shovels, they are shoving implements into Jim's bread and making him keep a journal with blood and creating a lot of extra work for themselves.

Chapter 37

Chapter 37 Summary

In this chapter, things start to get pretty wild in the Phelps house Tom and Huck, in the hopes of fostering a great, classical escape, start to steal spoons and candlesticks, sheets and shirts. Now, Mrs. Phelps and the servants have found things missing, they must take extra care. In one scene, Mrs. Phelps keeps counting and recounting her spoons, never getting exactly gone as Huck keeps taking them off and on the pile. Finally, Jim gets his rope ladder delivered in a witch pie.

Chapter 37 Analysis

There are hilarious moments in this chapter as Huck and Tom carry out their plans, which involves the elaborate pilfering of Tom's relatives' household. Certainly, one of the more amusing scenes is where Huck forces Aunt Sally to count and recount her spoons. And, then, there is the making and remaking of the witch pie, which finally gets to serve their purpose- to deliver something to Jim in the most complex and unnecessary way- all this in the name of style.

Chapter 38

Chapter 38 Summary

The boys outdo themselves as they struggle with providing Jim, an escaped slave, with a coat of arms, befitting a prisoner of State. They try out various inscriptions, one of which was "Here a captive heart busted." These inscriptions were so moving that Tom nearly broke down when he was reading them. It was fitting that he would put them on a rock. They chose a huge grindstone, which was very difficult to get in the cabin, but they managed.

Now, they need to turn their attention to providing Jim with rattlesnakes and rats and some spiders to provide the proper atmosphere in which to conduct a major escape. Jim protests against the rattlesnakes so they settle on garter snakes. They also want Jim to water a small plant with his tears but Jim says it's hard for him to cry. So Tom decided he would have to slip him an onion. Jim was rapidly beginning to think that there was a lot of absurdity in the plans, which offended Tom.

Chapter 38 Analysis

The strange excesses of Tom's plans begin to affect Jim's mood. Jim is a fairly straightforward, clear-thinking person about most things unless his superstitious side is somehow triggered. Tom just won't let things happen in a simple way. For Tom Sawyer, the joy is not in the outcome so much as in the fabrication of a complex, romantic-seeming process.

Chapter 39

Chapter 39 Summary

Now it is necessary to find the rats and spiders. When they unstopped one of the largest rat holes, they managed to scare Aunt Sally, who stood on a bed screaming at the top of her longs. They did very well with spiders, frogs, bugs and garter snakes. Soon snakes were crawling all over the house. Every now and then, Aunt Sally would howl or scream when she found a snake.

By this time, Huck and Tom were getting a fairly constant licking when their snakes appeared. Jim's cabin was now loaded down with the huge grindstone and every type of animal, while Jim kept a torturous journal; the boys ate the sawdust after cutting off the bed leg. Jim would write in the journal every time a rat bit him.

Meanwhile, Tom started to write anonymous letters, threatening that some hooligans were going to steal their slave. They posted these under the front door also putting pictures of skulls and crossbones and coffins in blood on the front and back doors respectively. Tom gives a detailed picture in his final letter of a gang insider's confession as to how they will steal Jim away.

Chapter 39 Analysis

As chapters go, this is perhaps one of the most hilarious- as snakes, rats, spiders and frogs are placed throughout the household, creating all kinds of bedlam. Not content with creating chaos in his relatives' home, Tom has focused on providing Jim with as much cramped and painful chaos as possible in honor of his prospective escape. Further, he spices up the situation by warning the relatives with strange, threatening letters.

Chapter 40

Chapter 40 Summary

The Phelps try and protect them from the news about the gang. At one point, Huck gets the butter, which he had forgotten, but has to slip it under his hat because of Aunt Sally. He then finds himself in a room with a lot of irate farmers with guns. She starts to ask Huck questions, but then the butter starts melting down his head and she believe that his brains are melting from brain fever! She finds out what's really there when she snatches off his hat.

Tom is, of course, delighted they are going to steal Jim under the most adverse and dangerous conditions, which he himself provoked. So, under gunfire and with dogs loose, they make a run to the river. Tom gets his by a bullet in the leg, which he is very glad about, although it hurts. Huck is told to get a doctor and blindfold him and help him out.

Chapter 40 Analysis

Tom's amazing schemes now jettisons them into the midst of real danger and Tom actually gets shot, an element of the situation that he cherishes, even though he is somewhat hurt. Now, even though they have freed Jim, they have this problem to contend with. Tom plans for Huck to find the doctor and bring him to Tom's aid in another contorted plan.

Chapter 41

Chapter 41 Summary

Huck procures the doctor and then goes home, falling asleep in a lumber pile. He tells his Aunt he has been looking for Jim with Tom, but Tom's disappeared for the moment. The farmers have come to the conclusion after looking at the inscription on the grindstone and the rag ladders and the way they used case knives. And all during this time, Aunt Sally was constantly afraid. But Sally has begun to worry about Tom. Huck promises that he won't leave, but of course he does.

Chapter 41 Analysis

After all the subterfuge, it all comes to naught because Jim is discovered with the Doctor. People think that Jim is completely out of his mind because of the inscriptions and case knives and journals. It is a difficult for everyone to handle. But the final ironies are yet to come.

Chapter 42

Chapter 42 Summary

Just as Chuck was about to go on a walk, Sally sees Tom on a mattress and Jim, tied up, walking with a group of people. The men were angry and wanted to hang Jim right away and hit him a few times.

The doctor defends Jim, saying that he crawled out of hiding just to help him. And so Jim risked his freedom just to help him save Tom. After this vigorous defense by the doctor, Jim's life is saved. They lock him up, though.

When Tom wakes up, he tells his Aunt the whole story, including the snakes, rats, stolen shirts, and spoons. He finds that Jim is still in captivity and is very indignant. According to Tom, Jim was set free months ago by Mrs. Watson and the whole escapade with Jim was just for the adventure of it.

Suddenly, Aunt Polly appears and gives away Tom's true identity, as well as Huck's. Aunt Polly confirmed that Jim had been let free, confirming the fact that the escape was just an excuse for adventure. Furthermore, Aunt Polly's letter had been rerouted by Tom.

Chapter 42 Analysis

The greatest irony of all is, of course, that Jim was freed by Miss Watson before the rescue ever began- and Tom knew it all along. Tom endured a great deal of self-imposed suffering and put his friends in danger all because of a romantic escape that was flawed all along.

Chapter 43

Chapter 43 Summary

Tom was going to make up to Jim his little subterfuge, paying him for his time and even getting some slaves to parade him with a brass band to celebrate his freedom. Still, he paid Jim forty dollars, which made Jim very happy and now he believed that he had fulfilled the prophecy that he had related to Huck so long ago. One day, Jim was going to be rich- and now he was, a rich, free man! And the three of them plan new adventures in Indian Territory. Tom attaches his bullet to a watch guard and hangs it around his neck. Huck plans on leaving for the new territories before Aunt Sally winds up civilizing him, as Miss Watson had tried not so long ago.

Chapter 43 Analysis

In the end, all goes well. Tom gets to keep his bullet, Jim goes free and Huck prepares for a new adventure. Huck is somewhat sorry he wrote the book, though, because he didn't think it would be so much trouble. But Mark Twain probably wasn't too sorry- and neither should we be.

Characters

Aunt Polly

Tom Sawyer's guardian. She arrives at the Phelps's farm and reveals Tom and Huck's true identities.

Aunt Sally

See Mrs. Sally Phelps

Boggs

During his travels with the King and Duke in "Arkansaw," Huck meets Boggs, a drunk in Bricksville. Boggs continually curses at townspeople, and despite several warnings, he provokes the wrath of Colonel Sherburn and is killed by him

Widow Douglas

The Widow Douglas has adopted Huck and attempts to provide a stable home for him. She sends him to school and reads the Bible to him. Although at first Huck finds life with Widow Douglas restrictive, eventually he gets "sort of used to the widow's ways, too, and they warn't so raspy on me." Later, when Huck refers to her, she represents all that is good and decent to him. Nevertheless, at the close of the novel Huck decides to "light out for the Territory" instead of returning to her home.

The Duke

On their Journey down the Mississippi, Huck and Jim pick up two con men who claim to be descendants of royalty. The Duke is a young, poorly dressed man of about thirty. Although they had never met before, the King and Duke soon Join forces to concoct a number of scams to play on the innocent inhabitants of the various towns along the riverbanks Even though he is aware of their true characters, Huck plays along—he has little choice, since the two men are stronger and can turn Jim in at any time. Eventually, however, Huck betrays them when they scheme to cheat the Wilks sisters out of their inheritance. The King and Duke later turn Jim in for a meager reward. The men later get their reward when they are tarred and feathered by an angry crowd. With these two characters, Twain ridicules the aristocratic pretensions of some Americans.

Huck Finn

See Huckleberry Finn

Huckleberry Finn

The narrator and hero of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is the title character, the fourteen-year-old son of the town drunk who was introduced in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.* At the end of that book, Huck was adopted by the widow Douglas and her sister Miss Watson, who brought him to live in town where he could attend church and school. But at the beginning of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* we learn that their attempts to "sivilize" him have been only partially successful. Huck learns to read and write, but he continues to climb out of his window at night to meet up with Tom Sawyer's gang.

Huck's life in town is abruptly ended when his father returns and kidnaps him, hoping to lay his hands on Huck's fortune. But Huck escapes by faking his own death, and he heads to Jackson's Island. There he meets up with Jim, Miss Watson's slave, who has run away because of her threat to sell him "down the river." The two of them embark on a journey down the Mississippi River and live a life of freedom on the raft, which has become their refuge from society. On their trip, Huck confronts the ethics he has learned from society that tell him Jim is only property and not a human being. By this moral code, his act of helping Jim to escape is a sm. Rather than betray Jim, though, Huck decides, "All right, then, I'll go to hell." Huck learns to decide for himself in various situations the right thing to do.

In the last third of the book, Huck defers to Tom Sawyer, whose outlandish schemes to free Jim direct the action. Huck is no longer m charge, and his moral quest appears to have been abandoned. But once Jim is freed, Huck decides he will "light out for the Territory" to escape the civilizing influence of another mother figure, this time Tom's Aunt Sally. For some critics, this decision redeems Huck from the charge that he has allowed Tom to distract him from discovering his Inner code of ethics. To others, it means that Twain sees no hope for civilization to redeem itself: because it cannot rid itself of fundamental failures like slavery, someone like Huck must escape its influence altogether.

Pap Finn

Huck's father, Pap, is an irredeemable drunk who schemes to get Huck's fortune away from him. When he returns to find Huck living at the Widow Douglas's and going to school, he accuses Huck of trying to be better than his father. Pap kidnaps Huck and brings him to a cabin in the woods where he beats his son and confines him to their shack. Pap also submits Huck to his drunken tirades against a free black man, reflecting the attitudes poor southern whites had about blacks who had the right to vote and were highly educated. Shortly after Huck escapes, Pap is killed, although Huck does not learn this until the end of the book.

The Grangerfords

Huck is taken in by the Grangerfords after the raft is broken up by a larger boat on the river. The family is wealthy and Huck is impressed by their gaudily decorated home, although the reader is aware of their shallow faithfulness to Ideals of gentility and decorum. Their feud with the Shepherdsons, based on a brutal, senseless code of honor, makes Huck "sick." He leaves after one of the Grangerfords's daughters runs off with one of the Shepherdson boys, and most of the men in the family are killed in the ensuing battle.

Buck Grangerford

The youngest son of the Grangerford family. He is Huck's age, but is killed in the feud with the Shepherdsons. Huck "haint ever heard anything" like how Buck swears after missing an opportunity to kill Harney Shepherdson. Nevertheless, he cries when he discovers Buck's body, "for he was mighty good to me."

Emmeline Grangerford

One of the Grangerfords's daughters, who died in adolescence and left behind a large number of sentimentally morbid poems and drawings that Huck admires. Her family tells Huck, "She warn't particular; she could write about anything... just so it was sadful."

Jim

Jim, a runaway slave who has escaped from his owner, Miss Watson, for fear of being sold to a plantation ill New Orleans, is Huck Finn's companion as they travel on a raft down the Mississippi river. He has been recognized by critics as a complex character, at once a superstitious and ignorant minstrel—show stereotype but also an intelligent human being who conveys more depth than the narrator, Huck Finn, is aware of. As their Journey progresses, however, Huck does grow to see Jim as more than a stereotype, despite comments like, "he had an uncommon level head for a nigger." Jim confronts Huck's prejudice when he scolds Huck for trying to playa trick on him without taking his feelings into consideration. Pointing to some leaves on the raft, he tells Huck, "dat truck dah is *trash;* en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren's en makes 'em ashamed" On their journey, Huck becomes aware of Jim's humanity and decides he will assist Jim in his quest to become free.

In the last third of the book, Huck enlists the help of Tom Sawyer to help free Jim, only to learn at the end that Tom knew all along that Jim had been freed by Miss Watson. In this section, critics have argued, Jim is once again cast as a shallow caricature of a gullible slave, and the novel's serious theme of race relations is reduced to a farce. But other critics have seen a consistency of character in Jim throughout the book, as a slave who wears the mask of ignorance and docility as a defense against white

oppression, occasionally giving Huck (and the reader) glimpses behind the mask. Forrest G. Robinson has argued that Jim learns Huck "is quite unprepared to tolerate the full unfolding of the human being emergent from behind the mask," and so the real Jim retreats in the last third of the book to ensure that Huck will continue to help him But according to Chadwick Hansen, Jim is never a "fully-rounded character" in his own right; rather he serves the function of making Huck confront his conscience and overcome society's influence.

The King

On their journey down the Mississippi, Huck and Jim pick up two con men who claim to be descendants of royalty. The King is a bald, graybeard man of about seventy years. Although they had never met before, the King and Duke soon join forces to concoct a number of scams to play on the innocent inhabitants of the various towns along the riverbanks. Even though he is aware of their true characters, Huck plays along—he has little choice, since the two men are stronger and can turn Jim in at anytime. Eventually, however, Huck betrays them when they scheme to cheat the Wilks sisters out of their inheritance. The King and Duke later turn Jim in for a meager reward. The men 'later get their reward when they are tarred and feathered by an angry crowd. With these two characters, Twain ridicules the aristocratic pretensions of some Americans.

Mrs. Judith Loftus

A sympathetic woman whom Huck meets while he is dressed up like a girl. She sees through his costume, but inadvertently warns Huck that her husband is on his way to Jackson's Island to cap ture Jim.

Mrs. Sally Phelps

Tom Sawyer's aunt. When Huck arrives on the Phelps farm, they are expecting Tom, so Huck pretends to be their nephew, while Tom pretends to be his brother, Sid She good-naturedly scolds "Sid" for pretending to be a stranger and then kissing her unasked.

Reverend Silas Phelps

Tom Sawyer's uncle. When Huck arrives on the Phelps farm, they are expecting Tom, so Huck pretends to be their nephew, while Tom pretends to be his brother, Sid. Phelps appears to be a kindly, good-natured, and trusting man, but he is holding Jim prisoner while waiting for his master to reclaim him.

Tom Sawyer

Tom Sawyer picks up where he left off in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by continuing to lead the other boys in imaginative games based on his reading of romantic adventure literature. But in this novel, his antics are much less innocent and harmless. At the beginning of *Huck Finn,* he provides comic relief in Huck's otherwise straight-laced life at the Widow Douglas's. But his reappearance at the end has troubled many critics. When Tom finds out that Huck is going to free Jim, he wholeheartedly takes up the challenge, creating elaborate schemes to free the man when he could just tell the family' that Jim has already been freed by Miss Watson, Neither Huck nor Jim approve of Tom's "adventures," although they feel compelled to submit to his authority in such matters. Many critics have noted the thoughtless, even cruel nature of Tom's games, as they make Jim's life miserable and terrorize Aunt Sally But Tom is ultimately punished for his forays into fantasy; during Jim's escape he is shot and seriously wounded.

Colonel Sherburn

A Southern aristocrat' who kills a drunk, Boggs, in the town of Bricksville, in "Arkansaw." He endures Boggs's taunts and gives him a warning before shooting the man in front of his own daughter. The town threatens to lynch him, but his scornful speech about the cowardice of the average American man and the mobs he participates in breaks up the crowd. .

Judge Thatcher

He keeps Huck's money safely out of Pap's hands by "buying" Huck's fortune for a dollar. Later he and the Widow Douglas petition a higher court to take Huck away from his father, but the court's "new judge" says families shouldn't be separated.

Miss Watson

The Widow Douglas's sister and Jim's owner. She represents a view of Christianity that is severe and unforgiving. It is her attempts to "sivilize" Huck that he finds most annoying: "MISS Watson she kept pecking at me, and it got tiresome and lonesome." When Jim overhears her admit the temptation to sell him down South despite her promise not to do so, he runs away. Her guilt at this turn of events leads her to set Jim free in her will.

Wilks sisters

The sisters—Mary Jane, Susan, and Joanna are orphaned when their guardian uncle, Peter, dies. The King and Duke impersonate their long-lost uncles in an attempt to gain

their inheritance. Their trusting and good-hearted nature in the face of the King and Duke's fraud finally drives Huck to take a stand against the two scoundrels.

Themes

Freedom

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* both Huck and the runaway slave Jim are in flight from a society which labels them as outcasts. Although Huck has been adopted by the Widow Douglas and been accepted into the community of St. Petersburg, he feels hemmed in by the clothes he is made to wear and the models of decorum to which he must adhere. But he also does not belong to the world Pap inhabits. Although he feels more like himself in the backwoods, Pap's drunken rages and attempts to control him force Huck to flee. At the end of the book, after Jim has been freed, Huck decides to continue ills own quest for freedom. "I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before." Huck is clearly running from a civilization that attempts to control him, rather than running in pursuit of something tangible. He is representative of the American frontiersman who chooses the unknown over the tyranny of society.

As a slave, Jim has likewise been denied control over his own destiny, and he escapes to prevent being sold down to New Orleans, away from ills wife and children. But Jim is chasing a more concrete ideal of freedom than Huck is. For Jim, freedom means not being a piece of property. Jim explicitly expresses his desire to be free as they approach Cairo and the junction with the Ohio River: "Jim said It made him all over trembly and feverish to be so close to freedom." But after they pass Cairo in the confusion of a foggy night, Jim's quest for freedom is thwarted and he must concentrate on survival. After Jim's capture, Tom and Huck attempt to free him in a farcical series of schemes that actually make escape more difficult and dangerous Huck indicates that a simple removal of the board that covers the window would allow Jim to escape, but Tom declares that is too easy. "I should *hope* we can find a way that's a little more complicated than *that,* Huck Finn," Tom says. After Jim escapes and is recaptured, Tom reveals that he has been free all along. Miss Watson had died and left him free in her will. The irony of freeing a free man has concerned many critics, who believe Twain might have been commenting on the failure of Reconstruction after the Civil War.

Conscience

Huck's main struggle in the book is with his conscience, the set of morals with which he has been raised. As they begin to approach Cairo, and Jim looks forward to his freedom, Huck says his conscience "got to troubling me so I couldn't rest." He rationalizes that he didn't lure Jim away from his owner, but "conscience up and says every time, 'But you knowed he was running for his freedom, and you 'could 'a' paddled ashore and told somebody.'" During this scene he wakes up to the fact that he is helping a slave gain freedom, something he has been brought up to believe is wrong. So m an attempt to relieve his guilt, he sets off for shore, telling Jim he is going to find out if they have passed Cairo, but really intending to turn Jim in.

When he meets up with two men looking for a runaway slave, he confronts a true test of conscience, and fails, in his eyes. The two men ask him about the man on board, and Huck protects Jim by making up an elaborate tale about his father who is dying of smallpox, a highly contagious disease. When he returns to the raft, Jim rejoices in his cover-up, but Huck instead is "feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong." He decides that he is naturally bad, and that he only did what made him feel better. Not being able to analyze his actions, Huck fails to recognize that he has taken a stand against a morally corrupt society. Later, after Jim has been turned in by the King and Duke, Huck must again wrestle with his conscience as he decides to play an active role in freeing Jim. Up until this point he had only protected Jim from discovery; now he must help Jim escape, an even more serious crime. But rather than let his "conscience" guide him, Huck listens to his heart, which tells him that Jim is a human being, not property. He turns his back forever on society's ethics and decides he'd rather *"go* to hell" than turn his back on Jim. Through Huck, Twain attacks that part of the conscience that unquestioningly adheres to society's laws and mores, even when they are wrong. .

Race and Racism

Probably the most discussed aspect of *Huck Finn* is how it addresses the issue of race. Many critics agree that the book's presentation of the issue is complex or, some say, uneven. No clear-cut stance on race and racism emerges. Despite the fact that Huck comes to respect Jim as a human being, he still reveals his prejudice towards black people. His astonishment at Jim's deep feelings for his family is accompanied by the statement, "I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for their'n. It don't seem natural, but I reckon it's so." And even after he has decided to help free Jim, Huck indicates that he still does not see black people overall as human beings When Aunt Sally asks "Tom Sawyer" why he was so late in arriving, he tells her the ship blew a cylinder head. "Good gracious! Anybody hurt?" she asks. "No'm. Killed a nigger." "Well, it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt," she responds. As some critics have pointed out, Huck never condemns slavery or racial prejudice in general but seems to find an exception to the rule in Jim. Nevertheless, the fact that Huck does learn to see beyond racial stereotypes in the case of Jim is a profound development, considering his upbringing. He lived in a household with the Widow Douglas and Miss Watson where slaves were owned. And Pap's rantings over a free black man indicate his deep racial prejudice. When confronted with the fact that a free black man was highly educated and could vote, Pap decides he wants nothing to do with a government that has allowed this to happen. He wants the free man,' whom he calls "a prowling, thieving, infernal, white-shirted free nigger," to be sold at auction In other words, all black people are slaves, white man's property, in his eyes. Such are the views on race with which Huck has been raised

But there is no agreement as to what Twain's message on the subject of race is. While some critics view the novel as a satire on racism and a conscious indictment of a racist society, others stress the author's overall ambivalence about race. Critics have had a

difficult time reconciling the stereotypical depictions of Jim and other slaves in the book with Huck's desire to free Jim.

Style

Narrator

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn was a breakthrough in American literature for its pre sentation of Huck Finn, an adolescent boy who tells the story in his own language. The novel was one of the first in America to employ the child's perspective and employ the vernacular—a language specific to a region or group of people throughout the book. Many critics have characterized the smoothness of Huck's language as the most unique feature of the book. Lionel Trilling sees Twain's creation of Huck's voice as a measure of his genius. He writes that Huck's language has "the immediacy of the heard voice." Shelley Fisher Fishkin has suggested that Twain created Huck's style of speech from that of a real boy, an African-American child that he met in the early 1870s, combined with dialects of white people he had heard as a child. But Huck's unique perspective is that of a lower-class, southern white child, who has been viewed as an outcast by society. From this position, Huck narrates the story of his encounters with various southern types, sometimes revealing his naiveté and, at other times, his acute ability to see through the hypocrisy of his elders. Many readers have commented on Huck's unreliability as a narrator, though, especially in his admiration of the gaudy taste exhibited by the Grangerfords and his inability to see through his own prejudices when he tells Aunt Sally that no one was hurt on board the ship, although a "nig ger" was killed.

Setting

Another distinctive aspect of the novel is its setting. Because it takes place when slavery was at its height in America, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* addresses in a roundabout way the prejudices of southern whites that had laid the foundation for slavery and were still omnipresent in the Reconstruction South of Twain's time. The discussion of slavery in the text, then, takes on anew meaning for a post-Civil War audience. It forced them to confront the legacy of slavery in spite of their eagerness to forget its devastating impact and rid themselves of its curse. The physical setting of the novel, most specifically the river and the raft, has also drawn the attention of critics. The Mississippi River itself serves as a kind of no-man's-land in the text, a place outside of society that is governed by different rules. The raft becomes a new world for Huck and Jim, where they can be themselves and make up their own rules by which to live. On either side of the river lies the shore, which represents a return to society. Significantly, It is Huck who makes excursions into towns along the river banks for food, information, and fun. While Huck can be a kind of vagabond, travelling from one place to another without being a part of society, Jim must hide on the raft, the only place where he can be safe.

Burlesque

Burlesques, or parodies of elevated or serious forms of literature, were popular as far back as Shakespeare, but they were also the favorites of working-class theatergoers in America starting in the 1840s. In America, burlesques often poked fun at aristocratic types who were subjected to the lowly conditions of the American city or frontier, and they extolled the virtues of a democracy over the pretensions of Europe's high society. Burlesques also became associated with minstrel shows as they were incorporated into the latter in the 1850s. Mark Twain is well known for his adept adaptations of burlesques in his works. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* he used the technique to critique the aristocratic pretensions of the King and Duke, and the romantic fantasies of Tom Sawyer. In fact, the last third of the book descends into burlesque, according to the novel's critics, as Tom's outlandish schemes to free Jim take center stage. In addition, some scenes between Jim and Huck are modeled on' burlesques, especially their conversation about Frenchmen, in which Jim subtly outsmarts Huck, revealing the wisdom of the supposedly Ignorant.

Realism and Regionalism

Mark Twain was a major contributor to the interconnected Realist and Regionalist movements, which flourished from the 1870s to the 1920s. Realism refers to the insistence on authentic details in descriptions of setting and the demand for plausible motivations in character's behaviors. Writers of the Regionalist movement also adhered to these principles as they explored the distinct and diverse regions of post-Civil War America that they feared were being swallowed up by a national culture and economy. Realist and Regionalist techniques are exemplified in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by the specific and richly detailed setting and the novel's insistence on dialect which attempts to reproduce the natural speech of a variety of characters unique to the Mississippi Valley region. In addition, Huck's momentous decision to free Jim, even if it means going to hell, is seen as a classic episode of Realist fiction because it demonstrates the individual's struggle to make choices based on inner motivations, rather than outside forces.

Historical Context

Slavery

The issue of slavery threatened to divide the nation as early as the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and throughout the years a series of concessions were made on both sides in an effort to keep the union together. One of the most significant of these was the Missouri Compromise of 1820. The furor had begun when Missouri requested to enter the union as a slave state. In order to maintain a balance between *free* and slave states in the Union, Missouri was admitted as a slave state while Maine entered as a free one. And although Congress would not accept Missouri's proposal to ban free blacks from the state, it did allow a provision permitting the state's slaveholders to reclaim runaway slaves from neighboring free states.

The federal government's passage of Fugitive Slave Laws was also a compromise to appease southern slaveholders The first one, passed in 1793, required anyone helping a slave to escape to pay a fine of $500. But by 1850, when a second law was passed, slave owners had become increasingly insecure about their ability to retain their slaves in the face of abolitionism. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law increased the fine for abetting a run away slave to $1000, added the penalty of up to six months in prison, and required that every U.S. citizen assist in the capture of runaways. This law allowed southern slave owners to claim their fugitive property without requiring them to provide proof of ownership. Whites and blacks in the North were outraged by the law, which effectively implicated all American citizens in the institution of slavery. As a result, many who had previously felt unmoved by the issue became ardent supporters of the abolitionist movement.

Among those who were outraged into action by the Fugitive Slave Law was Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) galvanized the North against slavery. Dozens of slave narratives—first hand accounts of the cruelties of slavery—had shown white Northerners a side of slavery that had previously remained hidden, but the impact of Stowe's novel on white Northerners was more widespread. Abraham Lincoln is reported to have said when he met her during the Civil War, "So you're the little lady who started this big war." White southerners also recognized the powerful effect of the national debate on slavery as it was manifested in print, and many southern states, fearing the spread of such agitating ideas to their slaves, passed laws which made it illegal to teach slaves to read. Missouri passed such a law in 1847.

Despite the efforts of southerners to keep slaves in the dark about those who were willing to help them in the North, thousands of slaves did escape to the free states. Many escape routes led to the Ohio River, which formed the southern border of the free states of Illinois and Indiana. The large number of slaves who escaped belied the myths of contented slaves that originated from the South.

Reconstruction

Although *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* takes place before the Civil War, it was written in the wake of Reconstruction, the period directly after the Civil War when the confederate states were brought back into the union. The years from 1865 to 1876 witnessed rapid and radical progress in the South, as many schools for blacks were opened, black men gained the right to vote with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 and the Civil Rights Act of 1875 desegregated public places. But these improvements were quickly undermined by new Black Codes in the South that restricted such rights. White southerners felt threatened by Republicans from the North who went south to help direct the course of Reconstruction Most galling was the new authority of free blacks, many of whom held political office and owned businesses. While prospects did improve somewhat for African Americans during Reconstruction, their perceived authority in the new culture was exaggerated by whites holding on to the theory of white superiority that had justified slavery.

In response to the perceived threat, many terrorist groups were formed to intimidate freed blacks and white Republicans through vigilante violence. The Ku Klux Klan, the most prominent of these new groups, was formed in 1866. Efforts to disband these terrorist groups proved ineffective. By 1876, Democrats had regained control over the South and by 1877, federal troops had withdrawn. Reconstruction and the many rights blacks had gained dissipated as former abolitionists lost interest in the issue of race, and the country became consumed with financial crises and conflicts with Native Americans in the West. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, new Jim Crow laws segregated public spaces in the South, culminating in the Supreme Court's decision in the case *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, which legalized segregation

Minstrel Shows

As the first indigenous form of entertainment in America, minstrel shows flourished from the 1830s to the first decade of the twentieth century. In the 1860s, for example, there were more than one hundred minstrel groups in the country. Samuel Clemens recalled his love of minstrel shows in his posthumously published *Autobiography,* writing, "If I could have the nigger show back again in its pristine purity and perfection I should have but little further use for opera." His attraction to blackface entertainment informed *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* where, many critics believe, he used its humorous effects to challenge the racial stereotypes on which it was based.

Minstrel shows featured white men in blackface and outrageous costumes. The men played music, danced, and acted burlesque skits, but the central feature of the shows was the exaggerated imitation of black speech and mannerisms, which produced a stereotype of blacks as docile, happy, and ignorant. The shows also depicted slavery as a natural and benign institution and slaves as contented with their lot. These stereotypes of blacks helped to reinforce attitudes amongst whites that blacks were

fundamentally different and inferior. The minstrel show died out as vaudeville, burlesques, and radio became the most popular forms of entertainment.

Critical Overview

When it was first published, responses to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* were fairly nonexistent until the Concord Public Library in Massachusetts announced that it was banning the book from its shelves. This action set off a public debate over the merits of the book. The most vocal were those who deemed the book to be unsuitable for children, fearing their corruption by exposure to its lower-class hero. Howard G. Baetzhold reports that beloved children's author Louisa May Alcott said about the book, "If Mr Clemens cannot think of something better to tell our pure-minded lads and lasses, he had best stop writing books for them." Critics who demanded that literature be uplifting cited rough language, lack of moral values, and a disrespectful stance towards authority as the book's faults. But some critics rallied behind the author and wrote reviews that praised the book as a lasting contribution to American literature.

These early reactions are a fair indication of how the book has been received ever since. On the one hand, respected scholars have claimed the book as the core text of an American literary canon, where it has enjoyed a secure position since the 1950s. As Leo Marx claims, "Everyone agrees that *Huckleberry Finn* is a masterpiece" H. L. Mencken went so far as to dub the novel "perhaps the greatest novel ever written in English." Although some have questioned the formal coherence of the novel, arguing that the ending and Tom's burlesque escapades disrupt the text's quest for freedom, the general consensus has emerged that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is one of the most important works of American fiction ever written. But despite this resounding stamp of approval from the nation's leading literary scholars, secondary schools around the country have at various times questioned its suitability for students, even going so far as to ban the book. Whereas detractors of the novel from the previous century had been primarily concerned with its lack of decency and moral values, in the wake of the Civil Rights movement, the main concern of administrators, parents, and librarians has become that it promotes racism and demeans African American children with its extensive use of the word "nigger." Ultimately, the fear is that the complexity of the racial issues in the text may be too much for schoolchildren to comprehend. As Peaches Henry explains, "Parents fear that the more obvious aspects of Jim's depiction may overshadow the more subtle uses to which they are put."

Although in the past there have been sharp contrasts between the responses of scholarly and lay readers of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* the debate over the book's racial messages has more recently become the center of debate amongst literary scholars as well. The crux of the controversy is whether or not the novel presents an indictment of racism or simply reflects the generally accepted racist attitudes of the time period in which it was written. For most critics, the issue boils down to the depiction of Jim. For some, Jim is nothing more than a minstrel show stereotype, "the archetypal 'good nigger,' who lacks self-respect, dignity, and a sense of self separate from the one whites want him to have,"_ in the words of Julius Lester. In these critics' eyes, Twain reveals his racism when he allows Tom to derail and hence belittle Jim's serious attempts to gain freedom and Huck's efforts to overturn society's view of blacks as property. But to others, a subtle satire on slavery and racism emerges from the text and

takes precedence over any stereotypical depictions of African-Americans. Eric Lott argues, for example, "Twain took up the American dilemma (of race) not by avoiding popular racial presentations but by inhabiting them so forcefully that he produced an immanent criticism of them." According to Lott, the use of minstrel show stereotypes, exaggerated and ridiculous depictions of whites's false perceptions of blacks has the effect of "making nonsense out of America's racial structures." Many critics agree with Lott, seeing the novel itself as a critique of the racism expressed by its narrator, Huck.

For many critics, however, Twain's conscious Intentions about racial messages are not the issue. They see instead a variety of perhaps unconscious effects in the novel that point to new ways to understand the text's complex evocation of America's racial predicament. For example, Forrest G. Robinson sees a depth to Jim that he thinks previous scholars have missed. Jim is both the stereotypical "darky" and the complex human being, wearing a mask of contentment and gullibility that represents the kind of prejudice whites have about him as an African American. But behind the mask, the real Jim is a shrewd agent in his own defense In essence, Robinson argues that whether Twain was aware of it or not, Jim is a complex African American character that reflects the situation of slaves at the time as they attempted to survive in a racist society. Such readings draw attention to the complex ways the novel addresses, in Robinson's words, "the nation's most painful and enduring dilemma.".

These readings accept Twain's ambivalence and contradictory responses to the issue, rather than attempting to vilify the author or insulate him from accusations of racism. In a related vein of argument, Peaches Henry declares that we may not be able to decide once and for all whether the novel is racist or subversive, but the book deserves our attention because "[t]he insolubility of the race question as regards *Huckleberry Finn* functions as a model of the fundamental racial ambiguity of the American mind-set."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

In the following essay, James, a doctoral candidate at Yale University, relates the history of controversy surrounding The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn *and particularly its portrayal of the slave Jim. She argues that how the reader interprets Jim's character can affect the interpretation of the novel's problematic ending.*

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn has been a source of controversy since its publication in 1884. It was banned from many public libraries on its first appearance for being "trash." Although today it is widely regarded as a—if not the—classic American novel, it still poses problems for its readers. *Huckleberry Finn* has long been identified as expressing something essentially American: in the words of Bernard De Voto, "the novel derives from the folk and embodies their mode of thought more purely and more completely than any other ever written." In some ways, the debate about the American-ness of *Huckleberry Finn* reveals the larger struggle to define American identity. Those who first condemned the novel as being "trash" objected to it on grounds of both literary merit and racial, social, and economic class: they rejected its portrayal of a slave and an uneducated, poor boy as the most typical kind of American citizens. The opposite point of view, which celebrates the novel as an expression of the "folk,"' asserts its subject is the quintessential, or typical, American story' characters without social advantages trying to "make good."

Twain creates the impression of American folk culture through his use of dialect and phonetic spelling, which mimics speech, rather than writing.

As he points out in his opening notice to the reader, different characters use different dialects; in *this* world, where not everyone receives the same kind of education, people speak differently from one another. Many critics read *Huckleberry Finn* as a lesson in the way that Identity is formed by social realities. They focus on the fact that Twain uses language to show that access to culture and education defines character. Depending on how you read it, the spoken language can either make characters more believable, complex, and therefore digmf1ed, or it can make them seem merely uneducated, caricatured, and "backward"

Twain's attempt to capture the sounds of vernacular (local) speech is part of the novel's realism, part of its documentary quality. And yet, the novel also has elements of romance, which is the very opposite of realism. For instance, Twain relies on unbelievable coincidences in his plot, like the fact that the Phelpses *just happen* to be Tom Sawyer's relatives, and he *just happens* to be arriving on the same day that Huck comes to the farm. Twain manages to merge elements of these two kinds of writing by using a third literary tradition to structure his novel. This literary tradition is called the picaresque—the comedy of the road, the traveling adventure; only here, instead of on a road, the journey takes place on a river. The episodes along the river suggest that the Mississippi winds through a semi-wild frontier. Twain makes the American landscape a site of endless adventures. The river, symbolizing both the power of nature and the inevitable passing of time, is what keeps the raft, and the story, moving. This picaresque

framework, although it is usually associated with romance, makes the novel's realistic, documentary moments possible. As Huck and Jim move down the Mississippi, they encounter a diverse swath of American society. Huck gives firsthand descriptions of feuding families, a camp-meeting religious revival, a lynch mob, and other complex social phenomena. Twain connects the picaresque structure, which leaves room for endless variation and adventures, with the endless variation of America's inhabitants. As in his earlier novel, *Life on the Mississippi,* Twain draws on his own childhood experience and his knowledge as a river man to give the book its convincing details Samuel Clemens even took his pseudonym, "Mark Twain," from his life on the river.

If *Huckleberry Finn* is *the* authentically American adventure story, it also explores one of America's most lasting problems: racism. Many critics have questioned Twain's portrayal of "the nigger Jim." Twain's consistent use of the word "nigger" is itself troubling to readers today. It is important to notice that Twain uses a great deal of irony in general, and that what Huck thinks is not the same thing that Twain thinks. There are two main questions here: does Twain simply use stereotypes? And if he does, does he do so in order to make those stereotypes seem true, or to show them as false and oversimplified? On the one hand, Jim's humanity makes him the novel's most appealing character.

Jim fills a gap in Huck's life: he is the father that Pap is not; he teaches Huck about the world and how it works, and about friendship. But on the other hand, parts of Jim's character belong to a traditional stereotype of the "happy darky" —an imaginary portrayal of the slave as simple, childlike, and contented. Although Jim runs away, he does not strike the reader as overtly "rebellious" or dangerous. Jim never seems to suspect Huck's crisis of conscience about whether or not he should be helping a slave to escape. And, instead of being angry with Tom Sawyer for the trick he plays at the end of the novel, Jim is simply happy to take his forty dollars.

How we read Jim influences how we read the novel's primary structural "problem," its ending. One way of thinking about this problem is to ask whether *Huckleberry Finn* seems to go in a line, or in a circle. On the journey down the river, Huck learns that Jim has real feelings, recognizes his humanity, and vows not to play any more tricks on him. If the novel is a *bildungsroman—a* narrative about a character coming of age—this is the moment in which Huck learns his most valuable lesson Huck seems to be traveling onward, in a line of development. But the ending chapters seem to circle us back into the childlike, irresponsible world of boyish adventure that Huck has supposedly left behind. The long and drawn out trick that Tom Sawyer plays on Jim makes the reader doubt if any real development has taken place. Which side of the joke is Huck on? Even though he does not know that Jim has been freed, he lets Tom turn the escape into a game, and seems to feel little, if any, remorse for toying with Jim's fate. He seems to have forgotten what he learned about the importance of Jim's feelings. Finally, even though Jim is technically "free," he is not recognized as a man by the other characters, or by the larger social world he inhabits. Toni Morrison argues that the novel needs Jim's enslavement to make the other characters seem free by contrast. She explains, "freedom has no meaning to Huck or to the text without the specter of enslavement, the anodyne to individualism; the yardstick of absolute power over the life of another; the

signed, marked, informing, and mutating presence of a black slave." At the end of the novel, for instance, Huck plans to "light out for the Territory" in search of more adventures. But Jim's wife and children are still slaves. Because of his racial identity in a racist society, Jim always remains more confined than Huck does.

Writing *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* took Mark Twain several years. He began the project as a sequel to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,* as another children's book. But as he wrote, it became more complex; it raises questions that make it a challenging book for readers of all ages. To understand the novel's complexity, one has to take its dual historical context into account Twain locates the action in the past, before the civil war, and before the legal abolition of slavery. But much of the novel speaks to Twain's contemporary audience, who lived during Reconstruction, a time when the South especially was trying to deal with the effects of the Civil War. The "king" and "duke" owe something of their depiction to the post-Civil War stereotype of carpetbaggers (a derogatory stereotype of Northerners come to prey on the defeated South). Jim belongs, at least partially, to a postwar Vaudeville tradition of the "happy darky," played on stage by white men in blackface, who used a parodied version of black dialect This popular stereotype conveyed a white nostalgia, and enacted an imaginary construction of the slave before Emancipation, before the "disappointments" of Reconstruction. Twain tries to come to terms with this nostalgia, but whether he critiques it, or indulges in it, is up for debate.

During his lifetime, Twain was best known for being a humorist, a user of irony and a writer of satire In this novel, he uses Huck as a relatively naive narrator to make ironic observations about Southern culture and human nature in general. As usual, Twain finds a likely object of satire in religious fervor, in the cases both of Miss Watson and of the visit the "king" pays to the camp-meeting. But the irony in *Huckleberry Finn* exists at several levels of narration: sometimes Twain seems to aim his irony at Huck, while other times, Huck himself is an ironic and detached observer. For instance, when the rascally "king" and "duke" come aboard the raft, Huck tells the reader:

It didn't take me long to make up my mind that these liars warn't no kings nor dukes at all, but Just lowdown humbugs and frauds. But I never said nothing, never let on; kept it to myself; it's the best way; then you don't have no quarrels, and don't get into no trouble. If they wanted us to call them kings and dukes, I hadn't no objections, 'long as It would keep peace in the family, and It warn't no use to tell Jim, so I didn't tell bun. If I never learnt nothing else out of Pap, I learnt that the best way to get along with his kind of people is to let them have their own way.

This passage ironically undercuts the way we think Huck has been relating to the two frauds; he does not, in fact, "feel right and kind towards" them In fact, the connections among the foursome on the raft are extremely tenuous. Huck's choice of metaphor compounds the irony: he compares the two men to his father, and decides to think of them as part of his "family," throwing the whole notion of "family" into an ironic light Huck thinks he can avoid "trouble" by pretending not to know that they are frauds, but trouble is all they bring. Huck's decision to "let them have their own way" is wishful, because he really has no choice. Finally, although Huck seems to condemn them, he recognizes

them as liars partially because he is one himself—he tricks people out of money on more than one occasion. This passage explicitly reminds us that Huck can dissemble and pretend, just as Twain does in his writing. As readers of *Huckleberry Finn,* we are continually challenged to locate the multiple objects of the novel's satire.

Twain's irony complicates the question of race and racism in the world of *Huckleberry Finn.* What the novel make clear, though, as their journey continually separates and reunites Huck and Jim white and black—is that their fate is intertwined. Their destinies must be worked out in relation to each other. For Twain, *that* is the great, and greatly troubled, American adventure.

Source: Pearl James, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale 1997

Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt, Browne discusses how Tom Sawyer, at the end of the novel, has a negative moral influence that Huck Finn must struggle to overcome.

Throughout the book Huck's attitude toward the life around him is remarkably ambivalent. Though he clearly is rebelling against respectability and civilization, he rebels because they make him uncomfortable and 111 at ease. He fights them by running away. When he can no longer abide the "pecking" of the widow and Miss Watson, and the privations they force upon him, he flees, but only to the rags and sugar-hogshead of the other side of town. He does not need to go farther. In fact, he must stay within commuting distance of respectable folk. And he quickly and easily returns when a lure is held up to him The agent who entices Huck back from rags to respectability is, of course, Tom Sawyer. Tom at this time clearly symbolizes Huck's Ideal.

Tom seems to be a rebel He battles the world around him. He attacks the status quo, and seemingly threatens to overturn it. Yet his battles are all shams. If he ever overthrew his paper dragons, his crusading spirit would collapse He lives happily in his society. After the lark of playing battler, he always joyously returns to the safety and security of Aunt Polly. This clash of danger and safety appeals to Huck, and it is epitomized in the person of Tom Huck will therefore make any sacrifice for his hero, even to giving up the comfort and freedom he so immensely enjoys. Tom has saturated and captivated Huck's consciousness. Near or far he is the older boy's evil genius.

But Huck is not satisfied or happy for long in his enslavement. Though he sees the world through Tom's rose-colored glasses, and though his spontaneous reaction to any situation is usually Tom's, Huck is restive. He is galled by his fetters and tries to break away. The fact is that he cannot live without Tom—or with him. He seeks a *modus vivendi* [a manner of living] with Tom and his world, but cannot find it. Huck's victory over this forced compromise constitutes one of the great achievements in the book.

Demonstration of Huck's ambivalence begins at the outset of the novel Huck recounts how in *Tom Sawyer* he was adopted by Widow Douglas, could not tolerate her "sivilizing" him and therefore ran away to his rags, where he was "free and satisfied."_ But Tom lured him back with the promise that he could become a member of the band of robbers "So I went back," Huck states matter-of-factly. The close bond between the two boys is further revealed when Miss Watson tries to get Huck, who is hell-bent, to reform and thus prepare for the other destination; Huck is content with hell when Miss Watson assures him that Tom will be there too: "I wanted him and me to be together.'"

But no sooner does Huck join the band of robbers than the two boys' incompatibility manifests itself and he begins to drag his feet. After playing robber for a month, Huck resigns. He can no longer pretend that hogs are "ingots" and turnips are "julery." He wants to see the "di'monds," A-rabs, and elephants. For his protests, Tom calls him a "numskull," and "perfect sap-head" Huck's revulsion overcomes him "I judged that all

that stuff was only one of Tom Sawyer's lies. It had all the marks of a Sunday school" Tom the romantic dreamer, the sham adventurer, thus symbolizes everything that frightens Huck: St. Petersburg civilization, religion, romantic literature. From this monster Huck flees.

Yet fly as he will, Huck cannot shake off Tom, who is a ghost that refuses to be laid. When Huck "kills" himself to escape from Pap, he does it on Tom's terms' "I did wish Tom Sawyer was there, I knowed he would take an interest in this kind of business, and throw in the fancy touches□" Again, on the night of the storm, when Huck is trying to convince Jim to board the wrecked *Walter Scott,* the force that drives Huck aboard is not the promise of loot—of "seegars" and "solid cash"—but the irresistible urge to imitate Tom. "I can't rest, Jim, till we give her a rummaging. Do you reckon Tom Sawyer would ever go by this thing? Not for pie, he wouldn't.. I wish Tom Sawyer *was* here."

Later, in Tennessee while the King and Duke play Peter Wilks' brothers, when Huck has adroitly maneuvered Mary Jane away from the house and has satisfactorily lied to the other girls, he congratulates himself, with his inevitable comparison: "I felt very good, I Judged I had done it pretty neat—I reckon Tom Sawyer couldn't a done it no neater himself." Still later, in Pikesville, when Huck discovers that the King has turned in Jim for the sum of forty dollars, he decides to write home and have Jim's owner send for him. But he automatically thinks of writing to Tom and having him tell Miss Watson where Jim is. The point is that in Huck's mind St. Petersburg—that world—and Tom are one and the same, inseparable, with Tom the symbol.

With Tom so constantly and completely—and so heavily—on his mind, Huck naturally—and not surprisingly—acquiesces in the deception when Aunt Sally mistakes him for Tom. Huck's first impulse has always been to give in to Tom. Why should he not be flattered *to be* Tom? Indeed, discovering that he was supposed to be Tom Sawyer "was like being born again," in the sense of being reborn into the world of St. Petersburg and of Tom. "Being Tom Sawyer was easy and comfortable," Huck confesses immediately. Once it is settled that Huck will be Tom and Tom will be Sid, the future looks rosy. Everything will be "easy and comfortable." Huck relaxes completely, suspending his mental processes—becoming again the blind disciple. For example, it is inconceivable that the Huck of the voyage, with his mind alerted for signs of Jim, could see a slave enter an isolated cabin with food—part of it watermelon—and not suspect its purpose. Yet the somnolent Huck does: "Well, it does beat all, that I never thought about a dog not eating watermelon. It shows how a body can see and don't see at the same time."

But in Huck's acquiescence there immediately becomes manifest the old attraction—revulsion tug-of-war he felt in St. Petersburg. And after the initial joy of being Tom has worn off, Huck begins to protest. In the old environment, the last time the boys shared an adventure, it took Huck a month to break away. Now, however, Huck's new nature shows through quickly. When he and Tom are concocting schemes for the release of Jim, Huck gives his plan first, then sits back waiting for the "superior" one; when Tom springs his, Huck reflects ironically: "I see in a minute it was worth fifteen of mine, for style, and would make Jim just as free a man as mine would, and maybe get us all killed besides."

After this initial resistance, Huck protests each new detail of the plan, as the more mature person realizes the absurdity of Tom's childish pranks. He protests, but he gives in each time. Each protest, in fact, is weaker than its predecessor. In this increasing weakness lies Huck's downfall. His resistance—his maturity—is being abraded. He is corning more and more under the mesmeric influence of Tom. Finally he capitulates completely: "Anyway that suits you suits me," he says when Tom wants him to dress up like a servant-girl to deliver the warning of the release of Jim.

Throughout the remainder of the evasion, Huck protests not at all. During the actual escape he apparently enjoys himself. It is action, of course, instead of romantic theorizing, and therefore appeals to the pragmatic Huck. But—far more significantly—Huck's new self is being subsumed under Tom's. So fast has been the activity since Tom's arrival that Huck has not had a chance to be alone and to reflect, and it is only when he has searched his soul through active thinking that his true self emerges. Now, caught up in activity, he is becoming the old Huck again, so completely under the influence of Tom that he is ready to "slide out" with Tom and Jim and "go for howling adventures amongst the Injuns, over in the Territory, for a couple of weeks or two."

At this point Huck is faced with the greatest crisis of his life. Once before he was confronted with a mighty decision, when he had to choose between being respectable and returning Jim to Miss Watson, and being himself, listening to the voice of his heart, not returning Jim—and going to hell. He chose the latter course, but only after great soul-searching, in solitude and silence: "I ... set there thinking—thinking...And went on thinking. And got to thinking..." In this even greater crisis if the new boy is to prevail over the old, clearly he needs time to think and think Luckily time is provided.

Source: Ray B Browne, "Huck's Final Triumph," in *Ball State Teacher's College Forum,* Vol. 6, No.1, Winter, 1965, pp. 3-12

Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, Brownell explains the importance of Jim's role in the novel as not just a foil to Huck but as a "moral catalyst" who is key to Huck's moral growth

At the beginning of the second chapter of *Huckleberry Finn,* we meet one of the most important characters in the novel' "Miss Watson's big nigger, named Jim, was setting in the kitchen door... " Jim is to play a role second only to that of Huck in this novel, but the reader is seldom conscious at anyone point of the extent of Jim's importance. Even in Jim's biggest scenes, we more often than not come away thinking of Huck rather than Jim. The main point I wish to make in this paper is that Jim is not merely a noble cause or an ignoble foil, in either of which cases he would be more particularly important for the action episodes of the book than he in fact is; he is rather what one might call a moral catalyst, and thereby of central importance in the portrayal and illumination of the character of Huckleberry Finn. True, the action depends upon the presence of the runaway slave, and from this status evolves the double search for freedom which Professor [Edgar Marquess] Branch defines [in his *The Literary Apprenticeship of Mark Twain* (1950)] as the explicit theme of the book: "Huck's story of his struggle to win freedom for himself and Jim." His role as the runaway slave may certainly be argued as showing Jim's indirect importance to the varied action in the book, but it is my thesis that Jim's primary function is to further the characterization of Huckleberry Finn: by his presence, his personality, his actions, his words, to call forth from Huckleberry Finn a depth of tenderness and moral strength that could not otherwise have been fully and convincingly revealed to the reader. For Mark Twain's gift for characterization was, as Professor [Edward] Wagenknecht has observed [in his *Mark Twain: The Man and His Work* (1935)], a very great "ability to *evoke* character, as distinct from *constructing* it." ...

It is Jim's openness, his unashamed dignity, that makes Huck's struggle with and conquest of his pride, that is, his ashamed dignity, deeply moving and fully significant. We have seen earlier in the book touches of gentleness in Huck, we have seen that he does not mean to hurt the feelings of the Widow Douglas, and later we are to see him grieving that he has deceived and brought sorrow to Aunt Sally. But it is this incident [when Huck lies to] Jim which, above all others, shows his concern about "hurting others" in its full meaning, as a deep and affectionate respect for human dignity. We have seen and are to see this concern carried far beyond respect for the visible and admirable dignity of Jim, the Widow Douglas, Mary Jane Wilks, and Aunt Sally, to include respect for the besmirched if not invisible dignity of the Duke and Dauphin as, tarred and feathered, they are ridden out of town astride a rail (Ch. XXXIII). And there is Huck's attempt to secure rescue for the stranded murderers: "I begun to think how dreadful it was, even for murderers, to be in such a fix I says to myself, there ain't no telling but I might come to be a murderer myself yet, and then how would I like it?" Professor Wagenknecht comments: "What a triumph of Christian humility! What a triumph of understanding and imagination! It is Mark Twain's version of the generally misquoted and misattributed utterance of old John Bradford, on seeing some criminals on the way to execution. 'But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford.'"

Jim is a gentle and loyal person; he is not vengeful, he does not hate, he cannot cheat or trick another He fears and evades violence, but he does not commit violence—as do so many of the characters in this book, whether as individuals or with the clan or mob. His most memorable speeches are characterized by an open honesty and a deep capacity for unselfish love. We recall the wounded love for Huck that brought about Jim's angry speech quoted above, and the love for his little deaf daughter in that other powerfully dramatic, though brief, narration (Ch. XXIII). In a world peopled by Pap Finn, the Duke and the Dauphin, lynchers, feuders, and murderers, Huck is almost constantly on the defensive. It is when he is alone with Jim in the secure little world of the raft drifting down the Mississippi that Huck hears a voice of love that makes sense in a world of hatred, and can reply from his own heart with his apology and with his famous moral victory' "All right, then, I'll *go* to hell." Mr. Branch has pointed out in considerable detail the significance of the Widow Douglas, but she was not a comrade to Huck. Huck was III at ease with her, and they sometimes simply could not understand each other's thoughts and feelings. With Jim, this barrier of age, position, sex, and background does not exist. It is in response to the open tenderness in Jim that there is the opportunity and the necessity for the tender side of the "realistic" Huck Finn to be spontaneously and convincingly revealed to the reader. Mr. Branch pays tribute to the integrity that lies back of and gives strength to this tenderness in Jim: of those people in Huck's world who live consistently from the heart. "Jim, of course, is foremost in selflessness and magnanimity. Because he is incapable of deceit, his innocence, whether comic or pathetic, is haloed with grandeur. His search for freedom is carried forth in humility and sanctified by elemental justice." When Jim's dignity is violated without remorse, it is by the amoral Tom, not the moral Huck, and this will be discussed later in this paper.

Jim's personality is strongly influenced by his faith in superstition, especially evil omens. His first serious appearance in the novel, after his brief appearance as the butt of Tom's prank, is to cast a rather ominous prediction for Huck by means of this ox hair-ball. The reader has been prepared before this for a serious attitude on the part of the characters towards superstition, when, in the first chapter, Huck is terrified to realize that he has accidentally killed a spider. Even the simile with which he describes the atmosphere takes on the morbid touch of his fear: "I set down again, a-shaking allover, and got out my pipe for a smoke; for the house was all as still as death now, and so the widow wouldn't know." After Jim has completed his splendidly ambiguous prophecy with the disheartening sentence: "You wants to keep 'way fum de water as much as you kin, en don't run no resk, 'kase it's down in de bills dat you's gwyne to git hung," This chapter concludes with a one-line paragraph: "When I lit my candle and went up to my room that night there sat pap—his own self!" Thus enters for the first time a genuinely evil force into the novel, in the form of the malicious and dangerous town drunkard. Later, the wreck of the raft, which leads to the Grangerford feud episode, is also preceded by an evil omen: Huck carelessly handles a snake-skin. (On this is also blamed—accurately—Jim's rattlesnake bite and-inaccurately the near disaster on the *Walter Scott.)* As a final instance of the direct role of superstition in the plot, there is the fact that the rescue episode would have been foiled at the start if the great superstitious fear of Uncle Silas had not made communication with the prisoner Jim not only possible but relatively easy....

Jim is, as Mr. Branch observes, Huck's mentor in this dark and shifting realm. But he is more than an instructor in fear, as Mr. Branch might seem to suggest; he is here again the voice of love and conciliation in an erratically malicious and quarrelsome world, although a voice touched with fear in this realm as with grief in the human realm. Jim's only rebellion in the human realm was born of love, not hate: he planned (though futilely) to free his wife and children, to steal them away from their "rightful owners." Huck and Jim are essentially not rebels: they seek to escape, not to fight. They ask only to be left alone. This is true in the human realm, and it is true as they try to ward off "bad luck" with charms and magic formulas.

We need not smile with condescension on this superstitious response to unseen malevolence. This "mythical, fatalistic level" is merely more picturesque in Huck's world than in our present world. It would be hypocritical of us to laugh at Jim and Huck's belief in the concrete existence of evil as Evil Powers, merely because the present unwritten code observes a different form. We no longer put in our time with dead cats and salt shakers in order to save ourselves from harm Instead, we modern realists construct fierce, nationalistic mythologies peopled with spotless heroes and mustachioed villains, the roles remaining the same, but the cast changing every twenty years. So we who have humbled ourselves before one huge fear, who accept the supremacy of Evil or Violence, and struggle to clothe ourselves most adequately in his livery, hoping that our stockpile of A-Bombs will prove the highest in the end, laugh in relieved contempt at the multitude of little fears we no longer share. Still, even this side of a graceful admission of a common weakness, the reader who reads this novel responsively is eventually saturated by the awe and humility of these people (I mean especially Huck and Jim) towards what they do not understand but feel to exist above and beyond their limited power. The reader is aware of the more-than-human struggle that tinges the novel throughout, through all the petty and tragic human struggles. And that more-than-human struggle is most often made vivid through the words and actions and personality of Jim.

Source: Frances V Brownell, "The Role of Jim in *Huckleberry Finn,* in *Boston Studies* in *English,* Vol. I, 1955, pp 74-83.

Adaptations

In the 1930s, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was adapted twice as a black-and-white film under the title *Huckleberry Finn,* once ID 1931 by director Norman Taurog for Paramount, and then ID 1939 by MGM The latter is the most famous of the novel's adaptations It was directed by Richard Thorpe and starred Mickey Rooney as Huck and Rex Ingram as Jim The 1939 film is available on video from MGM/UA Home Entertainment.

An adaptation of the novel was produced for the "Climax" television program in 1954 by CBS. It starred Thomas Mitchell and John Carradine and is available from Nostalgia Family Video.

Another film version of the book was released by MGM ID 1960, this tune in color as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.* Directed by Michael Curtiz, the film starred Eddie Hodges as Huck, Archie Moore as Jim, and Tony Randall as the King. This adaptation is also available on video from MGM/UA Home Entertainment.

PBS produced a version titled *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* for "American Playhouse" in 1986. The movie was directed by Peter H. Hunt and the cast included Sada Thompson, Lillian Gish, Richard Kiley, Jim Dale, and Geraldine Page. It is available from MCA/Universal Home Video.

Walt Disney produced *The Adventures of Huck Finn* in 1993. This film, starring Elijah Wood as Huck and Courtney B. Vance as Jim, deleted racial epithets and translated the characters' dialects to snit modern tastes. It was directed by Stephen Sommers, who also wrote the screenplay. The film is available from Walt Disney Home Video.

In 1994, the novel was updated in the film adaptation *Huck and the King of Hearts* produced by Crystal Sky Communications In this version, Chauncey Leopardi plays Huck, who lives in a trailer park, and Graham Green plays Jim, who is a Native American con artist fleeing a hoodlum from whom he has stolen drug money. The movie was directed by Michael Keusch and written by Chris Sturgeon. It is available on home video.

The novel has also been recorded on sound cassettes many times since 1980. Unabridged versions are available from Books, Inc. and Books in Motions Abridged versions are available from Metacom, Listen for Pleasure Ltd., and Time Warner Audiobooks, which released a study guide along with the tape.

Topics for Further Study

Study the history and form of the minstrel show in the nineteenth century and find evidence in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that Twain was influenced by minstrels in his creation of the novel.

Research the history of the novel's censorship in America, and argue for or against the exclusion of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from a school's curriculum.

Using history texts and primary sources like slave narratives, research the conditions under winch slaves lived in the 1840s to gain a deeper understanding of what Jim's life might have been like, and tell Jim's story from his perspective.

Compare and Contrast

1840s: Under the Slave Codes, enacted by individual southern states, slaves could not own property, testify against whites in court, or make contracts. Slave marriages were not recognized by law.

1884: As the result of Black Codes enacted by states during Reconstruction, African Americans could now legally marry and own property, but the codes also imposed curfews and segregation. The Fifteenth Amendment granted black men the right to vote, but individual states prohibited them from doing so.

Today: The right to vote is universal for all citizens above the age of eighteen, and other rights are not restricted by race.

1840s: The steamboat was the most popular mode of travel and the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers were the main thoroughfares in the West.

1884: The railroad had taken over as the means of mass transportation all across America.

Today: Most goods are transported within the U.S. by truck, and airplanes and cars allow peo ple to travel long distances in short periods of time.

1840s: Means of entertainment were beginning to flourish in America. Among the many new kinds of literature available were slave narratives and romantic adventures. The first minstrel show was staged in 1843.

1884: The field of literature, in the form of books and periodicals, had become the province of the masses. The minstrel show continued to be popular, as did the music of ragtime winch was associated with it.

Today: Entertainment, especially film, television, and music, is a multi-billion-dollar industry.

1840s: The Mississippi River ran freely, making travel dangerous, due to snags, large pieces of trees lodged in the river.

1884: The Mississippi River Commission had been founded in 1879 to improve navigation. Over the next decades, a series of levees were built which also alleviated flooding problems.

Today: The level of the Mississippi River and its banks are tightly controlled so that navigation is very safe and floods are less frequent.

What Do I Read Next?

Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* (revised, 1883) tells of the author's years as a steamboat pilot through a series of short articles.

Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845) is the most prominent slave narrative written, and depicts his development from slave to free man.

A Short History of Reconstruction (1990) by Eric Foner, an abridged version of his award winning study *Reconstruction" America's Unfinished Revolution,* explains the complex reasons for the failure of Reconstruction.

In *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South* (1990), James Oakes presents a thorough history of slavery as it was practiced and preached during the period in which *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* takes place.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's classic *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) depicts the inhumanity of an institution which separates slave families on the auction block and corrupts southern whites by giving them absolute power over their slaves.

In his essay "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience," published in 1849, Henry David Thoreau argues that each person is responsible for acting on his own principles, no matter what the laws of the state. He applied this reasoning specifically to slavery.

Further Study

Anthony J Berret, *Mark Twain and Shakespeare a Cultural Legacy,* University Press of America, 1993.

A contextualization of Shakespeare in Twain's time, debates about authorship, Twain's identification with Shakespeare, and popular productions.

Pamela A. Boker, *The Grief Taboo in American Literature Loss and Prolonged Adolescence in Twain, Melville, and Hemingway,* New York University Press, 1996.

In this study, Boker looks at the relationship between loss and coming-of-age Issues as they are expressed in the works of several prominent American authors.

Richard Bridgman, *Traveling in Mark Twain,* University of California Press, 1987.

A study of how Journeys express several themes in Twain's works.

Bernard De Voto, *Mark Twain's America* Houghton Mifflin, 1932.

De Voto thoroughly analyses the novel's structure and reception

Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *Lighting Out for the Territory. Reflections on Mark Twain and American Culture,* Oxford University Press, 1997.

A new study of how Twain's focus on issues relating to the frontier reflect a uniquely American experience.

Andrew Jay Hoffman, *Twain's Heroes, Twain's Worlds: Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* A *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, and Pudd'nhead Wilson,* University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988.

A study which interprets Twain's characters, including Huck Finn, according to various theories of heroism.

Randall K. Knoper, *Acting Naturally. Mark Twain in the Culture of Performance,* University of California Press, 1995.

A study which places Twain's work in the popular culture of his time, placing special emphasis on the theatrical forms of entertainment popular in Twain's day and their influence on his work.

Mark Twain A *Collection of Critical Essays,* edited by Eric J. Sundquist, Prentice Hall, 1994.

A collection of scholarly essays, three of which examine *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in particular. A good introduction to recent scholarly approaches to Twain's work.

Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination,* Vintage, 1992, pp. 54-7.

Morrison interprets the Importance of Jim in *The* Ad *ventures of Huckleberry Finn* and relates Twain's portrayal to other writers' fascination with and use of African-American characters in American literature.

David R. Sewell, *Mark Twain's Language. Discourse, Dialogue, and Linguistic Variety,* University of California Press, 1987.

This linguistic study uses sophisticated language theory to analyze Twain's writing. Although a scholarly study, this work is relatively free of jargon.

David Sloane and E. E. Sloane, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: American Comic Vision,* Twayne Publishers, 1988.

This volume in the Twayne "Masterwork Series" examines *Huck Finn* and how fits within the American tradition of comic literature.

J D. Stahl, *Mark Twain, Culture and Gender. Envisioning America Through Europe,* University of Georgia Press, 1994.

This study looks at two trends in examining Twain's work first, Twain's treatment of and concern with gender issues; and second, Twain's use of encounters with Europe as a mean to explore and define the American identity.

Bibliography

Howard G. Baetzhold, "Samuel Longhorn Clemens," in *Concise Dictionary of American Literary Biography' Realism, Naturalism, and Local Color,* 1865-1917, Gale, 1988, pp 68-83.

Shelly Fisher Fishkin, *Was Huck Black?' Mark Twain and African-American Voices,* Oxford University Press, 1993

Chadwick Hansen, "The Character of *Jim* and the Ending of 'Huckleberry Finn'," in *The Massachusetts Review,* Vol. V, No I, Autumn, 1963, pp. 45-66.

Ernest Hemingway, *The Green Hills of Africa,* Scribner, 1935.

Peaches Henry, "The Struggle for Tolerance' Race and Censorship in *Huckleberry Finn,"* in *Satire or Evasion? Black Perspectives on Huckleberry Finn,* edited by James S. Leonard, Thomas A. Tenney, and Thadius Davis, Duke University Press, 1992, pp. 25-48.

Julius Lester, "Morality and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,"* in *Satire or Evasion? Black Perspectives on Huckleberry Finn,* edited by James S. Leonard, Thomas A Tenney, and Thadius Davis, Duke University Press, 1992, pp. 199-207.

Eric Lott, "Mr. Clemens and *Jim* Crow: Twain, Race, and Blackface,"_ in *Criticism and the Color Line. Desegregating American Literature,* edited by Henry B. Wonham, Rutgers University Press, 1996, pp 30-42.

Leo Marx, "Mr. Eliot, Mr Trilling, and *Huckleberry Finn,"*_ in *The American Scholar,* Vol. XXII, 1953, pp. 432-40

H. L. Mencken, "Final Estimate," in his *H. L. Mencken's "Smart Set" Criticism,* edited by William H. Nolte, Cornell University Press, 1968, pp. 182-89

Forrest G Robinson, "The Characterization of *Jim* in *Huckleberry Finn,"* in *Nineteenth-Century Literature,* Vol. XLIII, No.3, December, 1988, pp. 361-91.

Lionel Trilling, "The Greatness of *Huckleberry Finn,"'* in *Huckleberry Finn Among the Critics,* edited by M. Thomas Inge, University Publications of America, 1985, pp 81-92.

BOOKRAGS

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Novels for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Novels for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535