
Racism and Slavery in the Portrayal of Jim's Character in Mark Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

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Abstract

"Slavery and racism" is one of the controversial themes, especially in the literary works published in the nineteenth century. At that time, slavery was not just a political practice that could be changed through legislating new laws, but it was also intrinsic to the American social system. Racism and slavery were deeply rooted in American society, marking one of the darkest periods in the nation's history. Mark Twain was one of the leading literary figures who took the responsibility to address this issue and represent how it greatly influenced his community's social and cultural context. His realistic portrayal of Jim's character is iconic in the American novel. The author has made a unique balance between his depiction of Jim's realistic character and his satirical writing style to stress the rotten environment of the American community regarding its racial attitude toward black-skinned citizens. The current study will focus on that issue as it is cleverly represented in Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn through the brilliant portrayal of Jim's character. The researcher will discuss the various elements of the "slavery and racism" theme in the novel with particular reference to Twain's portrayal of Jim's character and his simple dream of being free.

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المخلص

تعتبر العبودية والعنصرية من المواضيع المثيرة للجدل على المستوى الأكاديمي في الأدب الأمريكي على وجه العموم وفي الأعمال الأدبية التي تم نشرها في القرن التاسع عشر على وجه الخصوص. ولم تكن العبودية في ذلك الوقت مجرد ممارسة سياسية يمكن تغييرها من خلال تشريع قوانين جديدة، بل كانت العنصرية والعبودية متجذرة بعمق في المجتمع الأمريكي مما يعكس واحدة من أحلك الفترات في تاريخ الأمة الأمريكية. ويعد مارك توين أحد الشخصيات الأدبية الرائدة التي تحملت مسؤولية معالجة هذه القضية وذلك لما تمثله من تأثير شديد السلبية على السياق الاجتماعي والثقافي للمجتمع الأمريكي حينذاك. ويعد تصوره المبدع والواقعي لشخصية جيم من أشهر الإبداعات الفنية في الرواية الأمريكية. ولقد حقق المؤلف توازناً فريداً بين تصوير جيم الواقعي وأسلوب كتابته الساخر لفضح البيئة الفاسدة للمجتمع الأمريكي فيما يتعلق بموقفه العنصري تجاه المواطنين ذوي البشرة السوداء. وتركز الدراسة الحالية على تلك القضية مثلما تم عرضها بكفاءة منقطعة النظير من خلال التصوير الرائع لشخصية جيم في رواية توين الشهيرة مغامرات هاكلبري فين. ويناقش الباحث العناصر المختلفة لموضوع العبودية والعنصرية في الرواية والتي تدور جميعها في فلك شخصية جيم وحلمه البسيط في أن يصبح مواطناً حراً.

Key Words:

Slavery and racism – Huckleberry Finn – Jim – the inferiority of the black slaves – the superiority of the white race

1.0 Introducing the Study

The current study investigates the theme of "slavery and racism" as one of the significant themes in American literature. Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain) is one of the pioneering American novelists and social critics who addresses this topic in his masterpiece, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884). Despite his fame in satirical and comic writings, Mark Twain chooses thoroughly to investigate the arrogant atmosphere of the American white society towards the Afro-Americans who were brought against their will from Africa to the new continent to serve as enslaved people for their white masters. The novel presents two parallel plots (Doyno 22). The first

one concerns Huck's journey as his quest for personal freedom. This plot is familiar with other Mark Twain comic and satirical novels, including *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889). The second plot presents Jim's journey towards rejection of slavery.

Consequently, he could work hard to buy his freedom first and then buy the freedom of his wife and two kids to live as a family together. Huck's comic dream of finding a land without a social code or norms contrasts sharply with the seriousness of Jim's simple dream of having a simple life with his wife and children. The author started to write his novel two decades after the end of the American Civil War. The abolition of slavery, when the laws of the American society towards slavery changed a little (Davis, 1992: 78). However, the real problem regarding that issue is the corrupt cultural and social background of the American ways of living, especially in the South. The current study will investigate the theme of racism and slavery in the novel, which reflects the author's genuine point of view. The researcher will focus on five aspects: Jim and Huck's friendship, Jim's running away as a crime, the realistic portrayal of Jim's character, and finally, freeing Jim legally and socially.

2.0 Jim's Loyalty and Friendship to Huck

In one of the unique studies about racism and slavery in Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Richard K. Barksdale investigates the weird friendship between Huck and Jim, which was an impossible phenomenon during the slavery time of nineteenth-century American society. Afro-Americans were regarded as nothing more than animals who had no rights, no feelings, and even no human instincts. They were considered a labor force that could help the white masters in their households, driving their carriages, guarding their farms, and planting their fields (20). Such an inhuman system, according to Barksdale, motivated several enslaved Black people to run away when they had a chance. The white society, as Barksdale says, took several procedures to punish those escapees for their attempts to run away. These punishments included shooting or hanging them in the town square (20). However, these cruel punishments could not prevent the enslaved people from running away. Barksdale adds that the era of the slavery system was one of the darkest periods in American history.

Nevertheless, facing the realities of that period is the most effective approach to resolve any complicated racial issues in the present social life of the American society. Those complex and cruel conditions cast doubts on the

probability of establishing a friendship between Huck and Jim (21-22). However, Barksdale argues that the ironic atmosphere of the novel, which is regarded as the most dominant feature in Mark Twain's writing style, renders such friendship as possible. The author wants to expose the corruption in American society, which sanctioned such a system and gave enslaved people the cold shoulder. Consequently, being isolated on their raft and away from those abnormal social codes, Jim and Huck can quickly form their friendship and loyalty. The improbability, as Barksdale says, is not in the friendship itself; it is in having such a loyal and pure relationship in such a corrupt and inhuman racial atmosphere (24).

Many passages in the novel show the authenticity of Jim and Huck's friendship. Loyal to his friend Huck, Jim took complete responsibility for the boy, showing his noble manners and ethics. During the storm, they discovered a drifting house in which Jim found the dead body of Huck's father, Mr. Pap Finn. Being loyal and caring about Huck, Jim decided to warn the little boy against looking at the body as the scene was too horrifying. According to Barksdale, the real reason for Jim's warning is his friendship with Huck. He kept the boy from watching his father's corpse (21). Despite Huck disliking his father's behavior to the extent that he ran away from the house, he still loves him. Watching the dead body of his father could have unfavorably affected Huck. Jim takes responsibility for not revealing Pp's identity to protect Huck from the tragic consequences. This attitude reflects deep understanding and compassion on the part of Afro-American Jim despite his illiteracy. Another situation of Jim's loyalty is when Jim thinks he has lost Huck in the fog. Though it was one of Huck's immature and childish tricks, the situation was different from Jim's point of view. Huck narrated:

However, when he did get the thing straightened around, he looked at me steadily without ever smiling and said: "What do dey stan' for? I'se gwyne to tell you. When I got all wore out wid work, en wid de calling for you, en went to sleep, my heart wuz mos' broke bekase you wuz los', en I didn' k'yer no' mo' what become er me en de raf'. En when I wake up en fine you back agin, all safe en soun', de tears come, en I could a got down on my knees en kiss 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. -----". Then he got up slow and walked to the wigwam, and went in there without saying anything. But that was enough. It made me feel so mean I could almost kissed HIS foot to get him to take it back. (P: 42)

In this quotation, Huck indicates that Jim does not mind losing the raft for Huck's sake. Sacrificing his only means to escape to the land of freedom where he could work hard to buy his freedom, then his wife and kids, shows how loyal he feels towards Huck. Huck's reconsideration of his attitude after that situation shows his gratitude for Jim, with whom he feels protected and secure for the first time. These examples show how intimate and close the two characters are. They form an idealistic and noble bond in that dark period of racism and slavery.

3.0 Jim's Crime

In another study co-authored by Niken Khusnul Nibiya, Heri Dwi Santoso, and Yesika Maya Ocktarani (2021), they argue that Jim's decision to escape from Miss Watson. However, it was a crime with several psychological motivations indicating Jim's good nature. Being an enslaved person does not affect the peaceful mind of Jim, who is completely content with his enslavement, especially since he can be with his wife and children, who were also enslaved on a nearby farm. He decided to escape only when he knew he might be separated from his family. The authors wrote, "Jim's case can be studied from sociological or psychological aspects. The pressure that makes Jim run away is caused by some motivation following his discomfort, knowing he will be sold. Besides, he wants to be reunited with his wife and children without being enslaved (2021: 135)". This quotation points out the first psychological reason behind Jim's decision to escape and threaten his life by hanging in the town square if he was caught. He accepted slavery only because of his love of and care for his wife and children. His life as an enslaved person was satisfactory except for some moments when Miss Watson got angry. He told Huck: "... dat's Miss Watson, she pecks on me all de time, en treats me pooty rough..." (51). Here, he says he was displeased with Miss Watson when he could not understand what she wanted of him.

Nevertheless, those moments were not miserable enough to motivate him to escape (69). However, when he knew that his owner would sell him for eight hundred dollars, he started to realize the dangers of his situation. He told Huck, "I hear old missus tell de widder she gwyne to sell me down to Orleans, but she did not want to, but she could get eight hundred dollars for me, en it 'uz sich a big stack of money she could' resist" (51). Consequently, Jim planned his escape with straight and ambitious goals. Huck explained that plan in a few words, pointing out its logic and wisdom. He said: "... he would go to saving up money and never spend a single cent, and when he got enough, he would buy his wife, which was owned on a farm close to where

Miss Watson lived, and then they would both work to buy the two children". (P: 85). Jim's escape is far from being a sudden decision or a criminal activity. Jim's practicality, despite his illiteracy, is admirable.

Nevertheless, this plan has a point of weakness, which Jim was completely aware of. By escaping away, he would be away from his family and children. He understood such painful consequences, but escaping was his only hope of being united with his family (70). His sadness over the temporary separation from his family reflects his compassionate and kind heart. Such sadness is described by the thirteen-year-old Huck when he says: "He was thinking about his wife and his children, away up yonder, and he was low and homesick because he had not ever been away from home before in his life..." (P: 135). These quotations indicate Jim's true nature as practical, wise, and goodhearted. He broke the law by escaping from Miss Watson's house. However, his escape was for many noble reasons, and he presented his crime as a good deed that could be justified and pardoned.

4.0 The Neutral Portrayal of Jim's Character

In another study co-authored by Sebastian Rao and Michael Snead, entitled "An Afropessimist Interpretation of Huckleberry Finn," the authors refer to Twain's contradictory presentation of anti-racism in the novel. In other words, they argue that the several attempts made by the author to criticize racism in American society at that time were unsuccessful. Instead, all these naïve attempts increase the contradiction and the conflict in the text, increasing its racial approach (2). This is illustrated obviously in the white doctor's description of Jim after helping Tom Sawyer when he says:

Don't be no rougher on him than you're obleeged to, because he ain't a bad nigger ... I tell you! I had a couple of patients with the chills, and of course, I'd of liked to run up to town and see them, but I dasn't, because the nigger might get away, and then I'd be to blame ... and I never see a nigger that was a better nuss or faithfuller, and yet he was risking his freedom to do it ... I liked the nigger for that; I tell you, gentlemen, a nigger like that is worth a thousand dollars—and kind treatment, too. (P: 360-1)

In this quotation, the reader, according to Rao and Snead, can find all the types of the author's contradictions in his fake war criticism of racism and slavery (2). The white doctor, a representative of the elite society, praised Jim at the beginning of his speech. Despite his kind words, he was petrified to leave him alone. The doctor could not leave to see two patients who required his immediate help and stayed all night lest that "criminal fugitive" might escape. This is an indication of the contradiction (3). The doctor could

not finish his praise of Jim without reference to his criminal nature that was thought to characterize enslaved Black people. They were thought to be dark both outside and inside. However, the contradiction was not limited to that accusation. After accusing him of being a fugitive with wicked plans to escape, the doctor returned to praise Jim for the second time. However, that second time, his praise includes a price of Jim, stressing that Jim is no more than a valuable object that could cost one thousand dollars. Here, the doctor could not find anything better than money to give Jim his worth of value.

Ironically, the doctor added that Jim deserved a kind treatment. Thus, the doctor described Jim as an object and asked the others to treat him kindly. In addition, Rao and Snead explain that Jim's story is narrated from the point of view of a thirteen-year-old white boy, Huck. This means that this presentation is unreliable. This presentation depends mainly on the vocabulary, grammar structure, and even the semiotics used by the young white friend. According to the authors, this is another example of Twain's failure to defend anti-racism (4). This does not mean that Huck was prejudiced against Jim. However, it is still not his story to tell.

In the novel, Jim is presented as wiser than Huck. This is represented during Huck and Jim's adventure on Jackson's island when Jim predicts the storm. Despite his sarcastic comments on Jim's superstition, Huck would have been in a hazardous situation if he had not listened to Jim's warning about the storm. Furthermore, Jim makes a wise decision when he saves Huck from watching the corpse of his dead father. Later, Jim sacrificed his chance to achieve his goal of saving himself and his family and remained beside the sick Tom Sawyer until he was healed. All these situations show that Jim is mature enough to narrate his own story without depending on a white child who once stated, "If ever I struck anything like it, I am a nigger. It was enough to make a body ashamed of the human race" (165). Here, Huck made it clear that the black slave and the shame of the human race were at the same level.

In his paper entitled "Blackness, Critics, and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," David Smith takes an approach different from that taken by Rao and Snead, indicating that it would be unfair to describe a genius literary work like Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as racial. The author's recurrent use of the term "Niger," which is one of the first accusations made against the work, is a positive point because of the author's realistic presentation of the novel that was written in the nineteenth century. It is important to note here that the novel's cultural context should be compared to other literary texts written in the same period, not compared to the current

literary works whose approach towards racism and slavery is entirely different in both language and theory. During the twentieth century, especially its second half, the topic of racism and slavery radically changed upside down (3). According to Smith, the author has made a clever balance in his portrayal of Jim between his superstitious and naïve qualities on one side and his practical and loyal traits on the other. Jim is an illiterate. This balanced presentation accounts for his beliefs and faith in superstition and witchcraft. It also explains how both Tom and Huck's comic pranks, which do not imply white racism against the black African American citizen, easily tricked him. Instead, they were just innocent games played by the two teens on their close acquaintance, whether black or white (3-4).

Conversely, Jim is portrayed as a practical man who can predict the weather. He was also portrayed as a loyal human being who could easily sacrifice his dreams of freedom for the sake of his true friends. Smith adds that two obvious situations in the novel reflect Twains' proper understanding of the unpleasant nature of the American white society with its racial culture (4). The first situation is represented in Pap's speech about his encounter with the educated black man. He told Huck:

There was a free nigger there from Ohio – a mulatter, most as white as a white man. He had the whitest shirt on you ever see, too, and the shiniest hat; and there ain't a man in that town that's got as fine clothes as what he had; and he had a gold watch and chain, and a silver-headed cane – the awfulest old gray-headed nabob in the State. And what do you think? They said he was a p'fessor in a college, and could talk all kinds of languages, and knowed everything. And that ain't the wust. They said he could VOTE when he was at home. Well, that let me out. Thinks I, what is the country a-coming to? It was 'lection day, and I was just about to go and vote myself if I warn't too drunk to get there; but when they told me there was a State in this country where they'd let that nigger vote, I drawed out. I says I'll never vote (P. 38)

In these few lines, Mark Twain introduces the rotten nature of racism and slavery in the American white society during his time. Skillfully, he represents it through the cruelest character in the entire novel. Any can say those words of the characters in the novel. The author's choice of a drunk and abusive man like Pap Finn to pronounce them is significant. It first reflects how the author deeply understands the rotten thoughts of the white society towards the black citizens. It also reflects one of the magic solutions for those black citizens to defeat such racial attitudes, which is education. At the

beginning of Pap's speech, Twain stresses that this fellow American is an educated lawyer wearing much better clothes and hat than all the white citizens in the town. Another situation in the novel, which indicates the author's understanding of the racism in America during the nineteenth century, is presented early in the novel. As early as chapter two of the novel, the author attempts to convey his message regarding the dilemma of the American community's conflict between black and white citizens. Huck narrated:

When Jim falls asleep under a tree, Tom hangs Jim's hat on a branch. Subsequently, Jim concocts an elaborate tale about having been hexed and ridden by witches. The tale grows more grandiose with each repetition, and eventually, Jim becomes a local celebrity, sporting a five-cent piece on a string around his neck as a talisman. 'Niggers would come miles to hear Jim tell about it, and he was more looked up to than any nigger in that country, the narrator reports. Jim's celebrity finally reaches the point that 'Jim was most ruined, for a servant, because he got so stuck up because he had seen the devil and been rode by witches. That is, no doubt, amusing. However, whether Jim believes his tale or not--and the 'superstitious Negro' thesis requires us to assume that he does--the fact remains that Jim benefits from becoming more a celebrity and less a 'servant.'... By constructing a fictitious narrative of his own experience, Jim elevates himself above his prescribed station in life. By becoming, in effect, an author, Jim writes himself a new destiny. (108-9)

Jim's fame after that incident indicates his eloquent speech skills, which motivated all the enslaved Black people from around the area to come and listen to his story. Here, it is wrong to attribute the entire incident to Tom's prank. Instead, Jim's eloquence has changed a simple prank into a story worthy of being heard. According to Smith, the concluding words of the quote are very significant for the novel's events, in which the author stresses Jim's unique nature and qualities that could enable him to have a new destiny (7). This new destiny completely differs from his previous life as a simple servant of Miss Watson. Jim only needed the trigger that could unleash his hidden qualities. This is provided through Miss Watson's intention to sell him and separate him from his family. These two situations show the brilliant

atmosphere of the literary work that has made it one of the landmarks in the history of American literature.

5.0 Freeing the Free Jim

In his study entitled "Freeing the Free Nigero", Charles H. Nilon focuses on the last twelve chapters of the novel in which Jim was captured and both Tom and Huck have planned his escape. According to Nilon, those chapters dramatically reflect the events in the South during the post-restoration period when Mark Twain was already writing them. The dominant idea during these years was how the white American society, soaked deeply in the roots of racism, could accept the enslaved Black people who had been freed by law. Nilon states "that at the time of writing the novel, black people were freer as slaves than they were after they were freed by law" (64). This statement indicates the truth about the South, which could not socially accept what the law confirmed that some of the black slaves could be freed from their eternal slavery. Early in the novel, Pap Finn expresses his astonishment about some states where black persons can practice their political voting rights. As a protesting step against such a shameful procedure, from Pap's point of view, he declared his doubts about the integrity of the election process. He decided not to participate in them anymore.

This incident is again echoed during the conversation between Huck and the Duke after Jim is captured. Huck could not tell the Duke the terrible crime committed by the King as being directly responsible for Jim's captivity. He also could not tell him his real intention of freeing Jim. This indicates that the white society, represented here by the Duke, could socially not accept those rights, although they were approved legally. Huck told the Duke, "I says to myself, ' ... they've took my nigger, which is the only nigger I've got in the world, and now I'm in a strange country and ain't got no property no more, nor nothing, and no way to make my living" (273). Here, Huck told the Duke what he expected to hear and could understand. Huck would have a problem if he told the Duke the truth about Jim. He was Huck's best and only friend, and he was captured because of the King's materialistic, greedy nature.

However, the Duke would be unable to associate words like "friendship" with the black nigger Jim. This is precisely the case in white society regarding the acceptance of the idea of freeing a black slave by law. In his study, Nilon compares the events of those twelve chapters and Lillian Smith's tale entitled "Two Men and a Bargain" (68-9). The latter is concerned with a discussion between a rich white man and a poor white man

who discussed how a society should accept free black slaves. In this conversation, Mr. Rich White discusses with Mr. Poor White how to control the newly freed black slaves economically by preventing them from getting any low jobs in society. Consequently, the white poor citizens should have no competition in finding jobs. The white rich man's point of view is dominant throughout the entire conversation, while the poor white only has to agree with him.

Similarly, Tom, who represents the affluent white society, discusses the plan of freeing Jim with Huck, who represents the poor white Americans. Jim, as a poor black slave, plays no part in determining his escape. Huck had a simple plan to steal the key and unlock the chain. Tom rejects this plan, accusing Huck of lacking the skills to plan a great escape. Eventually, Tom's complicated plan of freeing Jim was imposed on both Huck and Jim, who accepted it without questioning it on their part. They would comment on the plan but Tom would not let them practice any right in questioning his dominant plan of freeing the poor Jim. Here, Twain reflects on what was happening in the South regarding the acceptance of free black citizens. Nilon wrote:

Tom, in his way, presumes to accept for himself the privileges of the powerful, as the rich man does in Smith's fable, and as the rich man would, Tom assumes that Huck must accept his point of view. He takes advantage of Huck as he does of Jim, just as Smith's rich white man takes advantage of the poor white man and black people. Huck senses that he is being taken advantage of, just as Smith's poor white man does, but does not trust his knowledge sufficiently to act according to what he thinks is proper and reasonable. As Chadwick Hansen says, Huck and Jim have no choice but to accept Tom's leadership; they are entirely in his power (P: 70)

Here, Nilon focuses on Twain's realistic representation of the South during his time. The powerful white man in the South would not approve of free black citizens in his community even if the law confirmed their rights. The problem with racism at that time was not a matter of legal issues that could be fixed by changing some laws. Rather, racism was fundamentally rooted in the social and cultural background of American society, which needed to be reformed in order to restore some of its lost humanity.

According to Michael Lackey, the academic studies devoted to analyzing and investigating the topic of racism and slavery through Jim's character cannot be compared to those devoted to addressing the character of Huck in the novel. In addition to the five studies mentioned above, a few other pieces of research are concerned with the study of Jim's character. The lack of a

reasonable number of studies to investigate a dominant topic like racism and slavery in American history in one of the classics in American literature shows the deliberate avoidance of discussing Jim's characters for unknown reasons (494). David Smith argues that most scholars feel ashamed of discussing that disgraceful topic in that period of American society in which the black slaves were treated worse than animals (62). Accordingly, the current study aims to resolve some issues of such dilemma to stress the main elements of Jim's character, hoping to draw scholars' attention in the coming years to investigate the topic more thoroughly.

It is clear that Mark Twain was utterly aware of the vices in the society of his time and that he attempted to reform them through his famous realistic and satirical writing style. However, there is a gap between his satire and the realistic representation of those vices. This explains the recurrent usage of the word "nigger" throughout the entire novel. Here, Twain aims to give his readers a realistic picture of what was happening in his society. Dealing with those vices in his ironic and satirical writing style is another quality that may add literary richness to the text. Thus, accusing Twain of being an advocate of racism is a superficial accusation that lacks evidence from the text. Jim's noble manners and ethics are mentioned in several situations in the novel, but it is astonishing to find few academic studies devoted to analyzing his several traits and features. Attributing a small number of studies to the secondary role of Jim in the novel is another claim. Jim and Huck are fundamentally close to each other throughout the entire novel. Consequently, if the analysis of Huck's character is discussed in many studies, it is expected that Jim's character would require at least a similar number (Lackey 495). Unfortunately, there was not enough academic interest in peeling the layers of Jim's black skin to reach his inside white heart.

In addition, having Huck, the thirteen-year-old white teen, narrate the whole story, cannot be a reason to account for the lack of enough research on Jim's character. Some scholars claim that depriving Jim of the advantage of telling his own story is a clear sign of racism (Nibiya et al. 140). Nevertheless, the author's deliberate choice of Huck to be his narrator has a crucial function in the novel. The author chooses to present the novel's action through the innocent eye of a boy with no hidden agenda or previous prejudiced opinions against any theme or topic (Mensch and Mensch 25). The neutrality and naivety of the narrator are essential elements on which the author can quickly build the realistic atmosphere of the novel. Additionally, Jim is illiterate, like most of the black slaves at that time. Consequently,

having him use his broken English and grammar to narrate the whole story is inconvenient (Smith 8). Thus, the choice of Huck is more convincing and sound to convey the writer's various messages, including his severe criticism of the white society's racial approach towards black slaves. Moreover, when Jim tells his story of being a victim of witchcraft in chapter two, the author uses Huck to comment on his eloquent and fluent narrating style that increased his popularity among the black slaves in his town and the surrounding areas. Therefore, through Huck's innocent and objective eyes, the readers are introduced to Jim, the orator, after opposing his first image in which he was superstitious and illiterate. The same eye, which transferred those negative aspects, conveyed his positive features when they came to the surface.

Another critical element regarding racism and slavery in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is represented through the author's direct link of the theme with the force of law. The author's intention in that link is to emphasize the impossibility of changing such conditions through changing the laws (Subryan 93). The racial issue in the American South at that time was not only a matter of unjust laws that were required to be changed legally. Instead, it was also a corrupt social and cultural attitude that engendered the superiority of the white race and the inferiority of the black-skinned people. Twain's prediction that changing the law will not change the racial scene in American society during the nineteenth century proves to be brilliant (Mason, 1989: 38). This is represented in a short dialogue in the novel between Aunt Sally and Huck in which he attempted to tell her a lie to explain his late arrival at her farm.

Huck: "We blowed out a cylinder-head."

Aunt Sally: "Good gracious! anybody hurt?"

Huck: "No'm. Killed a nigger."

Aunt Sally: "Well, it's lucky because sometimes people do get hurt." (280)

In this short dialogue, Aunt Sally expresses her happiness that the accident did not involve the loss of any human being except for a black slave who was not considered a person. This cultural and social atmosphere is the fuel that engendered the racial approach in Southern American society. Such context cannot be changed through laws. Instead, the literary text is the most significant tool that could alter that scene, motivating Aunt Sally to feel ashamed of expressing such an opinion in which she associates luck with the death of a black slave (Levy 385). Additionally, in Pap Finn's description of the black-educated citizen, he regarded his freedom as a crime against the natural laws of life. The last line of Pap's speech describes that gentleman

from Ohio as "a prowling, thieving, infernal, white-shirted free nigger," which contradicted mainly with his previous description of him as proud and elegant. The superficial mind of a drunkard like Pap could not understand the source of the racial attitude of the American society against slavery. However, like Aunt Sally, he expressed what he has already absorbed from the social and cultural context. The first pillar to challenge slavery in society is to change that rotten context through literature. This is exactly what Mark Twain has applied and practiced in his novel.

6.0 Conclusion

It becomes that Mark Twain has achieved a brilliant balance between his realistic representations of the racism and slavery issues in his novel through Jim's character and his satirical tone to show the vices of American society regarding the topic. Twain is entirely aware of the racial attitude in his society despite changing the laws regarding slavery. He uses his realistic portrayal of the illiterate fugitive slave, Jim, to show the ugly truths about that racial attitude that has been rooted deeply in the socio-cultural background of his community. Only through Twain's brilliant writing style could such a rotten social context be rectified by sowing the seeds of humanitarianism and equality.

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