

世界经典文学作品赏析(英汉对照)

Mark Twain's
**THE ADVENTURES OF
HUCKLEBERRY FINN**
and **RELATED WORKS**

Alexander J. Butrym

马克·吐温的

哈克贝利·费恩历险记
及相关作品



外语教学与研究出版社



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF MARK TWAIN

In order to make anything out of himself, Mark Twain had to struggle with his environment from the beginning. Born Samuel Langhorne Clemens in the one-horse village of Florida, Missouri, in 1835, he rose to become a world famous writer, lecturer and traveler before he died in 1910. Most of his success was due to a combination of indomitable drive, unceasing energy, and maximum use of his own talent.

BASIC FACTS: The basic facts of Twain's life are well known. Four years after he was born, the family moved to Hannibal, Missouri, a village just a little larger than his birthplace. During his boyhood he had all the advantages and disadvantages of growing up in a country environment. He was close to the big river, and probably spent time exploring its wooded shores and islands. He grew up in tune with the life around him, swimming and playing hooky from school, and falling in love and reading (for his family was an intelligent one). Upon his father's death in 1847, Sam Clemens became a printer's apprentice. He followed his trade over a good part of the country, working in towns as different as Keokuk and New York. But the pay wasn't too good for printers in those days, so after trying unsuccessfully to get to South America, he became a river pilot. He had thought he would go to South America to make some easy money. Before he got to New Orleans to take ship, however, he became friendly with a river pilot named Horace Bixby, who promised to teach him the river. Bixby was a good pilot, one who loved his work and established a reputation for excellence. The story of

Twain's apprenticeship is told in *Life on the Mississippi*. The account is "stretched" somewhat, as Huck Finn would say.

After piloting steamers for about four years, Clemens retired to the Nevada gold country, because the onset of the Civil War had put an end to river commerce. He eventually ended up in California, back at the printing trade. He wrote short pieces for the newspapers he worked on, establishing a reputation as a humorist among the provincial readers of the Old West. The result of this writing and some lecturing was that he fell in with a group of writers who have come to be known as the "Local Colorists." Men like Bret Harte and Artemus Ward—not much heard of today—were extremely popular in the West for tales which were woven from folk stories and written in dialect with rough—hewn humor and plenty of recognizable concrete detail.

SUCCESS AND MARRIAGE: In 1869 he published *The Innocents Abroad*, an account of a trip to Europe he made under the sponsorship of a newspaper. In the book, he satirizes the folly of going across the Atlantic to see dead men's graves when there are many living things to see right here. The book made him famous, and gave him a literary reputation in the East.

As a successful writer he attained respectability enough to marry into a wealthy Buffalo, New York, family. His wife's name was Olivia Langdon, of the socially prominent Langdons. Five years later he moved to Elmira, N. Y., and then to Hartford, Connecticut, where he had a house built. Most of this time was taken up with writing, for he had made friends with a number of interesting literary people, among them William Dean Howells, the famous author (*The Rise of Silas Lapham*) and editor (*The Atlantic Monthly*). During this

period he wrote *Roughing It* and *The Gilded Age*. The former is a memoir of the early days in the West; the latter, written in collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner, another friend, is a satire on the way the federal government was run. In 1875 he began work on his first novel: *Tom Sawyer*. The book was a success.

HUCK FINN: In 1876 he sat down to its sequel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Although this is the work on which the greatest proportion of his literary fame rests, it was not an easy book to write. The history of its composition has been traced by Walter Blair, and is discussed in the "Introduction to Huck Finn," below. It is sufficient to note here that the book didn't appear until 1884 in England, and 1885 in America. It was an immediate success, despite adverse criticism by some of the more conservative literary judges of the day.

Between 1876 and 1885 Twain had written several books, among them *The Prince and the Pauper*, *A Tramp Abroad*, and *Life on the Mississippi*. After *Huck Finn*, his next major work was *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1889). Then came *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1894).

SORROWS AND DIFFICULTIES: Mark Twain's final years were not full of the satisfactions a man hopes to find at the end of a life well led. Instead he suffered a series of financial disasters and personal losses which would have taken the heart out of a lesser man. His publishing company failed in 1894, and shortly thereafter he lost a great deal of money which he had invested in a project to invent a typesetting machine. In spite of his advanced years—he was in his sixties—he took on a foreign lecture tour to pay back every cent he owed. By 1898 he was out of debt. But before he finished the tour,

there began for him a series of losses which were to color the rest of his life. These were deeper losses, more personal than merely financial misfortunes. First, his daughter Suzy died, then his wife died, then his daughter Clara went with her husband to live in Europe. This left Clemens with only his daughter Jean, whose epilepsy resulted in a heart attack from which she died.

Four months after Jean's death, on April 21, 1910, Mark Twain died of a heart attack.

Disillusioned by business reversals and personal losses, he was a bitter writer toward the end of his days. Some of his later writings are just being published. They have been withheld from the public by his estate because of the savage nature of their biting satire.

His writings, from the earliest to those just appearing, can best be described as "iconoclastic." That is, they are "image breakers." The picture that most often comes to mind while one is reading his works is that of a man sitting on a hill overlooking a valley populated by foolish people. Every once in a while he shakes his head sadly at their folly and rants at the false symbols and standards they have raised. A terrible enemy of injustice and confusion, Mark Twain wrote scores of attacks on the villainous and fraudulent pursuits of dishonest people, and on the weak, insipid facades of hypocrisy.

INTRODUCTION TO *THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN*

HUCK FINN AND THE PICARESQUE: The story of Huck Finn's adventurous journey down the Mississippi River on a raft is really a series of short adventures. This is the kind of plot that is known in literature as episodic. Each event is an episode, a self-contained little story. Plots like this are characteristic of a certain kind of novel, the picaresque novel. (This type of novel had its beginning in Spain during the sixteenth century. Among the first of these novels is one called *Lazarillo de Tormes*.) To say that *Huckleberry Finn* is simply a picaresque novel is incorrect, however, because there is something missing from it that would be necessary in a picaresque novel. In addition to having an episodic plot, picaresque novels have as their chief characters the low-life and criminal classes of a nation. While it is true that Huck Finn is not of the upper or even the middle class, he is not a proper picaresque hero because he is not hard-hearted and cruel and selfish enough. Perhaps Huck's pap might be a picaresque hero; certainly the king and the duke would be. But not Huck.

There is no doubt that Mark Twain borrowed from the traditions of the picaresque novel, particularly from *Don Quixote*, the novel by Cervantes that sprang from the picaresque tradition. But as with any literary genius, Mark Twain changed and shaped what he borrowed until it was something a little different, and good in its own way.

The story was begun in 1876, but not completed until 1884 when it

was published in England. The history of its composition has been told by Walter Blair in his book, *Mark Twain and Huck Finn*. When Twain got as far as Chapter 16, he ran into trouble. First, he didn't know what to do with the plot; it had gotten out of hand. There was no way to get Jim and Huck upstream once the raft and canoe were lost, and they were past Cairo. He had been working so hard he lost his inspiration to continue the book.

SHIFTS OF VIEWPOINT: So he laid it aside for a while. But notice how the first sixteen chapters of the book deal with Jim's escape from slavery. Every time freedom is talked about, Jim's freedom is meant. After the sixteenth chapter, Jim recedes into the background. He disappears from the story altogether in the Grangerford chapters, coming in only to save Huck from the "civilization" of plantation feuds. After this, even though the two travelers have a canoe, they make no effort to go back north to Cairo. Once the king and the duke come aboard, Jim is of no importance to the story until he is sold off. Then, when Tom Sawyer makes his appearance, Jim is no more than a minstrel-show-Negro until he sacrifices his freedom, and is picked up as a human character again.

This shifting around would be a major flaw in the novel if Jim were the central figure, or if his escape from slavery were the central theme of the story. But neither of these is true. The central figure of the story is Huck Finn: the story is told to us from his point of view—in the first person. Huck sees and reports; sometimes he understands what he sees, and so he interprets it. Sometimes he doesn't understand, and this too is significant. The central theme of the story is the theme set by the first and last chapters: Huck's fight against getting "sivilised." The civilization he is running from is peopled by characters like the Widow, Miss Watson, Pap, Aunt

Sally, and Tom Sawyer, although Tom attracts Huck in a way.

CONTRAST: The story is full of striking comparisons, many of which are pointed out in the section of “Comment” following the summary of each chapter. Indeed, there are so many of these comparisons and contrasts that at times Mark Twain seems to be burlesquing his own story. The swearing in of Tom Sawyer’s robber-gang, for instance, is a clear foreshadowing of the events that take place on the wrecked *Walter Scott*. Tom’s love of adventure and Huck’s search for adventure (in the *Walter Scott* episode) are obvious parallels (see the “Essay Question and Answers”).

There is also an obvious contrast in the character of Tom Sawyer and that of Huck Finn. Tom’s ambition is to become famous without counting the cost to himself or others. The adventure’s the thing; the hurt and anguish of Aunt Sally, the pain and discomfort of Jim, these never occur to him. But Huck, involved in real adventures, is continually bothered by his conscience. All during the trip down river, he tries to answer the question whether he’s doing right by the Widow’s sister and by Jim, or not. The preoccupation with justice has him on the horns of a dilemma. Whatever he chooses to do, he’s wrong. He’s wronging Jim if he returns him to slavery; he’s wronging Miss Watson if he helps Jim escape. Huck has no way of knowing what is right. He must follow the dictates of his feelings every step of the way. The only thing he can do is learn by experience. And he does.

HUCK AND JIM: He learns from Jim, who is in some ways his substitute father. He doesn’t believe in Jim’s superstition until the superstition proves itself true. Note how he scoffs at the snakeskin, until the snakeskin does its work. Huck rises to Jim’s level. By ac-

cepting Jim's superstitions, Huck enters Jim's primitive world which, though crude, is much more sincere and honest than Miss Watson's world. Beyond it he cannot go. He won't pray because he has not experienced any benefits from prayer.

SECOND PART: In the second part of the story—the chapters dealing with the Grangerford feud and the adventures of the king and the duke—we are taken on a tour of the Mississippi River valley. We see the romantic ideas of Tom Sawyer in their practical applications.

The Grangerfords, with their senseless pride and basic crudity, are held up as examples of the real culture of the South. Huck describes them, their house and its decorations. These descriptions seem to us to be descriptions of ignorant and arrogant people. We understand this, and we laugh at the sentimentality of Emmeline's poetry and paintings; but Huck, who also sees all this, doesn't understand what it means, and he doesn't laugh at it. He thinks it's noble. And so do all the members of the Grangerford family, and all their neighbors.

The king and the duke are illustrations of Tom Sawyer's desire to "promote" things when that desire has taken hold of grown-ups. These two men choose their own comfort at the expense of those around them. They trade on the ignorance, pride, and laziness of the residents of the villages along the mighty river's shore. They do just what Tom does when he draws up a coat of arms for Jim, a coat of arms that he himself doesn't understand, let alone Jim. And Huck accepts the king and the duke just the same way he accepts Tom. He shrugs an intellectual shoulder and murmurs something about how you can't get Tom to explain a thing to you if he doesn't

want to. Tom's ambition is to become famous; the frauds want to get rich.

THIRD PART: Finally, the third part of the novel brings us back to Tom Sawyer as the focus of the plot. (Huck is still the main character in the novel, however. He is reporting all that goes on; and even if he doesn't seem to understand the action, he is involved in it and he colors what he reports by just being what he is.) But it is this part of the novel that ties together all that comes before it. We see Tom as he is, a romantic, a muddlehead, but bound to be a successful community leader. He has visions of grandeur; he is capable of stupidly leading an escaped slave into a Southern village and having all the slaves who are still bound hold a torchlight parade in honor of the escaped slave. The only logical outcome of such goings-on would be the hanging of most of the slaves in the village. And this is undoubtedly what would have happened if Tom had not caught the bullet that night at the Phelps' farm.

THE REALIST: We also see Huck as he is, the opposite of Tom. He is a realist, and generally level-headed except when he goes off after Tom Sawyer's adventure, or when he follows Tom's lead. He is not "civilizable." The end of the book makes this clear. He is where he was in the beginning: he left the Widow's house, and he will leave Aunt Sally's. Something in civilization appalls Huck Finn.

So far as the mechanics of composition are concerned, Mark Twain was considerably limited by the fact that Huck Finn is a living, breathing personality who shines through the pages of the book. Since Huck Finn tells the story himself, in the first person, Mark Twain had to put himself in the place of this thirteen-year-old son of the town drunkard. Twain had to see life as Huck saw it. He had to

conceive a character who could believably see life as Mark Twain saw it. But Huck is more than Twain's mouthpiece. As a living character he is capable of shaping the story. The very language Huck uses colors what he sees and how he will pass it on to us. Very obvious is the fact that the humor of the book often depends on Huck's language. However, it is through his use of language that Twain creates character and sets down objective truth. The very innocence of Huck is reflected through his credulous explanations of what he sees—explanations couched in language characteristic of primitive, basic society. Huck is capable of making Twain write something merely because it is the kind of thing Huck would do or say; and he can force Twain to leave something out because Huck would not do or say that kind of thing.

DIALECTS: So far as the dialects of the characters are concerned, we can only remark that Mark Twain was a master at reproducing the speech of his day. He doesn't need to indicate the speaker's name. The dialect indicates him just as exactly as if he were named. Twain uses, he says, "The Missouri negro dialect; the extremest form of the backwoods South-Western dialect; the ordinary 'Pike-County' dialect; and four modified varieties of this last." The careful and consistent attention to details of speech is one of the many characteristics of this book which make it worth serious and careful reading. Mark Twain drew his knowledge of these dialects from personal experience. And it is the concrete and graphic products of experience which make this story so appealing.

THE MAIN CHARACTERS

HUCKLEBERRY FINN: This is the central figure of the novel, the son of the town drunkard. He is essentially good-hearted, but he is looked down upon by the rest of the village. He dislikes civilized ways because they are personally restrictive and hard. He is generally ignorant of book-learning, but he has a sharply developed sensibility. He is imaginative and clever, and has a sharp eye for detail, though he doesn't always understand everything he sees, or its significance. This enables Mark Twain to make great use of the device of irony. Huck is essentially a realist. He knows only what he sees and experiences. He doesn't have a great deal of faith in things he reads or hears. He must experiment to find out what is true and what isn't. With his sharply observant personality he is able to believe Jim's superstition at some times, to scoff at it at others.

THE WIDOW DOUGLAS: The wife of the late Justice of the Peace of St. Petersburg—the village which provides the story's setting. Huck likes her because she's kind to him and feeds him when he's hungry. Her attempts to "civilize" him fail when Huck prefers to live in the woods with his father. He doesn't like to wear the shoes she buys him, and he doesn't like his food cooked the way hers is.

MISS WATSON: The Widow's maiden sister. She leads Huck to wish he were dead on several occasions by trying to teach him things. Her favorite subject is the Bible. She owns Jim and considers selling him down river. This causes Jim to run away. Filled with

sorrow for driving Jim to this extreme, Miss Watson sets him free in her will.

TOM SAWYER: Huck's friend. A boy with a wild imagination who likes to play "games." He reads a lot, mainly romantic and sentimental novels about pirates and robbers and royalty. He seldom understands all he reads; this is obvious when he tries to translate his reading into action. He doesn't know what "ransoming" is: he supposes it to be a way of killing prisoners. He has a great deal of drive, and can get people to do things his way.

JIM: Miss Watson's slave, and the one really significant human character Huck meets in the novel. Though he is referred to as Miss Watson's "nigger," it is clear that the expression is used as a literary device—it is part of the Missouri dialect of the nineteenth century. Aside from Huck, Jim stands head and shoulders above all the characters in the book, in every respect. He is moral, realistic, and knowing in the ways of human nature. He appears at times as a substitute father for Huck, looking after him, helping him, and teaching him about the world around him. The injustices perpetrated by the institution of slavery are given deep expression in his pathos.

PAP: Huck's father, the town-drunkard. He is in every respect the opposite of Jim. He is sadistic in his behavior toward his child. He is dirty, greedy, and dies violently because of his involvement with criminals. He is typical of the "white trash" of the day. Pap is an example of what Mark Twain thought the human race was: un-reformable. A person is what he is, for good or bad, and nothing can change him.

JUDGE THATCHER: The guardian of Tom's and Huck's money.

He is very wealthy, and the most respected man in the village. He becomes involved in a lawsuit to protect Huck from the cruelty of his father.

THE GRANGERFORD FAMILY: Southern aristocrats of the pre-Civil War South. They are portrayed as men who are jealous of their honor and cold-blooded in revenge. They are excellent horsemen and good fighters, and they respect their enemies as being the same. Their women are sentimental, but accustomed to hard living. Their taste runs to plaster of Paris imitations of things and melancholy poetry. The general influence of Sir Walter Scott's romantic novels is clearly seen in the details of these people's daily lives.

THE KING AND THE DUKE: Two river tramps and con-men who pass themselves off to Huck and Jim as the lost Dauphin of France and the unfortunate Duke of Bridgewater (Bilgewater). They make their living off suckers they find in the small, dirty, ignorant Southern villages. Of the two men, the duke is less cruel and more imaginative than the king, though neither has any moral sensitivity worth mentioning. These men represent the starkly materialistic ideals of "the man who can sell himself" in their most logical extreme. Mark Twain holds them up as examples of the anti-social tendencies of the human race. Readers are usually satisfied when they come to the part of the story where these two get tarred and feathered and driven out of town on a fence rail. Huck is more humane about their suffering.

THE WILKS GIRLS: Nieces of Peter Wilks, a dead man. The king and the duke try unsuccessfully to rob the girls' inheritance. Mary Jane, the eldest, causes Huck to almost fall in love with her. He admires her spunk, or "sand." Susan is the middle sister, and