MARK TWAIN'S SOUTHERN TRILOGIE. REFLECTIONS
OF THE ANTI-ENLIGHT SOUTHERN EXPERIENCE

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The purpose of this study is to explore Mark Twain's involvement with the southern ante-bellum experience as reflected in his Southern Trilogy, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Tom Sawyer's Comrade), and Pudd'nhead Wilson. He came to denounce the South more and more vehemently in these novels, and each occupies a critical position in his artistic and philosophical growth.

These novels maintain a consistency of theme, setting, and historical context unparalleled in Twain's other work. Each, however, presents different approaches to the ante-bellum South. Tom Sawyer is mild in its satire of the old South, even nostalgic. Huckleberry Finn is a serious exploration of the rigid alternatives in the southern culture, and it is a complete examination of the mythologized attributes of the ante-bellum South. However, neither Twain nor his spokesman Huck presumes to judge that culture. Pudd'nhead Wilson is by no means nostalgic or judicious in its exposure of the moral morass of the South. The final book in his Southern Trilogy is scathing, brutal, and merciless in its smack on the ills of the southern culture and the people who defend it.
Twain was a moral man and a satirist, and the South presented literary raw material for his pen. Born in slave-holding Missouri he survived the Civil War and the moral, social, and physical destruction of the benighted South. During the years in which he published the Southern Trilogy, 1876 to 1894, he watched the ethical disintegration of the South. He watched the South resurrect the painful absolutes of good and evil, the closed society, the myths, and the institutions which had precipitated the Civil War. He considered the implications of the New South Creed, Bourbon politics, economic slavery, and Black Codes. Intellectually, the South in this period was seeking a return to the status quo and redemption from the stigma of defeat and sin without having to pay the price. The South had returned to its recalcitrant ways. As the South retreated into its racist, bellicose creeds and habits, Twain's southern novels increase in vituperation almost in direct proportion.

In the case of his Southern Trilogy, Twain found in the land of his birth material for three thematically knit novels. None of his other efforts managed to maintain his attention over such a long productive period. As he matured philosophically Twain found his bitter measure of man, and he expressed that measure in the Southern Trilogy.
MARK TWAIN'S SOUTHERN TRILOGY: REFLECTIONS OF THE
ANTE-BELLUM SOUTHERN EXPERIENCE

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

by

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Denton, Texas

August, 1973
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is not the purpose of this thesis to reconsider the literary flaws or artistic gems and devices of Mark Twain's work. This has been done to the satisfaction of most, in a general sense. Rather, this thesis proposes to study the common bond in three of Mark Twain's novels: the ante-bellum southern experience. The purpose here is to demonstrate Twain's reflection of the southern experience in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and Pudd'nhead Wilson, and to show his progression from sentimental reminiscing in Tom Sawyer to bitter and slashing satire in Pudd'nhead Wilson. This will entail a brief look at Twain's old South and its myths, and how he personally changed in his approach.

The pieces in question hold preeminent positions in Twain's body of work. These novels are noteworthy not only for their subject matter, but also because they are among his best known work. An immediate question is to wonder what peculiar motives caused Twain to produce Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Pudd'nhead Wilson with a progressively hostile attitude to the old South. All these books were created after the Civil War, and after the South had been publicly, legally, and morally chastised by the victorious North. Why, then, did
Twain, a southerner by birth, periodically chastise the South in his novels about the southern experience.

We must assume that every person is formed and influenced by his parent culture. Twain was a southerner, and his family had been supporters of the slave-holding South. The acceptance of slavery in the ante-bellum South also entailed the acceptance of other southern peculiarities and distinctions noted, for instance, by C. Vann Woodward (15) and Robert B. Highsaw:

Southern distinctiveness of poverty amid national abundance, failure amid national success, a preoccupation with guilt amid the nation's wonderment at its own innocence, slavery in a land which was born free, and the southerner's personal commitment to the concrete and immediate, and his fear of abstraction (8, p. 137).

The pieces in question in this thesis are all closely developed from Twain's own life in the Mississippi Valley culture of the ante-bellum South. Later critics, however, have various interpretations of Twain's formative years. Briefly, Minnie Brashear in her *Mark Twain, Son of Missouri*, explains Twain's literary bent with a reasoned review of the abundance of desirable stimuli in Twain's culture (3). Van Wyck Brooks also maintains that Twain was shaped in his earlier Mississippi years, but from this culture Twain was shaped by fear and violence; his literature became subject to misdirection and dilution (5). There at least seems to be agreement among these later critics that Twain's
Mississippi years did, to some degree, shape his later literary performance. Twain, in a letter to a Brooklyn librarian who had banned *Tom Sawyer* and *Huck Finn* from his library, speaks of the influence of a culture on a young mind. He wrote,

I am greatly troubled by what you say. I wrote *Tom Sawyer* and *Huck Finn* for adults exclusively, and it always distresses me when I find that boys and girls have been allowed access to them. The mind that becomes soiled in youth can never again be washed clean. I know this by my own experience, and to this day I cherish an unappeasable bitterness against the unfaithful guardians of my young life... (11, pp. 1280-1281).

With Twain's own admission, Professor Woodward's scholarly description of the peculiarities of southern life, and Twain's "Mississippi trilogy" as evidence, it would seem that Twain finds in his own beginnings the original sin, the first reflection of the baser habits of mankind. It would seem reasonable to believe that Twain wrote these three southern novels with the memories and habits of his youth in mind. As he grew older, and as his fortune and family gradually melted away, it is no wonder that his pessimistic bent caused him to turn upon his culture, the southern experience. There surely can be no doubt that Twain did, in fact, find the South a perfect canvas for presenting man's foibles. Periodically with his novels he returned to the ante-bellum South, and, with his satire and increasing bitterness, he used the South as a reflection of man in general. The
progressing change in his reflections on the South can perhaps be explained by noting the increasing awareness of Twain; his acute sense of the passage of time; and his increasing fear that, in the end, nothing in life is predictable, stable, or permanent. In the years between *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, he had reached middle age and was moving into his fifties. Between *Huckleberry Finn* and *Pudd'nfhead Wilson*, he had aged and had been tormented by life. His personal torments surely did not allow syrupy renditions of his childhood years; these torments created a frame of mind that allowed the village of St. Petersburg in *Tom Sawyer* to become the putrefying moral morass of Dawson's Landing in *Pudd'nfhead Wilson*.

This progression follows a reaction to the general public attitude concerning the South. It should be remembered that *Tom Sawyer* was published in 1876, the year that Radical Reconstruction ended in the South. The Radical Republicans had essentially lost interest in reforming the southern society (4, p. 303), and the Southern Redeemers accepted the end in a blaze of triumph. *Huckleberry Finn* appeared in 1884, and this was the age of Republican politics and "the bloody shirt." Those were the days when at a meeting of the Veteran Club of Chicago in 1879, Twain heard Robert G. Ingersoll contrast the "angelic North and the wicked South."
They were wrong, and the time will come when they will say that they are victors who have been vanquished by the right. Freedom conquered them, and freedom will cultivate their fields, educate their children, weave for them the robes of wealth, execute their laws, and fill their land with happy homes (2, pp. 222-223).

It is said that Twain went into ecstasies over such oratory (2, pp. 222-223). It seems difficult to imagine that Mark Twain could so completely abandon his mother culture, but he did, at last, in Pudd'Nhead Wilson. The violence and insanity of the South as reflected in Huck Finn certainly reflect the violence and insanity Twain was witnessing in the South of the late 1870s and 1880s. Murder, lynching, rabid racism and seemingly irrational politics in southern circles was coupled "with his growing misanthropy and his political zeal, campaign documents, fervent oratory, and heated editorials must have caused the author to emphasize rougher aspects of southern life which lay in his memory (2, p. 294)." The political atmosphere of the time and his own southern background definitely contributed to his motives.

Nine years passed after Huckleberry Finn was published before Twain wrote another southern novel, Pudd'Nhead Wilson in 1894. By that year Twain had failed in his business ventures. The Paige typesetter had sucked him into bankruptcy; the publishing company of Charles L. Webster and Company "executed assignment papers carrying Samuel Clemens into bankruptcy, with it (10, p. XIX)." In a letter to her
sister, Livy Clemens said that "business failure means disgrace (9, p. 346)." Pudd'nhead Wilson, as shall be shown, maintains the theme of disgrace and failure, and the book follows close on the heels of the disintegration of Twain's business world. The failure Twain experienced found expression in a tale of the old South, and the tale is bitter.

With a sense of outrage Twain comes to attack the South of his birth. Although a southerner by birth, he grew to be a southerner without the temperament generally ascribed to a southerner. Perhaps he can best be described as a true scalawag, and he became an intellectual scalawag as a result of his western years, his travels, and the intellectual temper of his Hartford circle. The politics of the time certainly provided rhetoric and color for his anti-southern tendencies, and the moral problems he saw in the South certainly provided him with the raw material for writing his increasingly bitter southern books. It must be noted, however, that by the time of the publication of Pudd'nhead Wilson the South was in the grip of a peculiarly southern reaction to the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction (7, pp. 315-337). The New South Creed had become the intellectual playground for the South. In placating the North by "conforming" to the "Northern way" of doing business, and creating a distorted southern imitation of the North, the South managed to create a huge and all encompassing hypocrisy that Twain could not allow to go unchallenged. The South had
its New South Creed which necessarily viewed the ante-bellum South with saccharine rendition of what had gone before. This idyllic "goodness" of southern ante-bellum life preached by the advocates of the New South Creed contrasted with the memories Twain recalled, and with Huckleberry Finn and later with Pudd'nhead Wilson he challenged the myths created by the "New South."

Twain in more personal detail and definition reflected the themes outlined by Professor Woodward. He examines the poverty of the South, both physically and morally; he takes issue with the southerner's preoccupation with guilt, slavery, and fear of abstraction. He does this through his innocent pose, his disarming humor, and his intimate knowledge of the southern experience. He achieves the personal meaning of Woodward's comments by cudgeling the southern myths and characteristics in increasingly bitter satire.

It is interesting and revealing to note that not until the Twentieth Century would a great body of literature and history be developed that challenged the South as did Twain. The myths and characteristics that were peculiarly southern are expressed by W. J. Cash in his book The Mind of the South. Here one can see the very institutions and peculiarities which occupied Twain's southern trilogy. According to Cash, the South was a compendium of fictions which determined the direction of southern life. He says:
... a sort of stage piece out of the Eighteenth century, wherein gesturing gentlemen move soft-spokenly against a background of rose gardens and duelling grounds, through always gallant deeds, and lovely ladies, in farthingales, never for a moment lost that exquisite remoteness which has been the dream of all men and the possession of none. Its social pattern was manorial, its civilization that of the Cavalier, its ruling class an aristocracy coextensive with the planter group (6, p. IX).

As Twain well knew, although this ideal was actively pursued, it was just as actively elusive. Consequently, his work in the southern trilogy reflects the incongruous nature of the South; its preoccupation with pretense and the "beau geste" contrasted with the reality of brutality, crudity, and poverty. Twain knew the facts, and he created Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Pudd'nhead Wilson with the idea of reflecting these incongruities. In doing so, he reflected that greater segment of the South, "... a vague race, lumped together indiscriminately as the poor whites—very often, in fact, as the 'white trash' (6, p. X.)" The pitiful nature of the copy-cat society of the "poor whites" finds as much condemnation and contempt as that of the affected gentry of the southern hierarchy. Twain reflects the southern experience with "yearning back toward the colorfulness and the more or less imaginary glory of the aristocratic past (6, p. 62);" the southerner's treasure of "superiority as a white man, which had been conferred on him by slavery (6, p. 65);" its conception as the "polished,
brave, generous, magnificent" body of manhood (6, p. 62);" the ideas of rigid personal integrity in one's dealings with one's fellows and of 'noblesse oblige' and chivalry in the widest sense (6, p. 74);" the idea that "everything was as it was because He (God) had ordained it so. Hence slavery, and indeed, everything that was was His responsibility, not the South's. So far from being evil it was the very essence of Right. Wrong could consist only in rebellion against it ... and the practice of violence because of the feeling, fixed by social example, that it was the only quite correct, the only really decent, relief for wounded honor (6, p. 73)."

These themes and characteristics of the southern culture inherent in the ante-bellum South resurfaced and became institutionalized with the New South Creed. This focal point of vocal southerners, and the acquiescence of the North in allowing the South to return to its recalcitrant ways, did influence his attitude and reactions in the sense that, as a satirist and a moral man, he had to speak up. (Mark Twain was the devil's advocate of the late Nineteenth Century, especially in his relation to the South.

When Mark Twain created Tom Sawyer, "Nigger" Jim, Huckleberry Finn, Roxy, and Valet de Chambres (the white "nigger" of Pudd'head Wilson), he fathered a trend in literature that found artistic culmination in William
Faulkner, John Steinbeck, and even the somewhat neglected James Agee of the 'thirties, each of whom was sensitive to the history of his subject, and was aware of the reflection of that history in his present circumstances, much in the manner of Twain. However, Twain has not always been accorded the place of ground breaker for such literary direction in southern writing. Henry Nash Smith has this to say about Twain's involvement with the southern experience:

If Mark Twain meant to denounce the South, and as at least on certain levels of his mind he did, he would not be the first instance of an artist formed by his gesture of protest against a society which produced him. It would probably be more discerning to see in him an ambivalence of attitudes, a ferocious but fruitfully artistic interplay of attraction and repulsion, not unlike William Faulkner's attitude toward the South (14, p. 609).

Denounce the South he did, but, as Smith says, with an ambivalence worth noting. Tom Sawyer, as we shall see shortly, is definitely influenced by an ambivalent and paradoxical representation of the South. Twain is at once torn between a knowledge of the southern culture and the horrors it produced, and a yearning for the lost days of youth. There is a hardening of attitude in Huckleberry Finn, and ultimately in Pudd'nhead Wilson, wherein Twain shifts his emphasis away from the nostalgic memories and to the facts of southern life.

Beyond Twain's possible influence in literature, he blazed a path which our most respected historians of the
South are now following. By the 'thirties in this century, southern historians, or historians of the South, were beginning to refute the historical myths and romantic fogs surrounding the southern experience; myths and fogs which were familiar to Twain. In so doing, scholarly investigation began to refute and break down the thinking of the powerful and influential scholars of the Dunning School of Southern History, for example. Racism, poverty, sham, deceit, and grotesque exaggeration were being exposed. The old twice told tales of the ante-bellum South, the Civil War, and Reconstruction were being re-examined, and in this erosion the themes so common in Twain's writings were expanded and elaborated. Today's body of work by history scholars approves the thoughts and themes found in Mark Twain's work based on the southern experience. As noted by Henry Nash Smith, credit is not always given Twain, but Louis D. Rubin maintains, as did Smith, that "in many ways, Mark Twain is the prototype of the southern writers of our time (13, p. 4)."

This seems to be an accurate statement in that Twain does foreshadow the qualities of southern writers such as Wolfe and Faulkner. All too often, though, Twain has been accorded only the stature of a frontier humorist, story teller, or "phunny phellow" when more is deserved.

The entire range of southern myths and lies has been intellectually and scholastically challenged by those later
historians and writers with similar intent, if not similar style, to Twain's. The success of these challenges has been limited; even today the same myths continue with the trappings long ago familiar to Twain. Of particular interest, and perhaps the key to Twain's popularity, is the fact that his southern writing challenges in a tone and a style popular today. Twain's best artistic work is generally considered to be *Huckleberry Finn*, which is devoted to an examination of the totality of the southern life. Of all his efforts, the "source and subject of his best art remained the time and place of his youth, the town and place of his youth... (13, p. 3)." Within the framework of the times and places of his youth, the southern experience becomes the crux of life in general. From his personal experience comes his greatest internal expression of the meaning and matter of life. His bitterness toward the southern experience provides the prime measure for all mankind.

As Twain moved through the West and finally into the East, he gained a perspective denied most of the southerners of his day. He did things good southerners did not do: he voluntarily deserted the land and causes of his youth; he listened to men who had expressed ideas foreign to the typical Mississippi Valley resident; he noted that the South had suffered defeat, humiliation, moral destruction, disaffection from the world at large, and a self-imposed
isolation from a humanitarian morality. As he came to understand the reasons for these conditions he came to attack the blind stubbornness that allowed these conditions to continue. He knew the South was different, it was another country.

Louis D. Rubin says,

It is not the country in which they were born, nor the country to which they once fled, nor yet the South to which they came back. Like Mark Twain's Mississippi River Community, it is the country of fiction. There they may see the meaning of things in time, for as they write they step outside of everyday life toward a timeless perspective in which a fountain splashing in the town square becomes a sign of change, a Confederate cemetery a symbol of man caught in time, a rotting mansion in the Mississippi wilderness the emblem of what human beings in a time and a place aspired to be, and what they became (13, p. 20).

This experience is captured in Twain's southern novels, and the history he preserves offers a gift to the nation in particular: the knowledge and lesson to be learned from that experience. The South, as Twain envisioned it in his southern novels, was given a lesson in defeat, but the result was not change, but myth. Twain, the southerner, dared to look at the myths and he recognized the significance of the southern experience. He allowed the lessons he learned from living that experience to become his measure of man. He never escaped the looming presence of the South, and his southern antecedents trailed and tracked him throughout his literary career. Essentially, Twain was "a child of the southern frontier (12, p. 246)," and he never forgot his
beginning. He returned to the beginning in Tom Sawyer, his first true novel (The Gilded Age being a collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner); in Huckleberry Finn, his best novel (preceded only by The Prince and The Pauper); and finally in his pessimistic Pudd’nhead Wilson (his last novel before retreating into pessimism and artistic decay, followed only by the wistful Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, and the fragmentary and incomplete Tom Sawyer Abroad). With his three southern novels occupying such prominence in the greater body of his work, their consistency of theme and their growth from bittersweet nostalgia to bitter pessimism become important. It is in this, his southern trilogy, that Twain finds a consistent direction that is sometimes lacking in the rest of his efforts. Consequently, the primary intent is to demonstrate the blossoming of his awareness, and his inability to escape the southern experience. From the curious, childlike ramblings of Tom Sawyer with its world of dreams and strange conflicting emotions, we move to a crucial point in Twain’s thinking, Huckleberry Finn to the culmination of reaction, Pudd’nhead Wilson. Overall, this thesis should demonstrate that Mark Twain owes his greatest debt to the South for providing direction and consistency to the most important consistent group of his writings, his southern trilogy.

As Twain’s awareness increased, his treatment of his southern heritage became increasingly vitriolic. His
political involvement demonstrates his liberal, humanitarian instincts, and from a loyal Republican he moved into the Mugwump camp of Cleveland. He seems to always search for his own independence just as Huck Finn searches. In his political, private, and literary life, Twain came to be concerned with ethical rather than ideological issues (1, p. 117). *Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson* all indicate his struggle with ethical issues. In these three novels, this struggle becomes more and more bitter and scathing as he recognizes the impotence of his battle. Yet he was a southerner, and his bitter attack would seem to indicate guilt, and this guilt drove him to write as he did.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II:

TOM SAWYER: MEMORIES OF THE PAST

The role of Tom Sawyer in the history of American literature is confusing now, as it was at the time of its writing. Too often it has been relegated to the shelves with stacks of tales written for boys or "local-color" adventure stories. Tom Sawyer does perform these functions. The adventure and excitement that stem from such fantastic and alluring props as steam boats, islands in a great river, treasure, danger, and the assorted escapes from the restrictions of adult society are of sufficient interest to attract juvenile readers. In Tom Sawyer we see "boys who have lied, cheated, stolen, swore, run away and participated in all sorts of immoral deeds and were lionized for it (1, p. 82)." What more could the juvenile reader ask than that? For many adults, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is a fondly remembered book first read as children.

But there is more to the book than the stereotype of a "boy's book." There is purpose here of a deeper and more important nature. In the preface the author indicates his plan to "pleasantly remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in (25, preface)." In this light, Tom Sawyer takes on a new level
of importance to the reader. Twain underwent a capitulation of sorts to the editorial judgment of William Dean Howells, who insisted that the key to the book was in reading it as a tale for boys. Twain, however, originally envisioned the book as one "only written for adults (20, p. 82)." In which case, Twain "was of two minds about the readers for whom he finally published The Adventures of Tom Sawyer in 1876 (1, p. 82)." Tom Sawyer, nevertheless, is a success as a boy's tale on the first level, yet its second level is more important and more successful.

However, the third level of concern here is the representation of the southern experience. Mark Twain has "from his Mississippi Valley reminiscences . . . re-created typical villages of an older frontier (6, p. 249)." Tom Sawyer is more than a nostalgic re-creation of Mississippi river life before the Civil War. Tom is the "vehicle for a full-dress study of personality, community, and the anatomy of social evil (21, p. 51)," for our purposes here represented in terms of the southern experience. Underlying the story of Tom Sawyer is the omnipresent culture of the Southland, with its peculiarities, vagaries, and all-encompassing preoccupation with myth. The concepts of a landed gentry, chivalric attitudes, and a smug romanticism finds homes in Tom Sawyer. The manner in which Twain threatens these attitudes is rather mild. Germane to this effort are the moods and attitudes expressed by Tom Sawyer and
his community, and the "underlining" done by the author which emphasizes the southern experience. The underlining in *Tom Sawyer* is couched in less severe tones than in succeeding work, and the stabs are muted and subdued, indicating an ambivalence between the desire to recall an idyllic, pleasurable body of memories, and a full realization of the quality and characteristics of his mother culture.

Although correctly described by Walter Blair as idyllic in tone, *Tom Sawyer* was written during a period in which "kindly pictures of the past were popular and rife (2, p. 71)." *Tom Sawyer*, however, is not always so kindly, but is rather balanced and paradoxical. There are idyllic passages and sentiments, but there is also a "balanced view of the past revealing a paradoxical picture, mottled with highlights and deep shadows. There was chivalry at its best and swash-buckling at its worst. In the population as a whole crudeness was far more prevalent than gentility (7, p. 7)." This fact, however, does not prevent Twain from creating some very beautiful and sensitive impressions in the idyllic vein. For example, the passage describing early morning on Jackson's Island:

It was the cool, gray dawn, and there was a delicious sense of repose and peace in the deep pervading calm and silence of the woods. Not a leaf stirred; not a sound obtruded upon great Nature's meditation. Beaded dewdrops stood upon the leaves and grasses.
A white layer of ashes covered the fire, and a thin blue breath of smoke rose straight into the air. Joe and Huck still slept (23, p. 154).

The idyllic qualities of this passage are not equalled by other idyllic efforts common to the time. For example, compare Mary Noailles Murfree:

The sky that bent to clasp this kindred blue was of varying moods. Floods of sunshine submerged Chilbowee in liquid gold, and revealed that dainty outline limned upon the Northern horizon; but over the Great Smoky mountains, clouds had gathered and a gigantic rainbow bridged the valley (10, p. 425).

The struggle for idyllic quality seemed to turn upon the grandest rendition of any and every thing among those purveyors of "kindly pictures of the past," but Twain manages a more beautiful effort. Twain developed his satire in pointing up the more grandiose efforts of other writers, and in Tom Sawyer, the kindly, benevolent, idyllic tone is a satire in itself.

Twain seemed to comply with the current trend of complimentary pictures of the past for several reasons. Primarily, he seemed to conform because he was writing from his own experiences and familiarity with the customs and habits of the land of his birth, the ante-bellum South. He, like most men, looked with longing on those lost days of carefree youth. Perhaps equally important was the ample reward for the professional writer of a type of literature that was "marvelously popular and worth heaps of money (21, p. 51)." By 1876 Twain had authored The Innocents.
Abroad and co-authored The Gilded Age. He was committed to writing for a living, and he enjoyed the wealth and fame the profession offered.

The important fact is that Tom Sawyer is different from earlier work and other idyllic productions in its lack of reverence for the mythologized time. Although Tom Sawyer is composed of "nostalgic and picturesque stories of boyhood adventures on the Mississippi River... these works nevertheless anticipate the latent Twain pessimism (5, p. 27)." There is no pessimism or blatant satire in Tom Sawyer, but there is a lack of reverence for the ideal. On the one hand, Twain relates the memories of childhood, and they are gratefully and nostalgically recalled. On the other hand is his admonition to his boyhood friend, Will Bowen, to forget the past with its sticky and useless memories (20, p. 146).

A memory commonly recalled in the "kindly pictures of the past," is that of the local church, the center of the community as recollected by a southerner:

The Presbyterian Church, of classic beauty, a half-century old when I was born, was a part of the past. It was mellow and quiet. Even the sermons were quiet: long, reasoned arguments in theology (3, p. 9).

Tom Sawyer recalls a different view:

... the edifice was but a small, plain affair, with a sort of pine board tree-box on top of it for a steeple (23, p. 49).
If the absence of "mellowness" in Twain's church is not enough, consider Twain's depiction of a sermon, and the reaction of Tom Sawyer:

The minister gave out his text and droned along monotonously through an argument that was so prosy that many a head by and by began to nod--and yet it was an argument that dealt in limitless fire and brimstone and thinned the predestined elect down to a company so small as to be hardly worth the saving. Tom counted the pages of the sermon; after church he always knew how many pages there had been, but he seldom knew anything else about the discourse. However, this time he was really interested for a little while. The minister made a grand and moving picture of the assembling together of the world's hosts at the millennium when the lion and the lamb should lie down together and a little child should lead them. But the pathos, the lesson, the moral of the great spectacle were lost upon the boy; he only thought of the conspicuousness of the principal character before the onlooking nations; his face lit with the thought and he said to himself that he wished he could be that child, if it was a tame lion (23, p. 62).

Any other memory is patently a pretense, as far as Twain is concerned, but there is more internal ambiguity in this idyll. The scene in which Tom entices his friends into doing his work begins idyllically enough, but with a hint of doubt. In fact, the ambiguity extends into the realm of being a motif used to convey the mood and tempo of the times:

Cardiff Hill, beyond the village and above it, was green with vegetation, and it lay just far enough away to seem a delectable land, dreamy, reposeful, and inviting (23, p. 144).
These qualities of a "faraway country (15)," dreamy, reposeful, inviting, are those commonly attributed to the Southland with its slow moving, relaxed pace, waiting for the cotton to grow. The Old South is always in "summer."

In other instances, Twain continues to lay bare the traditional image of the ante-bellum South. For example, a dog is said to be "lazy with the summer softness . . . sad at heart . . . sighing for change (23, p. 63)." The change desired is merely a wish for distraction, and the distraction, when it comes, is humorously anti-idyllic.

In the moody and dark moments of personal suffering, the southern tradition was to engage in romantic brooding and dreams of faraway things. For Tom, such moments came in school:

The harder Tom tried to fasten his mind on his book, the more his ideas wandered. So at last, with a sigh and a yawn, he gave it up. It seemed to him that the noon recess would never come. The air was utterly dead. There was not a breath stirring. It was the sleepiest of sleepy days. The drowsing murmur of the five and twenty studying scholars soothed the soul like the spell that is in the murmur of bees. Away off in the flaming sunshine, Cardiff Hill lifted its soft green sides through a shimmering veil of heat, tinted with the purple of distance; a few birds floated on lazy wing high in the air; no other living thing was visible but some cows, and they were asleep. Tom's heart ached to be free, or else to have something of interest to do to pass the dreary time (23, p. 62).

There was not even a zephyr stirring; the dead noonday heat had stilled the songs of the birds;
nature lay in a trance that was broken by no
sound but the occasional far-off hammering of
a woodpecker, and this seemed to render the
pervading silences and sense of loneliness the
more profound. The boy's soul was steeped in
melancholy; his feelings were in happy accord
with his surroundings (23, p. 91).

Such moods of melancholy, monotony, stillness, and
tranquillity are indicative of Twain's sense of time past,
and man's place in that past. The fact that the images
conjured in one's imagination when visualizing the ante-
bellum South fit the mood expressed above is representative
of Twain's reflection of the popular "Southern" eternal
summer of tranquillity.

Just as the southern experience is so plagued with
dreamy, inviting delusions, and seeming always to possess
the vision of the never-never land, so Twain seems in Cardiff
Hill and the sleepy laziness of life in St. Petersburg the
other half of a dream; fear, catastrophe, and danger. This
environment harbors the seeds of violence. Here Tom and
Huck hunt for treasure, and encounter Injun Joe, the malev-
olent "bogey man" in all dreams, and the myth of the vision
is shattered. Jackson Island, scene of unrestricted gaiety,
is also a place of danger, as witness the storm and the
nearness of death (23, p. 170). Tom and Huck spent a great
deal of time congratulating themselves on their close escapes
from the absolute reality of death. The fact is, the
people of the ante-bellum South were "living a primitive
life, full of survivals (11, p. 16)." As Twain maintains,
in a thematic sense, the vision seems inviting when it contains, in truth, the presence of failure and catastrophe; familiar themes in the southern experience. The world was not as dreamy as one might think. The summery, peaceful environs of St. Petersburg are flecked with the pox of fear, danger, and disillusionment. Pain and fear in this "poor little shabby village of St. Petersburg (23, p. 21)" belie the idyllic qualities of the myth. The great river, for example, is a death trap. As Tom asks, remember last summer "when Bill Turner got drowned (23, p. 149)?" Remember how quickly the villagers concluded that Tom, Huck, and Joe were drowned. Little Gracie Miller did not get a sunburn, and Doctor Robinson did not die of old age. Muff Potter was not in too much danger of being lynched, and Injun Joe was not planning to be casual in his revenge on the Widow Douglas (23, p. 269). If not for the happy circumstance of Tom's discovery of an exit in the cave, he and Becky would have died as did Injun Joe. There is more here than an idyll, and in its presentation Twain cannot escape the southern experience with disaster amidst the idyll.

Twain continues to mottle his story with contrasting highlights and deep shadows. The people who populate St. Petersburg are, of course, the most important mirror of the southern experience. It is a town that "sits to Mark Twain for its portrait, one of the first in our fiction of
the social life of an American community. People of all sorts and classes inhabit Twain's town—lawyers and drunkards, boys, girls, and schoolmasters, old maids and half-breeds, Negro slaves and gentry (15, pp. 79-80)." It is a provincial, poverty-stricken, ignorant, simplistic, and superstitious community. The people are isolated and detached from the main stream of the nation, a characteristic of the South in the decade or so preceding the Civil War. The explanation of this fact lies in two words, according to Rollin Osterweis, "feudalism and slavery," and "the Southern people were largely the outcome of the interaction of these two formative principles (11, p. 16)."

The people in Tom Sawyer came from the Deep South, and they brought their customs and habits in their most primitive form. Existing on steady diets of hope and the promise of future glory, they were relatively untouched by ideas and a worldliness that could challenge their more grandiose dreams. They were the possessors of a perverse and distorted culture that was overly romantic and pseudo-chivalric. This thread is constantly interwoven into the fabric of Tom Sawyer. Chivalry is turned into bravado and grand gestures from Tom's initial meeting with the reader until he grandly pours the gold onto the Widow Douglas' table. Tom's swashbuckling is clearly the reflection of his elders' chivalric, feudalistic notions, but Twain treats them humorously (17, p. 78). In Tom Sawyer's continual
dreaming, these grandiose notions are perversions of the Virginia cavalier's. In a heart-broken moment, Tom muses:

What if he turned his back, now, and disappeared mysteriously? What if he went away...ever so far away, into unknown countries beyond the seas—and never came back any more! How would she feel then! The Ideal of being a clown recurred to him now, only to fill him with disgust. For frivolity and jokes and spotted tights were an offense, when they intruded themselves upon a spirit that was exalted into the vague august realm of the romantic. No, he would be a soldier, and return after long years all war-torn and illustrious. No—better still, he would join the Indians, and hunt buffaloes and go on the warpath in the mountain ranges and the trackless great plains of the Far West, and away in the future come back a great chief, bristling with feathers, hideous with paint, and prance into Sunday School, some drowsy summer morning, with a blood-curdling war-whoop, and sear the eyeballs of all his companions with unappeasable envy. But no, there was something gaudier even than this (23, pp. 92-93).

This sort of sentiment is reflected with serious intent in a poem written by John Reuben Thompson, included in a collection entitled "The Land We Love":

To the brave all homage render,  
Weep ye skies of June!  
With a radiance pure and tender,  
Shine, or saddened moon!  
"Dead upon the field of glory,"  
Hero fit for song and story,  
lies our bold dragoon (10, p. 318).

To Tom, the ultimate grandeur proved to be the life of a pirate; the gaudiest and most glittering figure imaginable. In _Tom Sawyer_ the reflected myth is associated with the feudalistic, dreaming society, and Tom translates that myth into the reality of Jackson's Island and
eventually into gold: the treasure from the cave. Eventually, Tom receives the adulation due a hero of his chivalric calibre. For example, "At school the children made so much of him and Joe, and delivered such eloquent admiration from their eyes, that the two heroes were not long in becoming insufferably stuck up (23, p. 184)." The children, as well as the other members of the society, could not help but be impressed by the glitter and glamor of notoriety and the culmination in fact of common dreams. Twain pokes fun at the cavalier tradition of southern gentility by allowing a child who "warn't bad, so to say—only mischeevous. Only just giddy, and harum-scarum, you know (23, p. 155)," to reflect the posturings of the feudalistic, chivalric dreamers of the South. To Twain, this sort of activity was set aflame by Sir Walter Scott, with his "silliness and emptiness, sham chivalries of a brainless and worthless society long vanished (9, p. 257)." A later critic, on the other hand, states in defense of such romantic characteristics that Scott:

... deserves unbounded gratitude because of his power to stimulate, to charm, to bring the phantasmagoria of the Old World to the eager eyes of the New. He increased the stock of homebred goodness and joy as he made the fireside a veritable palace of dreams (9, p. 274).

Scott obviously did not do this all by himself; nevertheless, the acceptance and amplification of a perverted sense of romanticism combined with the fact that the South
maintained a predilection for feudalism caused Twain the
satirist to take note. The feudalistic organization of
the South freed the gentry to pursue their romantic,
chivalric activities, and Tom, freed from the manual chores
and responsibilities by the little slave boy, Jim, is free
to pursue his own fantasies. When Tom's fantasies come
ture, Twain is setting up a compromise. How else can the
tale of a boy be ended satisfactorily without becoming
openly critical of the boy and his society? Huckleberry
Finn will be much more critical in its assault on the
feudalistic farce that was the Old South.

During the ante-bellum period, "home-bred goodness and
joy" other than Scott's work was available to southern
readers. It is evident that Tom was a rather dedicated
reader, though where he found the time is unspecified. No
doubt Tom was a great admirer of the more grandiose elements
in Patrick Henry's speeches, as evidenced by his flamboyant
rendition of Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death"
speech (23, p. 204). He also admired "The Boy Stood on the
Burning Deck." A collection of "brainless" dreams is
recorded in Chapter XXI in Twain's list of the school
commencement speeches:

"Friendship" was one; "Memories of other Days";
"Religion in History"; "Dream-land"; "The
Advantages of Culture"; "Forms of Political
Government Compared and Contrasted"; "Melancholy";
"Filial Love"; "Heart Longings"; etc., etc.,
A prevalent feature in these compositions was a nursed and petted melancholy; another was a wasteful and opulent gush of "fine language"; another was a tendency to lug in by the ears particularly prized words and phrases until they were worn entirely out; and a peculiarity that conspicuously marked and marred them was the inveterate and intolerable sermon that wagged its crippled tale at the end of each and every one of them (23, pp. 205-206).

Such qualities appear in innumerable bits and pieces of southern ante-bellum writing. One example is the author of *Irish Melodies*, a writer who "had worth which the veriest churl cannot deny... a master in touching all emotions of tenderness, a generous sensibility to pure and holy devotion to country possessed of a kind and unmixed sympathy for suffering (8, p. 69)." Hymns by James Montgomery, the "Cowper of our times" were popular. His muse was "copious, always sedate, thoughtful, and piously directed... not wanting in the picturesque (8, p. 68)." Montgomery's hymns such as "Angels from the Realms of Glory," or "Much Yet Remains Unsung" call to mind the flowery pretense of Tom's neighbors listening to their songs being read:

Shall I be car-ri-ed toe the skies, on flow'ry beds of ease,
Whilst others fight to win the prize, and sail thro' blood-y seas?

He [the minister] was regarded as a wonderful reader. At church "sociables" he was always called upon to read poetry; and when he was through, the ladies would
lift up their hands and let them fall helplessly in their laps, and "wail" their eyes, and shake their heads, as much as to say, "Words cannot express it; it is too beautiful, too beautiful for this mortal earth (23, p. 60).

The villagers were not that well acquainted with literature in all probability. They did, however, read some outside periodicals and paid attention to available newspapers. On the whole, however, "The South was . . . inarticulate in literary expression, but . . . it was by no means bookless (8, p. 61)." Reading occurred, as noted in the case of Tom. He seems well acquainted with the language and stories of Robin Hood, for example. Nevertheless, "there was little being done of one sort or another, beyond that involved by a disposition to follow the newspapers. These were of course read with all their shockingly detailed advertisements of various medicinal nostrums (8, p. 66)."

Notice Aunt Polly who is,

... one of those people who are infatuated with patent medicines and all new-fangled methods of producing health or mending it. She was an inveterate experimenter in all these things. When something fresh in this line came out she was in a fever, right away, to try it; not on herself for she was never ailing, but on anybody else that came in handy. She was a subscriber for all the "Health" periodicals and phrenological frauds; and the solemn ignorance they were inflated with was breath to her nostrils (23, pp. 126-127).

Tom's world was awash in the bits and pieces of isolated thought and information that seemed to contribute to dense and desolate thinking. It was a village typical of
an "older frontier (6, p. 19)," a frontier of slavery. In the time frame of Tom Sawyer, St. Petersburg has been left high and dry with the feudalistic remnants and chivalric fragments of a civilization on the decline. The national westward movement was passing them by, and increasing abolitionist criticism was beginning to challenge the existence of slavery. The people of St. Petersburg were the leftovers, the dregs of southern society practicing a perverse gentility and chivalry. They were the possessors of no great wealth, and they were shackled with the ignorance of any other way of life. It was a closed society, finding the definition of respectability lying within the community. Consequently, as James W. Silver in his book Mississippi: The Closed Society points out,

For whatever reason, the community sets up the orthodox view . . . . But with a substantial challenge from the outside . . . , the society tightly closes its ranks, becomes inflexible and stubborn, and lets no scruple, legal or ethical, stand in the way of the enforcement of the orthodoxy (18, p. 6).

The southern community was not a consciously evil community, but it was merely closed. The depredations of Tom and his friends are not only tolerated, but applauded. Sin is something other people do. "All the people vaguely reminiscent of sin are not from St. Petersburg, they are outsiders, and they always begin trouble (1, p. 82)." Anything that leads to trouble comes from outside agitation,
a situation that prompts many southern people today to complain of "outside agitators." In *Tom Sawyer*, the first person who brings trouble is a stranger (23, p. 21). Tom challenges a strange lad and a fight ensues. Tom wins, but the stranger has the last word. Not only has his outfit and "citified air" challenged Tom's sensitivity to his own shabbiness (23, p. 21), but he hits Tom with a rock while Tom is not looking. This seems to be further evidence of the inherent untrustworthy nature of outsiders.

Huckleberry Finn is an outsider, and he brings trouble also. He keeps Tom from school; gets him involved in a grisly murder; they both run away, and no end of devilment occurs. Huck is "the juvenile parish of the village," the "son of the town drunkard," and "cordially hated and dreaded by all the mothers of the town, because he was idle and lawless and vulgar and bad—and because all their children admired him so, and delighted in his forbidden society, and wished they dared to be like him (23, p. 70)."

*Injun Joe, Muff Potter, and Doctor Robinson* bring more serious trouble. They are outside the community as well as the law. Grave robbing, murder, and disruption are once again coming from the outsider, and the little community still maintains thematic purity; a theme common in the southern experience. Even Becky Thatcher, a stranger in the village, is the focal point of mortal trouble for Tom. This little creature gets Tom into trouble, and just about
the entire village eventually had to rally to rescue them from the cave.

These are a provincial people, impressed and awed by a man, Judge Thatcher, a stranger to the villagers. They are impressed by the slightest grandeur:

The middle-aged man turned out to be a prodigious personage—no less a one than the county judge—altogether the most august creation these children had ever looked upon—and they wondered what kind of material he was made of—and they half wanted to hear him roar, and were half afraid he might, too. He was from Constantinople, twelve miles away—so he had traveled and seen the world—these very eyes had looked upon the county courthouse—which was said to have a tin roof (23, p. 53).

In the dull, humdrum existence of St. Petersburg, a mere county judge, a traveling minstrel show, a pathetic circus, or a wandering mesmerizer find ample acceptance, temporarily. But just as the initial excitement whips the town into a fever, it just as suddenly subsides, or suffers a "relapse" as Twain says, into the same provincial rut.

"As Tom knew it, the village itself, indolent center of an easy going, slave holding community, was the abode of common man (6, p. 251)." Perhaps more than anything else, the characterization of St. Petersburg as a "slave holding community" places Tom Sawyer in the southern experience. It was an indolent, easygoing village, but those traits could be found anywhere in the rural United States of the time. Most distinctive of the southern experience in Tom Sawyer, ultimately, is the Negro. The characteristic which binds
Tom Sawyer closest to the South is the black man, the slaves, and "the ties uniting him to the life of St. Petersburg are more deep rooted and complex than is the case with the other village boys (22, p. 63)" in books in the bad boy burlesque genre. By the time *Tom Sawyer* was in circulation, the memory of the ante-bellum South was being reconstructed in southern minds through Bourbon politics, and, ultimately, the ante-bellum South was accorded complete myth-hood in the formation of the New South Creed. These two movements in southern history absolutely denied the reality of the past, saying that it was a pleasant time, the perfect summer idyll for all who were lucky enough to be a part of it. This re-creation of the past encompassed peace, plenty, contentment, and happiness. In those days "there was plenty of corn and fodder in the crib, plenty of big fat hams and leaf lard in the smoke-house, plenty of turkeys and chickens in the back yard, plenty of preserves in the pantry, plenty of trained servants to do all the work . . . (16, pp. 393-394)." Everything can be disregarded essentially except the presence of those trained servants who did all the work. As Ulrich E. Phillips (13) and Kenneth Stampp (21) quite correctly imply, the Negro is inescapably the central theme of the southern experience. Slavery, although not directly discussed in *Tom Sawyer*, was present in St. Petersburg and it exercised its characteristic importance. In *Tom Sawyer*, Twain does not belabor the-
presence of Negroes, but he is inescapably aware of them. Although the Negro does not have a prominent place, Twain cannot keep the subject of slavery out of sight completely.

The text of Tom Sawyer contains eleven specific references to Negroes. In every case but two, the references are in passing, and indicate acceptance of human slavery. Interestingly, the two cases which allude to something serious about slavery come from characters other than Tom. The first case is Huckleberry Finn, confiding what is obviously a dark secret. He says in conversation with Tom:

"That's all right. Now, where you going to sleep?"

"In Ben Roger's hayloft. He lets me, and so does his pap's nigger man, Uncle Jake. I tote water for Uncle Jake whenever he wants me to, and any time I ask him he gives me a little something to eat if he can spare it. That's a mighty good nigger, Tom. He likes me, becuze I don't ever act as if I was above him. Sometimes I've set right down and eat with him. But you needn't tell that. A body's got to do things when he's awful hungry he would'n want to do as a steady thing." (23, p. 258).

Tom, however, does not take note of Huck's confession, but continues with his own plan-making.

The second instance comes when Injun Joe is planning his revenge on Widow Douglas, and explains to his pal the motive:

But her husband was rough on me--many times he was rough on me--and mainly he was the justice of the peace that juggled me for a vagrant. And that ain't all. It ain't a millionth part of it! He had me horsewhipped!--horsewhipped in front of the jail like a nigger!--with all the town looking on! HORSEWHIPPED! do you understand (23, p. 267)?
Twain understood, but he did not allow Tom Sawyer to become an anti-slavery spokesman. Perhaps, Tom could not speak against slavery due to his construction as a small, humorous, and slightly satiric model of the Virginia cavalier type.

The other references to Negroes are somewhat less suggestive in their depiction of the southern experience with the Negro. In Chapter II, at the town pump, "white, mulatto, and negro boys and girls were always there waiting their turn, resting, trading playthings, quarreling, fighting, skylarking (23, p. 27)." Mulattoes are evidence of miscegenation; they were probably slaves. Tom, of course, does not take notice of the living proofs of the cruel nature of slavery. The fact that Twain notes them, however, indicates that Twain knows of the darker shadows in the ante-bellum idyll.

It is interesting to pursue Tom's accommodation of the slave. His conversation with the slave, Jim, at the fence contains a condescension that initially appears to set them both as equals. When Tom cannot persuade Jim to switch jobs, he attempts to bribe him, first with a "white alley, Jim! And it's a bully taw." Jim wavers, and Tom offers to show him his toe. "Jim was only human--this attraction was too much for him (23, p. 28)." Tom later takes Jim for granted, and does not pursue the implications of his presence:
Tom did play hookey, and he had a very good time. He got back home barely in season to help Jim, the small colored boy, saw next-day's wood and split the kindlings before supper—at least he was there in time to tell his adventures to Jim while Jim did three-fourths of the work (23, pp. 17-18).

Later, in Chapter VI, Tom and Huck debate the validity of a particular superstition, which turns on the veracity of a "nigger." The conversation proceeds:

"Spunk-water! I wouldn't give a dern for spunk-water."
"You wouldn't, wouldn't you? D'you ever try it?"
"No, I hain't. But Bob Tanner did."
"Who told you so?"
"Why, he told Jeff Thatcher, and Jeff told Johnny Baker, and Johnny told Jim Hollis, and Jim told Ben Rogers, and Ben told a nigger, and the nigger told me. There now!"
"Well, what of it? They'll all lie. Leastways all but the nigger. I don't know him, but I never see a nigger that wouldn't lie. Shucks!" (23, pp. 71-72)

In these instances where the slave is referred to at all, the situation generally is one in which some vague, strange, undefined emotion or set of circumstances is at work. In the matter of the wart removing process, and in almost every instance where superstition intrudes, the "nigger" is dragged into the conversation. The case of the howling dog in Chapter X is an example. When the probability of death is indicated by a howling dog, in local superstition, it is connected to the only possible source of certification, the "nigger." Tom says, "All right, you wait and see. She's a goner just as dead sure as Muff Potter's a goner. That's what the niggers say, and they know all about these kind of things (23, p. 116)."
In the matter of slavery, Twain provides brief almost cryptic glimpses of the black world of St. Petersburg. Had Twain not escaped to look back with new perspectives, and "had this life continued with Sam Clemens as an integral part of it, he might never have been aware that here was literary material, or that he had any reason for writing (12, p. 246)." In *Tom Sawyer* Twain is aware of slavery, but not until *Huckleberry Finn* will he expose the southern experience with slavery in complex terms. In the decade 1875 to 1885, "the white-washed democratic little community of Tom Sawyer changed, in Train's imagination, into a typical dirty, backward southern town (19, pp. 74-75)." When this happens, the real force of the southern experience is displayed in *Huckleberry Finn* and *Pudd'Nhead Wilson*. What Twain does give us in *Tom Sawyer*, though, is Huckleberry Finn, outsider; the one character in the book who has to make a moral decision. *Tom Sawyer* is incapable of carrying the increasing bitterness and awareness Twain requires of his characters in the past two parts of his southern trilogy.

It is inconceivable that the well traveled Twain did not see the implications of the southern experience. He did wait for the two later books to carry the brunt of his reaction to his experience. In *Tom Sawyer*, Twain has yet to react conclusively. He harbors a sincere desire to recall a boyhood and a time that was idyllic, and he manages
it to a certain extent in this book. Twain surely was aware of a reality that belied the existence of a truly idyllic St. Petersburg, but this did not keep him from distilling the essence of boyhood into a myth that is more than realism (4, p. 11). In so doing he managed to preserve "something of the American experience, more of American dreaming, and still more of the beauty that was our heritage and that still conditions both our national memory and our phantasy (4, p. 14)."

If, as Roger B. Salomen points out in Twain and the Image of History, Mark Twain believes "that the sole and only history makers are circumstance and environment," and that "social forces were of paramount interest to Twain (17, pp. 78-79)," then Tom Sawyer is more than a mere boy's book. In 1876 Twain wrote, "Ignorance, intolerance, egotism, self-assertion, opaque perception, dense and pitiful chuckleheadedness, and an almost pathetic unconsciousness of it all. That is what I was at 19 or 20, and it is what the average Southerner is at 60 today (11, p. 22)." The past represented in Tom Sawyer was decried by Twain for its denial of:

... practical common sense, progressive ideas, and progressive works. Its aesthetic and moral sham, represented a compendium of the qualities of an earlier American, especially the American of the Southern frontier. Huck, Tom, and Jim were hopelessly associated with the past, with the flush times of the river, with the idyllic village, even with mediævalism (17, p. 78).
On the whole, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a picture of a child burning "to achieve the acceptance, the admiration, and the place of importance (24, p. 117)" in a world which itself was not accorded acceptance, admiration, or success: the ante-bellum South (24).
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


Twain seriously explores the ramifications of the southern experience in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, artistically his finest novel and his most complex reflection of the southern experience. At the time of the publication of *Huckleberry Finn*, however, the nation as a whole was listening to different southern voices. These voices had laid the groundwork for the New South Creed, and were romanticizing the ante-bellum South in the most crass sense.

"During these years the New South propagandists flooded the nation with an insistent literature in which historians of our generation find an astonishing mixture of fact and fancy, wish and reality. Few observers from the North were unimpressed by what they read (7, p. 319)." Even Twain's old writing partner Charles Dudley Warner marveled in the "revitalized South (19)." Consequently, "there is irony in that, by chance rather than intention, Mark Twain wrote his most perceptive and most impressive attack on racism and related doctrines at a time when his attack could stir no spark in the reading public (1, p. 513)." Twain's progression to the point of *Huckleberry Finn* had taken a maturation of
technique as well as an increasing realization of the potent matter in the southern experience. He had changed, for example, from a typical, hardcore southerner on slavery due to a new family influence, literary influences, worldly status, and a change in perspective (11). The book Huckleberry Finn is an act of discovery and revelation for Huck, Twain's reporter, and the reader. This act of discovery and revelation takes place as Twain allows Huck to examine the consequences of the southern experience in personal detail. In the text of Huckleberry Finn, "all the meanesses of Mark Twain's 'damned human race' are seen through the eyes and presented through the lips of Huck Finn (1, p. 344)." Even yet, though, Twain still reserves his personal and final judgment and his vitriolic condemnation of the southern experience for Pudd'nhead Wilson. Huckleberry Finn, however, is his balanced reflection of the southern culture, and he allows Huck to report, and lets the culture judge itself. As a major effort in the book, Twain allows the myth and sham so deeply embedded in the southern experience to crumble under its own weight. "Huckleberry Finn made the fullest attack Mark Twain had yet written on any element in his southern heritage (15, p. 507)," but it is still a subtle attack cloaked in innocence. The southern experience passes in review, but it is not a proud parade. As Huck watches this parade, he "is, as ever, the skeptic, making a determined effort to be
fair and consider all sides of the question, and it comes to
Huck finally that possibly "there's something in it when a
body like the widow or the parson prays, but it don't work
for me... (18, p. 194)."

Huck sifts through the institutions, codes, and
practices of the South, allowing the reader to view through
his eyes (13, p. 3). He does not pretend to be a reformer
nor a condenser; rather, the southern experience is seen
without its protective camouflage of myth. Behind that
myth, Huck finds and reports the implications of three
general thematic characteristics of the southern experience
as distilled by James W. Silver in his book Mississippi:
The Closed Society (12) and W. J. Cash:

1) The southern experience demanded the
preservation of the status quo; the
southern society was, consequently, cold
to new ideas, static, simplistic, unvaried,
and unchanging.

2) The southern experience was the scene of a
perverted sense of personal integrity, honor
which expressed itself in the practice of
violence approved by the society.

3) The southern experience is ultimately
expressed in the institution of slavery (3).

These indicators of the southern experience are couched
in the search for freedom by Huck and Jim. The entirety of
Huckleberry Finn is predicated on the avoidance of these
traits. Contact with the southern society inevitably brings
to Huck and Jim danger, suspicion, fear, and oppression. The
trek down the river is a secretive journey to evade the
southern society (8, p. 97). The reflection of this society in Huckleberry Finn becomes, ultimately, a rejection of and a revulsion against the southern experience with its injustices, hypocrisies, and myths.

The fact that the society of the ante-bellum South is under scrutiny is obvious. The Civil War and its sweeping disruption seemed to the North to have been the last word, or the final act in a long running controversy with the failure of radical reconstruction. It is reasonable and probably justified to believe that Huckleberry Finn was written in the mood and attitude of a man "entirely satisfied with the result of the Civil War. As a loyal Republican supporting reconstruction, he was sensitive to the current events in the late 1870s and 1880s (10, p. 31)."

The tone of the book can be seen as one of vituperation and reaction against his mother culture, but there is, perhaps, this greater reason for writing of the southern experience. As we have seen, Twain continually barked back to his past for the powerful literary food he knew was there in the ante-bellum South. "In no instance does Twain depart from the physical and social aspects of a life he had known intimately and almost daily from his early boyhood through his years as a cub pilot (22, p. 57)." Even though the ante-bellum South was, at the time of publication of Huckleberry Finn, a condemned society (at
least by the victors), Twain finds more to be learned from the southern ante-bellum culture. One critic has said.

On occasion the book's mood is idyllic, and nowhere is the language so simple and eloquent as in Huck's description of daybreak on the river at the opening of chapter nineteen. The peace is the vulnerable peace of withdrawal, however, threatened by an intrusion from river or shore, that is, by contact with a social order which, though southern, more and more stands for a universalized view of mankind (13, p. 6).

The feeling is inescapable that Mark Twain's all-encompassing view of mankind derives from Huck Finn's analysis of the southern experience. With this attitude in mind, let us consider the reflection of this experience in Huckleberry Finn.

In The Adventures of Tom Sawyer there is a significant trend. Twain's treatment of the southern experience in Tom Sawyer is somewhat muddled and imprecise. In Huckleberry Finn, however, Twain is exploring in depth the ramifications of the southern experience. This exploration has been described in varying terms by various schools of thought, which range from describing Twain's work as the masochistic exercises of a repressed artist (2) to envisioning homosexual connotations between Huck and Jim (6). What seems to be significantly lacking, as Arlin Turner in his article "Mark Twain and the South: An Affair of Love and Anger (15)" has pointed out, is a recognition of the reflection of southern paradoxes of the southern experience in his work.
Any study of *Huckleberry Finn* must observe paradoxes created by the southern culture. This is an intense individualism competing with a rigid feudalistic hierarchy; humanity struggling to cohabit the same space with the inhumanity of slavery; a pretense that overshadows the tenets of honesty, and escape to freedom by burrowing ever deeper into the moral quagmire of the society. All these paradoxes and inconsistencies find articulation in the explicit scenarios from St. Petersburg to the Phelp's plantation. In fact, between "these strata has come every level of the South (4, p. 12)." None of the scenes in *Huckleberry Finn* is limited to a study of any particular inconsistency, because all are inextricably intertwined. In each scene a particular peculiarity of the southern experience is placed in relief against all the others.

The first of the three general characteristics of the southern experience to be noticed is the southern society seen in its armor of unchanging, simplistic, unvaried, and unequivocal attitudes. Because of the innate requirements of a feudalistic, highly stylized society founded on the institution of human slavery, an important contradiction confronts Huck quite early, sets the mood of confrontation in the book. When Huck is initially forced to make a choice of role in his society, all the idyllic, slightly muddled reflections of the southern experience as embodied in *Tom Sawyer* are instantly clarified for him. Although
separated from his society as a result of the device indicating his murder, Huck is still linked to the southern experience by training and environmental conditioning. When he finds Jim is being hunted, he voluntarily places his lot with the runaway "nigger." "Git up and hump yourself, Jim! There ain't a minute to lose. They're after us (17, p. 93)!' For the first time, Huckleberry Finn makes a choice, and whether his reasons stem from a Tom Sawyer-like sense of adventure, or whether he realizes the nature of the situation, he has cast his lot against the rigorous, unbending matrix of the southern experience. As far as the world is concerned, Huck is dead, but the runaway "nigger" claims his allegiance in rebellion. The height of folly and criminality is achieved by an already socially dead white boy. The die is cast for Jim and Huck, and their only alternative to a return to the southern society is escape to a free state. Rather, the fact is that Jim has no alternative. Huck, on the other hand, has been presented with two mutually exclusive choices. One, he may reconcile himself to the institutions of his society with the requirement to surrender Jim; or he may evade the society and assist Jim in escaping slavery. There is no middle way. The first alternative encompasses a society that harbors and propagates the "Miss Watsons," mooning about, unquestioning, and unconcerned about the implications of their actions. The problem for Huckleberry Finn lies in
the fact that he does not know the implications of the other alternative. He does know, however, that he no longer has any personal stake in the society he is leaving. He has sold his wealth, rejected the civilizing influence of the Widow Douglas' home, rejected his father, and he has "killed" himself. A personal emancipation has occurred, and Huck is free to follow the dictates of his heart, and also free to experience the agonies of moral withdrawal from the southern society.

The southern culture was peculiarly hostile and resistant to ideas which challenged the status quo. Pap, for example, speaks for the great bulk of the southern culture, "a vague race lumped together indiscriminately as the poor whites (3, p. x)." It has been the subject of much discussion as to why the poor southerner, the poor whites to be more precise, would support a system and a hierarchy inimical to their welfare. As W. J. Cash feels, this support stems from the poor white's treasure of his "superiority as a white man, which had been conferred on him by slavery (3, p. 66)." Cash could give credit to Twain for expressing this same sentiment years before he formulated this concept. In A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Twain has this to say about the poor white of the South:

It reminded me of a time thirteen centuries away, when the "poor whites" of our South who were always
despised and frequently insulted, by the slave-lords around them, and who owed their base condition simply to the presence of slavery in their midst, were yet pusillanimately ready to side with slave-lords in all political moves for the upholding and perpetuating of slavery...

(16, p. 215)

Resistance to any new ideas or concepts such as those wrestled with by Huck during the voyage are violently resisted in order to protect the status quo of personal identity. As Pap, spokesman for the poor white of the southern experience, speaks, this resistance becomes perfectly clear. Pap, in a drunken state, rants:

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 swiftest old grey-headed nabob in the State. And what do you think? They said he was a professor in a college, and could talk all kinds of languages, and knewed everything, and that ain't the wast. 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 election 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 drewed out. I says I'll never vote again. Them's the very words I said; they all heard me; and the country may rot for all me—I'll never vote again as long as I live. And to see the cool of that nigger—(17, pp. 48-49)

All the attitudes and unequivocal codes of the Southland are inherent in this expression of Pap's social consciousness.

Jealousy not of the anonymous "nigger" and his wealth,
necessarily, but jealousy of the status slavery conferred on him personally is at the heart of Pap's outburst. The resistant trend of the people for whom Pap is speaking is founded on "a vast insecurity, a searing awareness of the threats aimed at the southern way of life (5, p. 457)."

These threats figure prominently in Huck's massive, personal moral battles. In every case, Huck recognizes counter ideas inimical to the preservation of the status quo and the perpetuation of an identity which fitted the demands of the rigid southern society. In the first part of the trip, above Cairo, Huck is physically presented with those mutually exclusive choices noted earlier. He can yet turn back and rejoin the society he has so elaborately rejected. Huck knows that once Cairo is reached, there can be no turning back; he will be committed to a set of ideas and patterns of behavior frowned on in the southern experience. He reviews the alternative ideas, beginning with those delineating the "proper" procedure. Huck muses:

Well, I can tell you it made me all over trembly and feverish, too, to hear him, because I begun to get it through my head that he was most free— and who was to blame for it? Why, me. I couldn't get that out of my conscience, no how nor no way . . . . It hadn't ever come home to me, before, what this thing was that I was doing. But now it did; and it stayed with me, and scorched me more and more. I tried to make out to myself that I warn't to blame, because I didn't run Jim off from his rightful owner; but it warn't no use, conscience
up and says, every time: "But you knowed he was running for his freedom, and you could a paddled ashore and told somebody." That was so—I couldn't get around that, no way. That was where it pinched (17, p. 125).

Huck's southern culture presented him with the ultimate conflict—responsibility to his culture with its unilateral and unequivocal demands, or participation in acts and ideas outlawed in that closed society. There was no compromise. The extraordinary nature of the act he is helping to perpetrate is finally brought home to Huck while listening to Jim's excited vocal thoughts:

Jim talked out loud all the time while I was talking to myself. He was saying how the first thing he would do when he got to a free state 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, and if their master wouldn't sell them, they'd get an Ab'liationist to go and steal them.

It most froze me to hear such talk. He wouldn't ever dared to talk such talk in his life before. Just see what a difference it made in him the minute he judged he was about free. It was according to the old saying, "Give a nigger an inch and he'll take an ell." Thinks I, this is what comes of my not thinking. Here was this nigger which I had as good as helped to run away, coming right out flat-footed and saying he would steal his children—children that belonged to a man I didn't even know; a man that hadn't ever done me no harm (17, p. 126).

The sentiments expressed by Pap and embodied in the person of Miss Watson, slave owner and bulwark of southern society, are given personal meaning and consequence to Huck. Previously, he could listen to Pap "a-going on," and could
be complacent with the implications of Miss Watson's ownership of Jim. Now, along with Jim and approaching Cairo, the last chance for social salvation is rapidly approaching, and Huck is beginning to realize the uncompromising nature of his alternatives. Deciding in favor of returning Jim and redeeming himself with the unequivocal society he has temporarily rejected, Huck prepares to go and tell. "Let up on me," Huck thinks, "it ain't too late yet—I'll paddle ashore at the first light and tell (17, p. 126)."

As he paddles away from the raft, Jim's final words, "Dah you goes, de old true Huck; de only white genlman dat ever kep' his promise to old Jim (17, p. 127);" burns into Huck's heart. He maintains his resolve to tell, until he is irrevocably confronted with the choice. His alternatives have been narrowed to two, and the choice once made is irretrievable. Huck mentally stutters and stammers while he weighs his oath to Jim against the demands of the society. Finally,

I didn't answer up prompt. I tried to, but the words wouldn't come. I tried, for a second or two, to brace up and out with it, but I warn't man enough--hadn't the spunk of a rabbit. I see I was weakening; so I just give up trying, and up and says: "He's white." (17, p. 127)

The choice made, Huck begins his long and painful acceptance of new ideas. From this point on he will be divorced from outright, unquestioning obedience to the
southern culture, but he will undergo severe testing. What-
over the future, Huck has committed himself to lying,
cheating, and otherwise circumventing the demands of the
southern experience. Such a dramatic reversal of form
requires rationalization, and given only the southern
heritage to work with, Huck rationalizes his sin thusly:

... I knewed very well I had done wrong, and
I see it warn't no use for me to try to learn
to do right; a body that don't get started
right when he's little, ain't got no show--
when the pinch comes there ain't nothing to
back him up and keep him to his work, and so
he gets beat. Then I thought a minute, and
says to myself, hold ou--'pose you'd a-done
right and give Jim up: would you feel better
than what you do now? No, says I, I'd feel
bad--I'd feel just the same way I do now.
Well, then, says I, what's the use you
learning to do right, when it's troublesome
to do right and ain't no trouble to do wrong,
and the wages is just the same? I was stuck.
I couldn't answer that (17, pp. 129-130).

His conclusion is the first and most significant com-
mitment Huck will make. He at least defines his problem.
He does not have an answer yet, but he prepares for the task
of considering even more radical and far reaching concepts
later. At this point Huck realizes the cold fact that
indeed, when the pinch came he had nothing to back him up.
There was no loyalty, no personal investment, no nostalgic
notions, no romantic fogs, no substance to the heritage
which would support the weight of a different concept or
attitude. With the intrusion of the radical concept of
freedom for Jim, its attendant concepts of family rights for "niggers," and personal rule for "niggers" become food for thought.

Because of the danger inherent in the slightest threat, the southern society was closed, unequivocal, and predicated on the presence of distinct and simplistic relationships; "One uv 'ems light en t'other one is dark (17, p. 36)" prophesies Jim, and this choice is a reflection of the southern alternatives. The South could not stand modification, because modification entailed destructions. The top of the hierarchy would lose wealth, power, and prestige; the poor white would lose his identity, and consequently his prestige; the slave would lose only his slavery.

From this point until the conclusion of the novel, Twain trots Huck and Jim through a series of confrontations with the southern society. In each of these situations, Huck secretly maintains his budding identity of "nigger" stealer, and more importantly, "nigger" friend. As the story progresses, Huck and Jim share adventures, hardships and intimate moments when Huck becomes aware of Jim as a man. Huck, in his innocence and trusting nature, ultimately makes his finest declaration when he and Jim are separated in the Phelps' plantation episode. However, before he can make this declaration, he faces, essentially,
the same question and alternatives mentioned above, but
with a critical and crucial difference. When Jim is taken
to the Phelps' plantation, Huck finds he is changed. "Jim
was gone! I set up a shout—and then another—and then
another one; and run this way and that in the woods,
whooping and screeching; but it warn't no use—old Jim
was gone. Then I sat down and cried; I couldn't help it
(17, p. 275)." Now, contrary to popular ante-bellum
sentiment and practice, Huck Finn finds it in his heart to
cry for a "surly," "belligerant," runaway "nigger." With
this change of value, Huck's conflict when running for
Cairo is once more examined. "Here was it all come to
nothing, everything all busted up and ruined (17, p. 276),"'
but this time, when Huck feels it necessary to tell on
Jim, he does it for a different reason. Above Cairo, Huck
felt constrained to tell on Jim for fear of his standing
in the southern society. Now Huck thinks first of Jim,
laying out the situation and his choices:

Once I said to myself it would be a thousand
times better for Jim to be a slave at home where
his family was, as long as he'd got to be a slave,
and so I'd better write a letter to Tom Sawyer,
and tell him to tell Miss Watson where he was.
But I soon give up that notion, for two things:
she'd be mad and disgusted at his vascality and
ungratefulness for leaving her, and so she'd sell
him straight down the river again; and if she
didn't everybody naturally despises an
ungrateful nigger, and they'd make Jim feel it all
the time, and so he'd feel ornery and disgraced
(17, p. 276).
Only after Huck explores the implications of Jim's situation in regard to southern social attitudes does he finally come to his own situation. In a passage that exposes one of the most compact yet forceful reflections of the southern experience Huck says:

It would get all around that Huck Finn helped a nigger to get his freedom; and if I was to ever see anybody from that town again, I'd be ready to get down and lick his boots for shame. That's just the way; a person does a lowdown thing, and then he don't want to take no consequences of it. . . . And at last, when it hit me all of a sudden that here was the plain hand of Providence slapping me in the face and letting me know my wickedness was being watched all the time from up there in heaven, whilst I was stealing a poor old woman's nigger that hadn't ever done me no harm, and now was showing me there's One that's always on the lookout, and ain't a-going to allow no such miserable doings to go on only just so far and no further, I most dropped in my tracks I was so scared. Well, I tried the best I could to kinder soften it up somehow for myself, but saying I was brung up wicked, and so I warn't so much to blame; but something inside of me kept saying, "There was the Sunday School, you could a-gone to it; and if you'd a-done it they'd a learnt you, there, that people that acts as I'd been acting about that nigger goes to everlasting fire." (17, p. 277)

In this passage, Twain has Huck define and consider two significant aspects of the southern heritage. First, Huck reflects on the magnitude of his "sins" and the personal liabilities of his acts. That is, the idea that "everything was as it was because He had ordained it so. Hence slavery, and, indeed, everything that was, was His responsibility, not the South's; hence, far from being evil, it was the very
essence of Right. Wrong could consist only in rebellion against it (3, p. 81)." Huck reaches this crucial point, attempts to do the "Right" thing and finds,

It was a close place. I took it [the letter betraying Jim] up, and held it in my hand. I was a-trembling, because I'd got to decide, for ever, betwixt two things, and I known it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself:

"All right, then, I'll go to hell"--and tore it up (17, p. 279).

The cruel dilemma, "betwixt two things," the ultra-simplistic, unequivocal, and static nature of the southern society has led to this, a moral Alamo for Huck in which he is overwhelmed by the monstrous alternatives. Huck feels fearful and guilty, perhaps necessarily so. After all, he has arrived at this decision on his own, without a cultural background that would allow for the challenge of new ideas. With this precedent, Huck finds it easier to commit himself further, knowing

It was awful thoughts, and awful words, but they were said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about reforming. I shoved the whole thing out of my head; and said I would take up wickedness again, which was in my line, being brung up to it, and the other warn't. And for a starter, I would go to work and steal Jim out of slavery again; and if I could think up anything worse, I would do that too; because I might as well go the whole hog (17, p. 279).

The cruel dilemma, the simplistic alternatives, the mutually exclusive choices provided by the rigid, unequivocal
southern society is a primary reflection of the southern experience in *Huckleberry Finn*.

Another feature of the southern experience reflected in *Huckleberry Finn* is the confluence of two ideas: rigid personal integrity, a crude sense of chivalry and "noblesse oblige" coupled with an intense and often perverted sense of honor, precipitated a cult of violence in the Southland that can be described as casual in its employment. Violence becomes a socially accepted portion of human interaction (3, p. 74).

The characteristic lately mentioned finds elaborate exploration and dissection in two major episodes: chapters seventeen and eighteen present the Grangerford-Shepherdson feud; and chapters twenty-one and twenty-two present the Sherburn-Boggs incident. The Grangerford-Shepherdson feud and the shooting of Boggs illustrate a quality of southern life which combines a perverted sense of honor, rigid personal integrity, and an aristocratic and casual violence. To the proponents of the New South Creed, these qualities were hailed as representing the highest level of the culture. Twain presents the situation, making no judgment, so the situation judges itself.

The Grangerford-Shepherdson episode takes place quite soon after Huck and Jim have been exposed to the bald, casual violence of the Walter Scott. The riverboat episode
serves almost as a prologue to the greater violence in the aristocratic feud of the Grangerfords and Shepherdsons, beginning as a "Tom Sawyer" adventure; "He'd call it an adventure—that's what he'd call it . . . (17, p. 98)." Huck soon learning of the terror and fear of real life "adventures" is wary in his later contact with civilization. But in the Grangerford-Shepherdson episode, Huck receives a personal glimpse of the upper crust, the aristocracy, the very pinnacle of the southern ideal of gentility, decency, and quality. In fact, Huck finds in the Grangerfords the very essence of graciousness long attributed to the aristocratic element in southern society:

When him and the old lady come down in the morning, all the family got up out of their chairs and give them good day, and didn't set down again till they had set down. Then Tom and Bob went to the sideboard where the decanters was, and mixed a glass of bitters and handed it to him, and he held it in his hand and waited till Tom's and Bob's was mixed, and then they bowed and said, "Our duty to you, sir and madam"; and they bowed the least bit in the world and said thank you, and so they drank, all three . . .

Bob was the oldest, and Tom next. Tall, beautiful men with very broad shoulders and brown faces, and long black hair and black eyes. They dressed in white linen from head to foot, like the old gentleman, and wore broad Panama hats.

Then there was Miss Charlotte, who was twenty-five, and tall and proud and grand, but as good as she could be, when she warn't stirred up; but when she was, she had a look that would make you wilt in your tracks, like her father. She was beautiful . . .

The old gentleman owned a lot of farms, and over a hundred niggers. Sometimes a stack of people would come there, horsetail, from ten or
fifteen mile around, and stay five or six days and have such junks and picnics round about and on the river, and dances and picnics in the woods, daytimes, and balls at the house, nights. . . . It was a handsome lot of quality, I tell you (17, pp. 147-148).

These are the laboriously constructed ideals, the backbone of the southern culture. Twain even allows Huck to describe them in the language of the southern myth: "gracious," "handsome," "tall," "beautiful," "proud," "chivalrous," "hospitable" men. It is important to note that Huck views these people not with the critical and keen eye he employs in describing Pap, Mrs. Loftus, or the King and the Duke. Rather, the Grangerfords are portrayed in the vague generalities and superlatives commonly ascribed to gentility in the southern experience. The southern myth gave the "Southerner" these ideal attributes with "the delicate implication that this southerner was somehow any southerner at random (3, p. 68)."

All the people in Huckleberry Finn, to some degree, ascribe to these virtuous and desirable qualities, no matter what their station in the hierarchy. Huck finds that these qualities are embodied in their entirety only in the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons, and these clans soon dispell any preconceived notion about the desirability of their culture. From these people the bloodiest and most violent tendencies of the southern culture spring. It is fitting, then, that these families are portrayed in Huck’s hazy, imprecise, and elusive descriptive terms. The
magnitude of their violence completely overshadows any personality, so they become types. If they existed at all, so Huck seems to say, they could exist only in the terms of imagination and pretense, because the reality of their existence is challenged by their perverted clan warfare. The truth of the myth, or the proof of the perversion so carefully nurtured by the "quality" results with Huck's statement in summary. He says,

It made me so sick I most fell out of the tree. I ain't a-going to tell all that happened--it would make me sick again if I was to do that. I wished I hadn't ever come ashore that night, to see such things. I ain't ever going to get shut of them--lots of times I dream about them (17, p. 158).

In the southern experience, those "quality" folk, those fire-eaters, those magnificent cavaliers exemplified the epitome of gentility, refinement, and culture. "In the social order which was overthrown by the Civil War there existed a feature of feudalism incomprehensible to the modern mind with its egotism and enlightened selfishness, subordination without envy, and superiority without fear (20, p. 49)." The Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons of the South lived and breathed in a choking atmosphere of ritualized violence, sincere in the belief that violence was the only "quite correct, the only really decent, relief for wounded honor," the only recourse "which did not imply some subtle derogation, some dulling and retracting of the
fine edge of pride, some indefinable but intolerable loss of caste and honor (p. 73)." In the case of the fictional Shepherdsons and Grangerfords, pride creates a feud. Buck is acquainted with some important details in a conversation with Buck where he learns:

"Well, then, what did you want to kill him for?"
"Why, nothing—only it's on account of the feud."
"What's a feud?"
"Why were you raised? Don't you know what a feud is?"
"Well," says Buck, "a feud is this way. A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man's brother kills him; then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the cousins chip in—and by and by everybody's killed off, and there ain't no more feud. But it's kind of slow, and it takes a long time." (17, pp. 149-150)

But why, Huck asks, does such a thing come about. Buck's answer reveals the incredibly static and unequivocal nature of the vague, but powerful sense of honor and integrity:

"There was trouble 'bout something and then a lawsuit to settle it; and the suit went agin one of the men, and so he up and shot the man that won the suit—which he would naturally do, of course. Anybody would." (17, p. 159)

The southern experience with a perverted sense of honor and decency is here reflected in all its frailty and all its pitiful consequences for the participants. After this contact with the southern civilization, Huck retreats to the raft and Jim, both miraculously recovered from the steamboat accident. On the raft there is a freedom from
the "cramped up and smothery" southern society; freedom from "quality folk" and their "quality ways" (17, pp. 159–160).

The quality ways also reflect the peculiarities of the southern experience. The code is implicit in the incident on the Walter Scott, even though the men are common murderers and thieves; they perform within a code as rigid as that of the Grangerfords, though less elaborate and ritualized. In a perverse sort of way, Jim Turner, the "guilty" rascal threatened by his ex-pals, is "the meanest, treacherousest hound in this country (17, p. 99)," not for his anti-social, criminal acts, but for his lack of personal integrity among his peers. Jim Turner could lie to a Grangerford, if he had the guts, because they would be, somehow, different. It would be unthinkable for a Grangerford to shoot down in cold blood an inferior; after all, when Buck questions Buck on the quality of his adversary, Buck retorts:

"I reckon he warn't a coward. Not by a blame' sight. There ain't a coward amongst them Shepherdsons—not a one. And there ain't no cowards amongst the Grangerfords, either... No, sir, if a body's out hunting for cowards, he don't want to fool away any time amongst them Shepherdsons, becuze they don't breed any of that kind." (17, p. 151)

Among the robbers on the Walter Scott, a similar trend in thinking takes place. Bill and Jake want to kill Jim Turner, but do not want to kill him outright. They prefer
to let him die without personal participation; after all, he is not of the same caste any more. As Jake Packard puts it,

Hear him beg! and yit if we hadn't got the best of him and tied him, he'd a killed us both. And what for? Jist for nothing. Jist because we stood on our rights—that's what for. But I lay you ain't a-goin to threaten nobody any more, Jim Turner. Put up that pistol, Bill.

Bill says:
"I don't want to, Jake Packard. I'm for killin' him—and didn't he kill old Hatfield jist the same way—and don't he deserve it?" (17, p. 100)

Well, of course, he deserves killing under the terms of their code, but Jake proposes a better way:

"Now I say it ain't a-goin' to be more'n two hours befo' this wrack breaks up and washes off down the river. See? He'll be drowned, and won't have nobody to blame for it but his own self. I recon that's a considerable sight better'n killin' of him. I'm unfavorable to killin' a man as long as you can git around it; it ain't good sense, it ain't good morals. Ain't I right?" (17, pp. 101-102)

Both the Grangerfords and the murderers aboard the Walter Scott ultimately suffer from pursuing their code. In the case of the Grangerfords, integrity and honor is maintained through the death of the clan; for the murderers, integrity is maintained by the "natural" device of killing their former colleague. In both cases, the culminating violence occurs as redemption for the demands of honor and in expiation of an imagined wrong.
At no point in this text brought home more clearly than in the Sherburn-Boggs episode. This passage is important because it combines and compounds the more ritualized violence of the Grangerford-Shepherdson feud and the bald and calloused violence of the Walter Scott. One Boggs, "the best-naturedest old fool in Arkansaw—never hurt nobody, drunk nor sober (17, p. 190)," reviles one Colonel Sherburn, publicly "blackguarding Sherburn as loud as he could yell (17, p. 191)." Sherburn, "a proud-looking man about fifty-five—and he was a heap the best-dressed man in that town too (17, p. 191)," steps out of the store and warns Boggs to cease his raving. Maintaining his reserve, his aloofness, and his honor, Sherburn is finally pushed into shooting Boggs. Sherburn does not honor Boggs with a duel, nor stoop to an underhanded, sneaky method of murder. No, with the full authority of the southern tradition of a gentleman, Sherburn dispatches Boggs in full view of the town as calmly as he would a mad dog. After all, "the gentleman was surrounded with prerogatives. He could not be injured with impunity; his motives could not be impugned; and above all, his word could not be questioned (20, p. 6)." When the Grangerfords and Shepherdsons kill each other with equanimity, and Jake and Bill can kill Jim with equal aplomb, there is method in
their madness. They are killing each other as peers equal in station. They are acting out "acceptable" roles in regard to their station and status. Sherburn is acting in a role that demands certain actions including the cold blooded killing of a drunken lout. Everyone in town knows the danger Boggs faces in tampering with the hair-trigger temperament of a true southern gentleman. When Sherburn successfully challenges the mob intent on hanging him, his victory is an indictment of the perverseness of a society that would create such a situation. In his aristocratic way, Sherburn says, "slow and scornful;"

Do I know you? I know you clear through. I was born and raised in the South, and I've lived in the North; so I know the average all around. The average man's a coward... Your newspapers call you a brave people so much that you think you are braver than any other people—whereas you're just as brave, and no braver... the average man don't like trouble and danger. You don't like trouble and danger. But if only half a man—like Buck Harkness, there—shouts "Lynch him, lynch him!" you're afraid to back down—afraid you'll be found out to be what you are—cowards—and so you raise a yell, and hang yourselves on to that half-a-man's coat tail, and come raging up here, swearing what big things you're going to do. The pitifullest thing out is a mob; that's what an army is—a mob; they don't fight with courage that's born in them, but with courage that's borrowed from their mess and from their officers (17, p. 196).

Sherburn, cold blooded killer that he is, gets away with murder because he has aristocratic courage, not because he is morally right, and he tells the crowd so. In a very great sense, the actions of Sherburn and the feuding of the
Grangerfords and Shepherdsons are due to their manner, their conception of how they should react in moments of stress. In the midst of desolation, death, tragedy and murder, the manner in which one carried himself was the key to honor and integrity. Sherburn is "slow and scornful," and deliberate as he "run his eye slow along the crowd." He "takes his stand perfectly calm and deliberate;" the Colonel "was standing perfectly still in the street;" and he is always "mighty calm and slow." Sherburn is acting from the assurance of his society that he is performing well and in a manner befitting his station. The Grangerfords also feel the impact of their station on their manners of conduct, even performing for each other. For example,

The old gentleman's eyes blazed a minute--'twas pleasure, mainly, I judged--then his face sort of smoothed down, and he says, kind of gentle: "I don't like that shooting from behind a bush. Why didn't you step into the road, my boy?"

Or, Miss Charlotte Grangerford,

Miss Charlotte she held her head up like a queen while Buck was tellin his tale, and her nostrils spread and her eyes snapped (17, p. 149).

The reader, realizing the tragic nature of the activities these people accept as right and natural, is made aware of the perversity of this rigid, uncompromising sense of honor and chivalry, and duty curiously mixed up in a casual violence. As the Grangerfords rush off to
feud, one can almost sense medieval knights rushing to rescue the maiden; or, as Sherburn defends his right to kill, the image of an indignant baron comes to mind after being insulted by a menial. As indicated by the stately manner, the calm assurance of correct behavior is sanctioned by the southern experience. As Huck sifts through these concepts and their implications, the reader becomes aware of the grotesque exaggeration in the South of the concepts of honor, integrity, and pride. The stately Orangerfords become a "pack of aging Tom Sawyers whose adherence to an outworn code of ethics has only produced a long roster of honored dead (14, p. 76)." The ruffians on the Walter Scott seem to portray the lowest level on the social scale as far as southern concepts of manhood are concerned, yet they serve to emphasize to Huck the casual nature of violence in the southern society. Violence is accepted everywhere in a Tom Sawyerish spirit of adventure. Early in the book the Tom Sawyer gang outlines plans for robbery and murder because, although "some authorities think different," generally "it's considered best to kill them (17, p. 25)." As Huck surveys the mob surging to lynch Sherburn, and later the mob that has tarred and feathered the King and the Duke, his only comment is that "human beings can be awful cruel to one another (17, p. 299)." In no other American society was cruelty and violence given more
acceptance as a proper social expression than in the southern culture.

As noted in Chapter I, one of the most significant characteristics of Twain's reflection of the southern experience is the presence and treatment of the Negro in his southern books. *Huckleberry Finn* is a book in which Twain undertakes a major exploration of the Negro as a human being, but a "steadily increasing number of white authors, including Southerners, showed a disposition to undertake authentic recording of Negro life. The foundations of this inclination were laid in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in works of such writers as Albion Tourgee, George Washington Cable, and Mark Twain (9, p. 107)."

In *Huckleberry Finn*, Huck is growing in his awareness of the humanity of the black man, even if only in the person of Jim, a single representative of his race. In this book, Twain reaches his most complex description yet of the Negro. Even though "*Huckleberry Finn* paints the world of the lower Mississippi as the whites see it... The white man's doctrine of race superiority is held up to ridicule, but the victim of that doctrine remains unrealized (15, p. 507)."

Although sometimes condemned as drawing a stereotyped Negro slave created from the white viewpoint (9, p. 56), a degree of stereotyping is to be expected. After all, Twain is a southern white man, and no amount of sympathy or rapport with the Negro will change that viewpoint. Still, Twain
had created attitudes and situations which depict the Negro
in a light foreign to the times, but in keeping with his
position as a "desouthernized Southerner." Twain himself,
"growing up in a slaveholding community, was prone at first
to take for granted the South's 'peculiar institution (21,
p. 73)." Huck follows a similar pattern in his initial
unquestioning acceptance of the institution, but finds new
and previously unfamiliar questions inherent in the presence
of the Negro slave. Huck reaches a feeling which closely
parallels Twain's own deep, inarticulate emotions about the
presence of the Negro. Huck's belief that his sentiment
stemmed from the fact that he wasn't "started right (17,
p. 130)" echoes Twain's own memory that "I was playmate
to all the niggers, preferring their society to that of the
elect, I being a person of low-down tastes from the start
... (21, p. 75)." In fact, "there is scarcely an episode,
character, or place in Huckleberry Finn that was not closely
associated with Twain's personal experience (22, p. 56)."
Whatever may be the implications of Twain's growth as
reflected in Huck, the relationship between Huck and Jim
is primarily a long lesson in comradeship. Huck does not
come to view, necessarily, the entire slave populace as
being reproductions of Jim, but rather he learns to
respect and know Jim as a person; a major feat in itself
even though "slavery is obscured in the happy ending for
Jim, and other aspects of the race question are not broached (15, pp. 508-509).

Initially, the Negro in Huckleberry Finn represents little more than a reproduction from Tom Sawyer. The slavery of the initial part of the book seems to be something less than "the dignified and patriarchal institution which Southerners of the older South are fond of remembering or imagining (10, p. 154)." There are no broad acres of cotton fields, harsh overseers, or any stately mansions through which the darkies flit in eternal summer. There is a looser and more relaxed quality in which respectable white boys trick and dupe "nigger Jim." The Negro as a presence is simply there as a prop which lends a note of authenticity to what seems to be another idyllic ramble in the vein of Tom Sawyer. In passing, Huck notes that they had the "niggers" in for prayers, as a custom before going to bed (17, p. 17). Not until Huck breaks from his society does the Negro in Huckleberry Finn function as more than a prop, a source of mystic superstition and an authenticating agent for the setting.

But the fact is, slavery, no matter how benevolent or relaxed, is still slavery: the institution from which Jim runs. It is reasonable to suppose, however, that Jim would never have run away from St. Petersburg if he had not been threatened with being sold down the river. As Jim explains to Huck, this fact is evident:
Ole Missus—dat's Miss Watson—she pecks on me all de time en treats me pootty rough, but she asuz said she wouldn't sell me down to Orleans. Well, one night I creeps to de do', pootty late, en de do' warn't quite shut, en I hear ole missus tell the widder she gwyne to sell me down to Orleans, but she didn't want to, but she could git eight hund'd dollars for me, en it 'uz sich a big stack o' money she couldn' resis'. De widder she try to git her to say she wouldn' do it, but I never waited to hear de res'. I it cut mighty quick, I tell you (17, p. 69).

The representation of the slave becomes something quite different from the stereotype of a brow-beaten, slow witted helot. Twain represents Jim as a quick-witted, decision-making man. It takes Huck some time before he can accommodate this radical departure from custom. Initially, when Pap goes into his ranting spiel against the "govment," and the "free nigger," Huck is the typical southern lad, like Tom Sawyer or Buck Grangerford, incapable of questioning or debating the consequences of the southern society. However, when Huck physically disassociates himself from the society, Jim is in a position to become something more than a mere prop or highly stylized representative of the Negro slave. Jim becomes a companion, a fellow runaway. As Huck stumbles on the sleeping Jim, he relates that he was "ever so glad to see Jim. I warn't lonesome now, I told him I warn't afraid of him telling the people where I was (17, p. 57)."

Huck can trust Jim, because Jim is familiar to Huck; he is also a black slave who is subject to coercion. Initially, when Huck finds Jim, quite a conversation ensues about
Huck's recent history. Huck places faith in Jim's loyalty not to tell, but the situation is reversed in the matter of Jim's faith in Huck. Where Huck assumes Jim won't tell, Jim has to plead with Huck for secrecy. "But, mind, you said you wouldn't tell—you know you said you wouldn't tell, Huck (17, p. 69)." Huck promises and follows with this declaration,

"Well, I did. I said I wouldn't, and I'll stick to it. Honest injun I will. People would call me a low down Abliitionist and despise me for keeping mum—but that don't make no difference. I ain't a-going to tell, and I ain't a-going back there anyways. So now, le's know all about it." (17, p. 69)

Jim cannot tell Huck because "dey's reasons (17, p. 68)." Those "reasons" are the fear of a white man's culture which will require Huck to tell. Notice, although Huck promises to keep Jim's secret, he also notes that he does not plan to ever face that town of St. Petersburg, and he can keep his reputation safe. It will take some time before Huck can arrive at his personal human commitment to Jim, and lose the callousness and ignorance that prompted Aunt Sally, good natured soul that she is, to respond to Huck's story about being late. Aunt Sally says, in a loaded conversation with Huck,

"It warn't the grounding—that didn't keep us back but a little. We blew out a cylinder-head." "Good gracious! anybody hurt?" "No'm. Killed a nigger." "Well, it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt." (17, p. 287)
As the river odyssey continues, the contacts with the southern civilization provide various acts through which Huck grows into an awareness he would not have developed otherwise. On the island before the trip, Huck and Jim actually talk to each other. Huck learns that Jim, property and chattel slave that he is, has been a minister of finance in the dark, submerged world of slavery (17, p. 72). Huck even takes practical advice from Jim, and finds that advice sound (17, p. 53). Jim, the superstitious, fearful slave who once swore he had been ridden around the state by witches, now is able to enter a floating house, check out a dead man under eerie circumstances, and keep the secret of Pap's death from Huck (17, p. 78).

In a sense, Jim is the protector of Huck, acting out a paternalistic role in regard to his refugee mate. Jim and his superstitions project the early tone of the trip. According to Jim, the handling of the snake skin is a portent of trouble for the enterprise. It is reasonable to assume that Jim wasn't drawing on some occult power to provide the dire predictions about Huck and himself. Rather, Jim knew, innately, the complications and difficulties he and Huck would encounter as they sought to escape the clutches of a civilization. Whether it was superstition or knowledge, Jim warns Huck, "never you mind, honey, never you mind. Don't you git too peart. It's a-comin'. Mind I tell you, it's a-comin'! (17, p. 80)."
Trouble does come to the pair on the \textit{Walter Scott},
but most of Huck's awareness of Jim's humanity occurs on
the raft during their debates and as a result of their
separations. The temporary separation from Jim in the fog
and the subsequent reunion on the raft are indicative of the
growing sensitivity of Huck to Jim's humanity. Huck's
teasing of Jim (17, pp. 119-120) brings an amazing come-
back, amazing when one remembers that a slave is speaking:

When I got all wore out wid work, en wid de
callin's for you, en went to sleep, my heart wuz
mos't broke bekase you wuz los', en I didn't
k'yer no mo' what become ar me en de raf'. En
when I woke up en fine you back agin', all safe
en sound', de tears come en I could a got down
on my knees en kiss' you 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 dah is trash; en trash is what people is
dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren's en
makes 'em ashamed (17, p. 122).

Here is a slave, hurt to the quick because he has
actually exposed his feelings to a representative of the
white master race, and has been treated in return like a
slave. But Huck's sensitivity is such that he recognizes
the enormity of what he has done to Jim; treating his
human affections condescendingly, and struggling with his
heritage, he makes an important decision:

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 trucks, and I wouldn't done that one if I'd
a known it would make him feel that way (17, p. 123).
The new element added to Huck's consciousness is an awareness of the feelings of Jim, a revolutionary addition when one considers that in the southern experience awareness of the humanity of the Negro was inimical to the very existence of the institution of slavery. Huck has actually humbled himself to a "nigger," but not without a fight. The southern experience was predicated on never having to say "I'm sorry" to a Negro. For Ruck, though, the levee has been breached and now swiftly crumbles. He comes to see Jim in different roles, as father, husband, and friend. From this point Jim, the runaway slave, the very basic threat to the existence of the southern society, is in Huck's mind.

The concept of freedom for Jim becomes real to Huck, who proposes to help Jim escape because Jim is his friend. As noted earlier, Huck helps Jim to freedom, but it is more important to see Huck reaching an emancipation as a result of Jim's presence.

It remains to be said that the lessons Twain learned from living with the southern experience directed the development of Huckleberry Finn, and Twain's "charges against the South for dueling, feuding, and lynching, and for slavery and racism are parts of his inclusive charge against the human race, but the severity is greater because the blame lies with his own people, and hence himself (15, p. 496)."
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PUDD'NHEAD WILSON: CONDEMNING THE PAST

Of the three novels studied in this thesis Pudd'Nhead Wilson is, in some respects, the most complicated, sophisticated, and yet confusing and tangled. It is more sophisticated in its treatment of the southern experience, and its thematic elements are more convoluted than are similar elements in Huckleberry Finn. It is confusing and tangled in its structure, having a threadbare plot and tenuous devices to propel the action. The novel was written in several stages and in varying directions before ultimately being published in 1894 in the form entitled Pudd'Nhead Wilson. As originally conceived, Pudd'Nhead Wilson was proposed as a farce exploiting the comic possibilities of a pair of Siamese twins (14, pp. 231-232).

With Pudd'Nhead Wilson Twain had produced a novel which had no precedent in his literary past. The book has definite connections with Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn in that a motivating influence in all three stems from Twain's conception of the southern experience, and in this sense Pudd'Nhead Wilson is "the final volume in what we may justly call his Mississippi trilogy, and deserves the central position he assigned it in the Author's National Edition,"
immediately following Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn (5, p. 351)."

In several respects, Pudd'nhead Wilson is a dividing line in Twain's work. Twain approaches previously unquestioned and unexplored implications of the southern experience with slavery, and here "Pudd'nhead Wilson, which came last, ten years after Huckleberry Finn, shows him—finally and perhaps reluctantly—facing issues he had previously avoided (13, p. 501)." Pudd'nhead Wilson touches upon delicate subjects: miscegenation, sex, guilt; subjects which had been only hinted at or faintly treated in previous works. This is not to say that the subject matter and the dramatic material in Pudd'nhead Wilson had never been broached before by Twain, but such explorations had generally been conducted on a personal battlefield, not a public one. As seen faintly in Tom Sawyer, and more distinctly in Huckleberry Finn, Twain developed and explored the southern experience in increasingly explosive tones which nevertheless always left unanswered questions. Pudd'nhead Wilson finally answers those questions, with the result that a contemporary southern reader of this novel was led to "charge that its author was 'sinfully' reconstructed (4, p. 154)." That reader may have read Tom Sawyer with enjoyment, and Huckleberry Finn with some faint queasiness, but could not admit that "as a social study of the American village it [Pudd'nhead Wilson] ranks with Tom Sawyer [or] Huckleberry
Finn (12, p. 191).” There was some dissatisfaction with
Twain for writing such a scathing piece involving the South
of his birth. Yet, even Twain was caught up in the
propensity in the 1890s to respect the South’s heroic and
romantic tradition as indicated in the New South Creed,
and at times he moved close to the less genial vein of the
unreconstructed school concerning the Negro (4, p. 153).
Twain did occasionally look back at his youth with a
nostalgic eye, and his Life on the Mississippi seems to
encompass a memory of the river valley like that expressed
by Orland Kay Armstrong in Old Massa’s People:

Big River still winds down to the Sea, just as
it has for so long nobody seems to know. Maybe
it has glided along so many eons already, and
will continue to flow for so limitless a number
of ages, that the little span of decades when
stalwart pioneers built plantations along its
banks, and black folk moved hither and yon in
singing labor, seems to it as a mere incident.
But we can’t believe it. No--the Big River saw
its golden age when the morning mists blew
across its soft, damp, brown bosom from off
fields where slaves picked cotton; when it
carried the barges loaded with sugar; when its
steamboats rocked with the throbbing life of
gay youth from the mansions (2, p. 356).

But Pudd'Nhead Wilson is not a nostalgic return to a
golden past; it is a pessimistic return to a land where
the "niggers" do not sing, and the "stalwart pioneers" are
in fact inhuman, cruel monsters. Pudd'Nhead Wilson stands
as a demarcation line between Twain's books of his past
and the dark satire and invective of the future. From
Pudd'ned head Wilson forever, Twain never returned from a trip to his past with a freight of memories that was not tainted with bitterness, disappointment, and disillusionment.

As a work of literary art Pudd'ned head Wilson is not as successfully constructed and handled as are Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. No common metaphor binds the novel into a structurally feasible unit, as can be seen with Huckleberry Finn's great river. There is not the unlimited sense of time inherent in the boy world as in Tom Sawyer. In Pudd'ned head Wilson, the closest approximation of a unifying element is, perhaps, thematic in the sense of impending disaster for all the participants in the tragedy. This theme is constantly disrupted, though, by tangled plots and a certain roughness of construction which deny this novel the artistic stature its thematic elements deserve.

Two readily observable pieces of evidence which suggest the shoddiness of construction and lack of attention Twain paid to its construction involve the real Tom Driscoll, alias Valet de Chambres, and the Italian twins. The pathetic creature Tom Driscoll is innocent of the truth of his birth, and he plays the part of a Negro slave in the book. It would seem logical to utilize this character for exploiting the deterministic themes of the book and as a counter to the real Valet de Chambres. Initially, exploitation is done effectively, as seen in the following selections.
In babyhood Tom cuffed and banged and scratched Chambres unrebuked, and Chambres early learned that between meekly bearing it and resenting it, the advantage all lay with the former policy. The few times that his persecutions had moved him beyond control and made him fight back had cost him very dear at headquarters; not at the hands of Roxy, for if she ever went beyond scolding him sharply for "forgitt'n' who his young master was," she at least never extended her punishment beyond a box on the ear. No, Percy Briscoll was the person. He told Chambres that under no provocation whatever was he privileged to lift his hand against his little master. Chambres overstepped the line three times, and got three such convincing canings from the man who was his father and didn't know it, that he took Tom's cruelties in all humility after that, and made no more experiments (14, pp. 41-42).

One of the primary problems Twain seems to be wrestling with in the book is that of heredity versus environment as the primary determining factor of personality, identity, and individual actions. Yet, Twain forgets Chambres (the real Tom Driscoll) after the first few chapters, resurrecting him only in the concluding trial scene. The person of the real Tom Driscoll seems to present wonderful possibilities which Twain does not explore; rather, he hastily covers this area in the concluding chapter with a brief comment on the restored Tom Driscoll:

The real heir suddenly found himself rich and free, but in a most embarrassing situation. He could neither read nor write, and his speech was the basest dialect of the negro quarter. His gait, his attitudes, his gestures, his bearing, his laugh—all were vulgar and uncouth; his manners were the manner of the slave. . . . The poor fellow could not endure the terrors of the white man's parlor, and felt at home and at peace
nowhere but in the kitchen. The family pew was a misery to him, yet he could nevermore enter into the solacing refuge of the "nigger gallery"—that was closed to him for good and all. But we cannot follow his curious fate further—that would be a long story (14, p. 224).

It would be a curious story, indeed, and worthy of Twain's attention. It must be remembered, though, that at the time of the publication of this book Twain was literally swamped by money problems, personal disasters, and confusing legal questions which could best be solved with cash. Twain wrote Pudd'nhead Wilson because he needed cash desperately, and perhaps Twain just could not give the book the attention it structurally and thematically deserves (6, p. 134).

The case of the Italian twins is also indicative of a certain degree of roughness of construction, and it almost makes one imagine that with careful editing the twins, as they are portrayed in Pudd'nhead Wilson, might go the way of the original Siamese twins in the first conception of the book. As they surface in the final version of Pudd'nhead Wilson, there can be some confusion about the nature of the twins. For example, notice the hint in the following passage which indicates the presence of Siamese twins, not separate ones:

"Now come," said Luigi, "it is very pleasant to hear you say these things, but for unselfishness, or heroism, or magnanimity, the circumstances won't stand scrutiny. You overlook one detail; suppose I hadn't saved Angelo's life, what would have become of mine? If I had let the man kill him wouldn't he have killed me, too? I saved my own life, you see." (14, p. 105)
If one does not know that Luigi and Angelo have been separated as part of Twain's "literary Caesarian operation," such conflicts are assuredly confusing (14, p. 230). For all the roughness of certain aspects of structure, and the contrived presence of such luminous personalities as Luigi and Angelo in a provincial hick village, _Pudd'nhed Wilson_ is a successful platform for depicting the intimate and painful grotesqueries of the southern society. Even though Twain does not exploit the bountiful possibilities of the real Tom Driscoll, and drifts in the manufactured plot involving the now toothless farce of the Italian twins, the book is a success in denouncing the inhumanity of slavery. Although _Pudd'nhed Wilson_ is bungled somewhat in organization, and kept from being the model novel, nevertheless "the author enriches his situation with all his deepest insights into the human condition (1, p. 87)."

In probing the human condition, Twain predicates _Pudd'nhed Wilson_ on the painful absolutes in the southern society; absolutes which were present in _Tom Sawyer_ and _Huckleberry Finn_. These general themes entail the fact of a detestable slavery, the pitiful exaggerations of a closed society, and the foolish gestures of a tired chivalric code. However, in _Pudd'nhed Wilson_, these themes are given twists and turns which fully explore the nature of these symptoms of a sick society. Twain applies to the real fact of slavery the theme of the difference
between surface appearance and reality in creating Tom the "white Nigger" (14, p. 23). He explores the tremendous lie in the southern culture of forgetting that slaves are human, describing Percy Driscoll as "a fairly humane man to slaves and other animals (14, p. 25)." He seems to be searching out the reason for the differences of men, having Tom wonder "why is this awful difference made between white and black (14, p. 89)?" In fact, the themes are all connected with the notion of training—the shaping of the personality by society, a process that for Mark Twain embraced the cumulative social pressure he called heredity. Training constantly threatens and often annihilates personal identity, the ultimate me, especially by implanting in the individual the sense of guilt, or moral sense of conscience. These ideas find expression in . . . the institution of slavery, which Mark Twain considered the most striking illustration of how society perverts its members (11, p. 172).

The disparity between surface appearance and reality is initiated in Twain's description of Dawson's Landing, a quiet and isolated village, generally untouched by the outside world except for the small steamboat lines which "always stopped," and an occasional big boat that stopped for a hail (14, p. 13). Strangers are noticeable in Dawson's Landing, and they are always cause for excitement and curiosity. David Wilson's arrival produces such a striking event that the town and Wilson never really recover. The Twins cause universal uproar. They come to be the focal point of both intense hate and intense
admiration. Later, the appearance of a strange, seemingly innocent female precipitates the curiosity which results in the exposure of Roxy's great switch. Isolated, provincial, "Dawson's Landing was a slaveholding town, with a rich slave-worked grain and pork country back of it. The town was sleepy and comfortable and contented (14, p. 13)." At this point there is no discernible difference between Dawson's Landing and the St. Petersburg of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. There is yet no hint of the moral sleep of the village inhabitants. Indeed, "the opening of Pudd'nhead Wilson presents almost a deliberately, even artificially contrived effect of the familiar beauty and bliss of Huck Finn's youth--only here it is the appearance of paradise in the Mississippi River setting of Dawson's Landing which Clemens is deliberately provoking. It is a conspicuously false paradise (6, p. 138)." In a similar paradise Tom, Huck and Joe cavort and mock their grown ups, and on this river Huck and "nigger" Jim find a certain idyllic peace. In Pudd'nhead Wilson, however, there is no escape from the village and its monsters of slavery, cruelty, and inhumanity. The motif of surface appearance conflicting with reality is carried on to a powerful situation with the appearance of Roxy and Valet de Chambres, her "white nigger" bastard, the strange, unmentionable, and yet ultimate symbol in this representation of southern society. As Twain shows, on the basis of color two vastly
differing codes are created; both are faulty. Roxy cannot escape the Negro slave code, but she has never had an opportunity. Her son Valet de Chambres does cross over, but he "is two persons in one: a Negro . . . who appears white and is reared as the adopted son of the great man of the town. He is by law a slave but apparently free. The duality of white and Negro introduces the theme of false appearance and hidden reality (11, p. 174)." In this double faceted community, Tom the "white nigger" is given the chance to cross over and sample the other code.

Dealing with the theme of surface appearance and hidden reality is closely connected to Twain's exposure of the falsity of the southern culture in forgetting that slaves are indeed human. Twain initially describes the inhabitants of Dawson's Landing, at this point the leading citizens in particular, in almost the same manner as he describes the leading citizens in Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. There is the Dawson's Landing equivalent of Judge Thatcher, for example. But, in Pudd' nhead Wilson, the citizens are described more minutely and unequivocally than they are in Tom Sawyer. The characters do not become truly developed personalities, but caricatures of the personality types he is exploiting in the novel. Notice the handling of the town's leading citizen, York Leicester Driscoll, a man,
...very proud of his old Virginian ancestry, and in his hospitalities and his rather formal and stately manners he kept up its traditions. He was fine and just and generous. To be a gentleman—a gentleman without stain or blemish—was his only religion, and to it he was always faithful (14, pp. 13-14).

Or, Pembroke Howard, "another old Virginian grandee with proven descent from the First Families”:

He was a fine, brave, majestic creature, a gentleman according to the nicest requirements of the Virginia rule, a devoted Presbyterian, an authority on the 'code', and a man always courteously ready to stand up before you in the field if any act or word of his had seemed doubtful or suspicious to you, and explain it with any weapon you might prefer from brad-awls to artillery (14, p. 14).

And even Colonel Cecil Burleigh Essex, "another F. F. V. of formidable calibre," whose primary contribution to Pudd'nhed Wilson is fathering Roxy's thirty-one-thirty seconds white son, Valet de Chambres (14, p. 88).

These men help fulfill the two primary themes mentioned earlier in that Twain shows us "a stunted warped conscience coiled within the ruling families of Dawson's Landing, no matter how they glittered when they strolled down the sleepy main street. And if they looked at Roxy coldly in public, some of the gentlemen had a warmer attitude in private (4, p. 155)." These people are the pride of the community, so in their actions the rest of the citizens seek social examples. The examples they provide are dubious at best. After all, the masters and owners, the very core
of the slaveholding South perpetrate the evil of slavery, the denial of the Negro's humanity. They can threaten the slave with death itself, or "I will sell you DOWN THE RIVER (14, p. 28)!

After they get the required response from the slave, the slave owner can magnanimously relent "to sell you here though you don't deserve it," or perform some other incredibly perverse action (14, p. 28). These men convince themselves that they are in fact good, gentle, and humane, and perversely, the slave reinforces this feeling with his natural reaction of gratitude for not being punished as severely as he might have been. For example, the master feels:

They were sincere, for like a god he had stretched forth his mighty hand and closed the gates of hell against them. He knew, himself, that he had done a noble and gracious thing, and was privately well pleased with his magnanimity; and that night he set the incident down in his diary so that his son might read it in after years, and be thereby moved to deeds of gentleness and humanity himself (14, pp. 28-29).

In all this perverse pride, there is an effect on the Negro slaves which is equally destructive. As a result of their training, the slaves find in these men the earthly incarnation of God, an ultimate in earthly power. Is it any wonder that they marvel at and occasionally take a perverse pride in association with one of these men? For example, when Valet de Chambres asks Roxy, "Ma, would you mind telling me who was my father?" Roxy,
... drew herself up with a proud toss of her head, and said:

"Does I mine tellin' you? No, dat I don't! You ain't got no 'casion to be shakin' at yet father, I kin tell you. He wuz the highest quality in dis whole town—old Virginy stock. Fust families, he wuz. Jes as good stock as de Driscolls en de Howards, de bes' day day ever seed." She put on a little prouder air, if possible, and added impressively: "Does you 'member Cunnel Cecil Burleigh Essex, dat died de same year yo' young Mars Tom Driscoll's pappy died, en all de Masons en Odd Fellers en churches turned out en give him de bigges' funeral dis town ever seed? Dat's de man." (14, p. 88)

Part of the irony in Twain's portrayal of the gentry, in this case Percy Northumberland Driscoll, is that Percy's son will never read his diary, but will be a slave in the eyes of the community and the law. If the son ever came to read about the incident, he could never understand his father's sentiments. Also, Twain is puncturing the incredible vanity of people who could brag and "swell" about their blood line, and all the noble characteristics it contains and perpetuates—but not when in a "nigger's" veins.

The entire range of events in Dawson's Landing is directly attributed to the perversions of this southern aristocracy, which is responsible for the inhumanity. Their religion is unquestioning obedience to a tradition as outlined in the following passage:

In Missouri a recognized superiority attached to any person who hailed from Old Virginia; and this superiority was exalted to a supremacy when a
person of such nativity could also prove descent from the First Families of that great commonwealth. The Howards and Driscolls were of this aristocracy. In their eyes it was a nobility. It had its unwritten laws, and they were as clearly defined and as strict as any that could be found among the printed statutes of the land. The P. F. V. was born a gentleman; his highest duty in life was to watch over that great inheritance and keep it unsmirched. He must keep his honor spotless. Those laws were his chart; his course was marked out on it; if he swerved from it by so much as half a point of the compass it meant shipwreck to his honor; that is to say, degradation from his rank as a gentleman (14, pp. 115-116).

Dawson's Landing is built around its leading citizens, the Driscolls, the Pembroke Howards, the Burleigh Essexes, and the women who "were good and commonplace people, and did their duty and had their reward in clear consciences and the community's approbation (14, p. 14)." And although the village is built around "an aristocracy of Virginia gentlemen who worship honor, we discover as the novel unfolds that across their coats of arms runs a dark bar sinister, an indelible stain disfiguring not only the Driscoll heraldic pattern but that of every white man who upholds that structure (5, p. 353)." Tom Sawyer does not bring such denunciation to bear on the leading citizens of St. Petersburg, nor does Huckleberry Finn. Twain has the children of Tom Sawyer mocking their grownups, but it is grown men in Pudd'nhead Wilson who mock themselves as they wallow in their perversity and foolishness. The Judge is obviously an object of satire when he grandiosely shows the twins:
The new graveyard, and the jail, and where the richest man lived, and the Freemason's hall, and the Methodist church, and the Presbyterian church, and where the Baptist church was going to be when they got some money to build it with, and showed them the town hall and the slaughterhouse, and got out the independent fire company in uniform and had them put out an imaginary fire; then he let them inspect the muskets of the militia company, and poured out an exhaustless stream of enthusiasm over all these splendors, and seemed very well satisfied with the responses he got, for the twins admired his admiration, and paid him back the best they could, though, they could have done better if some fifteen or sixteen hundred thousand previous experiences of this sort in various countries had not already rubbed off a considerable part of the novelty of it (14, pp. 63-64).

In spite of all this banality and pettiness in Dawson's Landing, dramatic forces are at work. The Judge does not recognize them, nor do any of the characters except Roxy, perhaps, and Tom must assuredly after he learns the truth of his birth.

The general populace of Dawson's Landing is equally indicted by Twain's satire and treated in almost the same tones Twain uses in describing the mob in Huckleberry Finn. They are also reminiscent of the fools and sluggish characters so easily fleeced by the King and the Duke (17, p. 106). Their incredibly culpable nature and their innocence of anything faintly ironic or subtle is evident in the public opinion of David "Pudd'nhead" Wilson. His wry joke on arrival in Dawson's Landing "gagged" (14, p. 16) him as a fool and a pudd'nhead, and the result is that the brightest, and the one truly curious, inquisitive soul in
Dawson's Landing was still wallowing in obscurity at the bottom of the ladder, under the blight of that unlucky remark, which he had let fall twenty-three years before (14, p. 51)." Judge Driscoll tries to help Pudd'nhead by exposing the townsfolk to the quips and fancies written by Wilson, "but irony was not for those people; their mental vision was not focused for it. They read those playful trifles in the solidest earnest (14, p. 52)."

Even when the colorful twins come to Dawson's Landing, the populace accepts them in "the solidest earnest," never thinking to question in any but the most superficial manner what could bring them. It is no wonder, then, that they never question the commonplace absurdities of slavery in their midst. Just as they do not question the twins, they do not question the slurs and innuendoes slandering the twins later. They are, in fact, stupid, and Twain's treatment of these everyday, "honest," village folk consistently reveals their stupidity and venality (16, p. 222). They live to follow the example, or more correctly, they live to approve the lives of the leading citizens and to aspire to their degree of glory.

In the staid and ordinary world of Dawson's Landing, Pudd'nhead Wilson is a cipher. He is an outsider and, more than that, he is incapable of being assimilated into the community. His chance remark that first day in the
The village has marked him for life, and his chances for a career in Dawson's Landing are "snuffed." For over twenty years David Wilson is "Pudd'nhead" Wilson, and the fact that his curious, sharp mind leads him to investigate "in every new thing that was born into the universe of ideas" only leads to an increase in "his reputation as a pudd'nhead (14, p. 20)." His reputation does have far-reaching consequences, however, in that this ostracism leads to his status as observer and commentator. Pudd'nhead functions in this role except for occasional parts played in the plot centering around Roxy and Tom, and in the final scene, where Pudd'nhead joins the village in its moral morass. After all the years as outsider and local "pudd'nhead," David Wilson as "mayor, or town spokesman . . . seeks and fetches the truth that finishes Tom and Roxy (3, p. 70)." Yet, for all the inquisitiveness that Pudd'nhead displays, and all the intellectual activity he initiates, "what is curiously absent from the description of Dawson's Landing in the years just before the Civil War is any theoretical or ideological discussion of the slavery issue itself (6, p. 144)." It would seem sensible to expect that Wilson, born in the interior of the state of New York, the possessor of a college education and a postgraduate course in an Eastern law school, would never find an opportunity to discuss the topical subject of slavery (14, p. 20). Of course, due to the limitations of the detective novel plot,
basically, and to the nature of the real life issue of slavery Twain is commenting on, perhaps where just was not room or time for Wilson to speak.

Pudd'nhead Wilson falls easily into the role demanded by the society of the South. After all the years of professional idleness, Pudd'nhead finally gets a case, and loses it. But as he explains to Tom, "I would have kept that case out of court until I got word to him and let him have a gentleman's chance (14, p. 125)." Tom calls him a fool for having those sentiments, and Pudd'nhead retorts, "you degenerate remnant of an honorable line! I'm thoroughly ashamed of you, Tom (14, p. 126)." Pudd'nhead has seemingly assimilated the laws of the southern aristocracy, and he is now offered a chance to join the society. His capitulation is almost complete, and he acts, finally, as the purifying agent in restoring order to the society. Perhaps it is poetic justice that "the man who finally sees Tom Driscoll and restores a semblance of honor to the community is quite appropriately the rank outsider, Pudd'nhead Wilson (5, p. 357)."

The change that has taken place in the role of the outsider in Twain's reflection of the southern culture from Tom Sawyer to Huckleberry Finn to Pudd'nhead Wilson is interesting. In the first two novels, the outsider plays slightly differing roles, or rather, the viewpoint is different in the two novels. In Tom Sawyer, the outsider
is the troublemaker, the disturbance that brings trouble into a placid society. In *Huckleberry Finn*, Huck is the outsider, and from his point of view he experiences trouble in the hide-bound southern society. In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, the outsider does not bring trouble, because the problem finds its roots and causes inside the society: insiders cause the disturbance. *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, the outsider, ultimately restores order and "moral" stability to the society. Finally, it is *Pudd'nhead Wilson* who steps inside the society and rights the wrong. These shifting viewpoints can, perhaps, be explained by Twain's rapidly increasing pessimism and belief that no good moral platform is available. Where Huck made the correct moral choices concerning Jim, and Huck is the rank outsider, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* casts his lot with the perpetrators of the greatest immorality of them all. On two occasions Twain has his characters make reference to the traditional outsider in the southern society, the Yankee. The first is, of course, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. The second comes from Roxy in her description of her former overseer. She says, "Dat overseer wuz a Yank, too, outen New England', en anybody down South kin tell you what dat mean. 'De^_ knows how to work a nigger to death, en dey knows how to whale 'em, too . . . (14, p. 170)." This traditional outsider generally is painted as an abolitionist, or a "nigger" lover, but in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Twain seems to be saying that there is
and compassion, there is a bigotry that transcends all boundaries. After all, even the nominal "hero" of this novel is a part of the inhumanity practiced on the banks of the Mississippi. Just as the outsider in *Tom Sawyer* brought fear, and Huck is the recipient of fear and hostility, Pudd'nhead Wilson is the agent who assuaged the fear. In fact, "the Yankee stranger's participation in the crime of the slave holding community on the banks of the Mississippi extends the import of the novel beyond the South to the nation at large, and his disclosure of the criminal becomes a disillusioning rediscovery of America (5, p. 361)."

Twain's prime motive force in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is the confluence of themes dealing with hidden reality, inhumanity, and the molding force of societal roles as expressed in the slave population in general, and in two slaves in particular. Unlike *Tom Sawyer*, where the slave is a shadowy and fleeting subject, or *Huckleberry Finn* where the Negro slave does not insert himself pugnaciously into Huck's adventures, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* introduces the slave early and in more revealing terms than ever before. In slavery and the tangled moral net it weaves *Pudd'nhead Wilson* finds its primary direction. None of the caricatures, the leading citizens, the townsfolk, nor Pudd'nhead Wilson are exempt from the implications of the overwhelming presence of slavery. The fact of human slavery is everywhere,
and the resulting "social conventions pervert and distort human fact (11, p. 237)," leaving sexuality and humanity shattered wrecks. In all instances, the populace of Dawson's Landing is affected by slavery, and "Pudd'nhead Wilson ends tragically for all the characters, white and black, who are touched by slavery and race (13, pp. 508-509)."

Pudd'nhead Wilson has often been used as a point of some rather severe criticism concerning Twain's reflection of "negritude," and his inability to create more than a stylized picture of the slave (7, p. 12). In fact, a recent critic even goes so far as to state:

Nor can the portraits of the Negroes in Twain's novels be made palatable to the present generation of Civil Rights activists. Stupidity, shiftlessness, superstition, helpless immaturity, and ineradicable ignorance are the qualities we find in Twain's Negroes relieved only in Pudd'nhead Wilson by depravity, viciousness, and cruelty (9, p. 14).

The Negroes Twain writes about are ante-bellum slaves forced into stupidity and shiftlessness reinforced by a paternalistic slavocracy, a devout superstition, and relieved only by a brand of fire and brimstone Christianity. They are deliberately kept socially immature, often being used as breeding stock. Their ignorance is a result of southern law forbidding even a modicum of education and training. In Pudd'nhead Wilson the Negro characters are depraved, vicious, and cruel, but that is part of Twain's
intent to establish the fact that these slaves are human and just as entitled to exercise depravity, viciousness, and cruelty as any white man. If anything, Twain makes no moral distinction in the two races in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, as evidenced by his "white nigger," Tom.

Although Roxy is Twain's best developed female character and she is believable in her role in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Twain can only imagine from a white man's point of view the intensity with which a slave could or would approach life. "After all, only a slave could describe what it meant to be enslaved (15, p. 177)," but Twain's Negroes are valuable because, previously, "most accounts of slavery written contemporaneously are more valuable as records of propaganda than as accounts of bondage (15, p. 177)." *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is a valuable account of bondage delivered in a personal, humane manner that was rare if not non-existent in the accounts of slavery written in the nineteenth century. Twain had to depend on what he envisioned as the nature of slavery, and in this sense "he reached no consistent, inclusive attitude, and he displayed a tolerance of slavery as seen from the position of the slaveholders which in the total view is out of keeping with the view of slavery shown through the slaves (13, p. 514)." In several instances Twain does seem to cast some aspersions in regard to "negritude," as
evidenced in the following speech by Roxy as she castigates Tom for his cowardice:

"Whatever has come o' yo' Essex blood? Dat's what I can't understand. En it ain't on'y jist Essex blood dat's in you, not by a long sight—'deed it ain't! My great-great-great-gran' father en yo' great-great-great-gran' father was Ole Cap'n John Smith, de highest blood dat Ole Virginny ever turned out, en his great-great-gran'-mother or somers along back dah, was Pocahontas de Injun queen, en her husban' was a nigger king outen Africa—en yit here you is, a-slinkin' outen a duel en disgracin' our whole line like a ornery low-down hound! Yes, it's de nigger in you!"

.... "Ain't nigger enough in him to show in his finger-nails, en dat takes mighty little—yit dat's enough to paint his soul." (14, p. 139)

If this is Twain speaking he certainly does seem to be denigrating the Negro character. But Roxy is speaking in such a manner, not Twain, and for different reasons than could be proposed if Twain were the spokesman. At any rate, Twain necessarily tended to depict Negro slaves as he respected and understood their position, and in an artistic sense, certain suspected aggressions against the Negro type may safely be overlooked. For example, in a volume written and published in 1894 entitled *The Ills of the South* by Charles M. Otken, and slanderously defined as a history, Mark Twain's mulatto Roxy and her son Tom are outlined in the general and simplistic terms popular and common in that day. Mr. Otken declares:

The ambitious, aspiring portion of this people are . . . mulattoes, quadroons, and octoroons . . . . The mulattoes inherited the superior
intellectual qualities of their fathers, and often their bad moral qualities. Ambition, pride, cunning, and resentment show themselves much more clearly in varying degrees in the mixed race than in the pure negro . . . Generally, it is the white blood of the mulattoes that pushes forward, that seeks the professions, looks with resentment upon the past, and boasts of his relationship to a white father (10, pp. 205-206).

There is no doubt that Twain does construct Roxy and Tom along these lines, and it is possible that Twain possibly viewed the Negro, or in this case the mulatto, in such simplistic terms. If so, it must be remembered that it is easy to criticize from the vantage point of later times the "truths" men once accepted. After all, it is the rare person who does not work within the context of his society, and in 1894, the Negro was usually discussed in such terms. But, Twain always puts his personal touch to his views, and never accepts totally anything as offered.

For example, Roxy is indeed the owner of a sharp and bright mind. She is proud, cunning, and full of resentment. Twain portrays these qualities in the following selections. First, he indicates Roxy's physical characteristics:

From Roxy's manner of speech, a stranger would have expected her to be black, but she was not. Only one-sixteenth of her was black, and that sixteenth did not show. She was of majestic form and stature, her attitudes were imposing and statuesque, and her gestures and movements distinguished by a noble and stately grace . . . . Her face was shapely, intelligent, and comely—even beautiful. She had an easy, independent carriage—when she was among her own
Roxy is a beautiful woman and she knows it and is proud. She also knows her place, and as Twain would have it, she is the product of training and environment. Otherwise, Roxy would never humbly submit to anyone. Slavery has made her cunning and resentful. She knows the implications of slavery, and the ultimate realization of what that institution can do comes to her when she faces the fact that her child is also a slave and could be sold by the master at a mere whim. "A profound terror had taken possession of her. Her child could grow up and be sold down the river (14, p. 30)!" As Otkin would have it, her cunning mind (running with white blood) conceives the dramatic switch. Twain would have the reader see her daring soul and mother love as prompting her to this stratagem. The switch is cunning, and it is an ambitious undertaking, but ambition is not necessarily the motive. Why did she do it? Why did she put Valet de Chambres "by a fiction of law and custom a negro (14, p. 23)," into Tom's cradle? Ambition? The real reason stems from a real fear for the safety and future of her son. As the reader learns, "Roxy's benevolent deception is a failure, for her urge to place her son within the white community leads to disaster. As a white aristocrat he is freed only to exercise a destructive
temperament (3, p. 67)." Tom is destructive, and his destructive yet weak temperament finally allows him to sell his mother down the river and slaughter his "uncle."

Twain also indicates that Roxy has an ulterior motive for performing the switch, and that is a personal selfish desire. By stretching her imagination, Roxy has a secret hope that her son who is passing for white will one day be her comfort and solace in old age:

Time had worn away her bitterness against her son, and she was able to think of him with serenity. She put the vile side of him out of her mind, and dwelt only on recollections of his occasional acts of kindness to her. She gilded and otherwise decorated these, and made them very pleasant to contemplate. She began to long to see him . . . maybe she would find that time had modified him . . . maybe he would give her a trifle now and then—maybe a dollar, once a month . . . (14, pp. 69-70)

Tom, it is obvious, does not provide the solace she may have once envisioned. Roxy learns early after her return that her son is a "white" monster, as evidenced by his treatment of her in their reunion:

"... does you 'member old Roxy?—does you know yo' old nigger mammy, honey? Well, now, I kin lay down en die in peace, 'ca'se I's seed—"

"Cut it short, _it, cut it short! What is it you want?"

"You besh de same old Marse Tom, al'ays so gay and runnin' wid de old mammy, I 'uz jes as shore—"

"Cut it short, I tell you, and get along! What do you want?"

... Roxy had for so many days nourished and fondled and petted her notion that Tom
would be glad to see his old nurse, and would make her proud and happy to the marrow with a cordial word or two, for it took two reprimands to convince her that he was not running . . . (14, p. 75)

Twain is not too gentle with the popular old myth that "mammies" and their former charges lived in an attitude of harmony. In fact, as Twain makes clear, Tom had never longed for his old mammy, and from the very day he took office as the "massa's" son, "Tom was a bad baby from the very beginning of his usurpation (14, p. 38)." He had been bad, and was bad still.

She was cunning, in everyday terms, but she could not see the totality of her act. The immensity of the situation finally is apparent and Roxy cries, "De Lord have mercy on me, po' misable sinner dat I is (14, p. 222)!

All Roxy had wanted was the good life for Chambres, not a rich life, necessarily, but safety. For herself she had merely wanted to be near him and serve him within the limits of her slavery, and be protected by him. When he refuses even this, Roxy rebels:

"I'll tell you dis, for a warnin'; if you ever does say it ag'in, it's de las' time you'll ever say it to me; I'll tramp as straight to de Judge as I kin walk, en tell him who you is, en prove it. Does you b'lieve me when I says dat?"

"Oh," groaned Tom, "I more than believe it; I know it." (14, pp. 85-86)

Roxy does possess all the qualities mentioned by Otkin, but Twain shows that they indicate the humanity of Roxy, and
in a general sense that indicate the potentialities in the race. These qualities of ambition, cunning, will, determination, pride are personified in Roxy. She has a fierce pride that lowers her to the level of her masters, on occasion, but "Roxy is nevertheless free of the heaviest burden that slavery had imposed on the whites: the sense of guilt (11, p. 242)." Her son, however, is not free. For example, Roxy chastises Tom:

"En you refuse' to fight a man dat kicked you, 'stid o' jumpin' at de chance! En you ain't got no mo' feelin' den to come en tell me, dat fetched sich a po' low-down ornery rabbit into de worl'! Pah! It makes me sick! It's de nigger in you, dat's what it is . . . . You has disgraced yo' birth. What would yo' pa think o' you? It's enough to make him turn in his grave." (14, pp. 138-139)

Here Roxy is angry that her son has the chance to revenge himself, a privilege denied the Negro, and Tom has refused. All the repressed abuses spill over onto poor Tom, and he is legitimately angered by his mother's words because he knows, if Roxy does not, what his father would think of him! Tom is not a mulatto who can point to a white father with pride:

... that if his father were only alive and in reach of assassination his mother would soon find that he had a very clear notion of the size of his indebtedness to that man, and was willing to pay it up in full, and would do it too, even at risk of his life . . . (14, p. 139)
More than Roxy will ever know, Tom is aware of the real meaning of white blood and what it implies in the society of the ante-bellum South.

He knows he is the victim of a brutal society. He, more than Roxy, is aware of the impact of "this fiction of law and custom, which Clemens had suggested in Huckleberry Finn (6, p. 139)." The ironic duality of Tom's existence is apparent to him, and is the painful cause of his resentment against all the society and his mother and father most of all (11, p. 174). Tom Driscoll is:

... not so much a character as a complex of themes. He incarnates both the tortured paradox of uncertain identity and the perverseness resulting from generations of the bad training imposed by slavery. He exhibits the worst traits ascribed to both races in this fictive world—the lax morals and cowardice of the Negro, together with the hatred of the master... the indolence and affectation of white aristocrats... the cruelty toward slaves... (11, p. 244)

Tom is the cruel composite of two worlds, the white master world of the Judge and the faceless slave world of Roxy, and these two worlds "war with each other in a never-ending struggle, or at least never ending until Pudd'nhead Wilson dramatically clarifies Tom's social position and identity (14, p. 221).

Tom is the sum total of the entire guilt of the southern society, but the guilt he acquires is from his training as a white aristocrat. This guilt is negated by his secret slavehood, and he is indeed a nothing person much in the same way as his white slave counterpart
Chambres who, when his identity is clarified, becomes a lost person too. The problem of identity is the result of the profoundly immoral nature of southern society which:

imposes upon slaves and masters alike the fictions which sustain the institution of slavery. The training corrupts both: the slave by destroying his human dignity, by educating him to consider himself inferior, building up in him a ferocious hatred of himself as well as of his rulers; the master by encouraging cruelty toward the human beings he is taught to regard as animals, and thus by blunting his sensibilities and fostering an unwarranted pride of place (11, p. 174).

This is echoed in Tom’s pitiful and unanswerable question immediately after learning that he is in truth a Negro:

"Why were niggers and whites made? What crime did the uncreated first nigger commit that the curse of birth was decreed for him? And why is this awful difference made between white and black? ... How hard the nigger’s fate seems, this morning!—yet until last night such a thought never entered my head (14, p. 89)!

The complexity of the thematic elements in Pudd’nhead Wilson indicates a more intense reflection of the slave than was present in Tom Sawyer, or even in Huckleberry Finn. The situation is real and painful in Pudd’nhead Wilson and no amount of petty thievery, cunning tricks, or anything else can compare with the doom of sale down the river, an equivalent of "condemning them to hell (14, p. 28)!

To the slave in Pudd’nhead Wilson, the situation was not a matter of being an unfeeling piece of property; it hurt to
be treated so and it bred resentment and hatred in the slave and guilt and perversity in the master.

All of these aspects of southern society are present in the novels previously studied, but here, in Pudd'nhead Wilson there is an intensity and a power about the perversity of the southern world that is absent from earlier works. In a major sense, this is true because Pudd'nhead Wilson is constructed from a different point of view. Just as the shift in Huckleberry Finn to Huck as commentator changed the power of the work, so the presence of a mulatto Negress slave who deliberately causes her son to pass for white in the ante-bellum South introduces a note of drama never reached previously. Twain encompasses the ideas of miscegenation and sex, and makes clear that Roxy is a physically desirable woman. This is new material for Twain. Here in Pudd'nhead Wilson Twain prints for the first time his personal comment about all the "yaller wenches" in the kitchens of Hannibal, on the Phelps' plantation, and around the town pump in St. Petersburg. Huckleberry Finn makes passing reference to mulatto slaves, as does Tom Sawyer. But there is no comment on the implications of their presence and how they came to be. In Pudd'nhead Wilson, the theme of the crime and injustice of slavery is given meaning and strength in the personal and powerful representation of Roxy and her pitiful son, Chambres. In this book Twain speaks of the perversity that existed
in the southern experience with "this virtue for white, and that for black folks (2, p. 115)."

Here Twain finally clarifies the paradoxical status of the Negro: the human being as animal and property. He distills the paradox into a pitiful and painful picture of the total implications of slavery. *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is a representation of the neglected facts of slavery. Sensitivity displayed in regard to the southern experience from the slave's point of view is rare in the nineteenth century, and it is remarkable that within the context of his time he could create such a piece, publish it, and find any audience. Yet that audience has been, in comparison to the many admirers of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, a small and unappreciative one. It remains so today. For all its faults, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* contains Mark Twain's most serious and condemning satire of the southern experience.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


These three novels are predicated on the life and circumstances of a people and a time unique in American history. In writing these novels, Twain was himself unique when considered in the context of his own time. After the Civil War, amazing and powerful forces were at work in this land resulting from the trauma of that conflict. The South had been destroyed, but in a perverse sort of way the defeat had tended to consolidate the South as never before (3, p. 384). This consolidation took the form of a virulent propaganda barrage directed by Southern Redeemers. Twain was on the alert for pretense, and he found in the land of his birth the regeneration of a pretense more intense than had ever existed before. Twain knew the trends of his time and he possessed:

... a thoroughly honest mind, that hated all sham and quackery and humbug, and a singularly warm heart, that hated all wrong and cruelty and injustice; and this honest mind and chivalrous heart, deceived and led astray by the mass mores, espoused and defended such fragments of ideas, such bits of truth, as he came upon in his solitary brooding, until driven from one stronghold after another he came to doubt the adequacy of all strongholds, and took refuge in a black pessimism (4, pp. 91-92).
Contradicting Paul H. Buck's thesis in Road to Reunion, 1865-1900 that literature written in the South, and about the South during this period tended to bind the nation's wounds (1), Twain's novels are corrosive and irritating in their effect. W. J. Cash spoke of the general representation of the South in the latter Nineteenth century as "propaganda" (2, p. 142), and C. Vann Woodward challenges the lack of realistic portrayal in the work of southern writers (7, p. 68). With Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Pudd'nhead Wilson Twain bucked the tide and wrote the other side of the picture. Twain seems to perform the role of Devil's Advocate in his satire and choice of subject in the Mississippi trilogy. The picture he creates of the old South was not the image created in southern fiction, or in history. Charles M. Otken's The Ills of the South or Related Causes Hostile to the General Prosperity of the Southern People, 1894, is an excellent example of the arguments Twain found so repulsive. Twain reflected the South of his origins, and in these three novels he presented the entire range of his views about the South. Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Pudd'nhead Wilson indicate a growth and sophistication of insight that is generally and almost categorically denied to the contemporary southern literature of the time.

These novels were written in different stages of Twain's artistic and intellectual growth. Each contains a
differing viewpoint and emphasis, but all are treatments of the same themes and setting. As his life passed, Twain continued to reconstruct his memories and knowledge of the South. Increasingly, that knowledge became more and more tinged with bitterness. All the novels concern the same symbols of the ante-bellum South: smug romanticism, a "closed society," slavery, pitiful sham and pretense, intolerance, "chuckleheadedness," and inhumanity, but Twain becomes increasingly penetrating in his representation of these themes. Tom Sawyer, the childhood view of the world, has depicted the rambling and unsophisticated meanderings of children in a world as yet unspoiled. There is no room in Tom Sawyer for a "Nigger Jim," or a "white nigger" like Tom Driscoll of Pudd'nhead Wilson. There are the conventional villains: Injun Joe, parental restriction, school, but there is no room for direct attacks on slavery, poverty, ignorance, intolerance, and sham. All these things are accepted in Tom Sawyer because that is the way of the world; that is the world of the child. The result is a trip to the past that is suitable both as a boy's tale and as a reminder to adults of how things seemed to have been. It is also a reminder of just how ignorant and "chuckle-headed" that society seemed in retrospect. Even though hypocrisy, miscegenation and the other implications of slavery are not discussed in Tom Sawyer, it is impossible to imagine the setting of the book as being any other place.
in America. The mood, tone, and quality can be related only to the southern experience.

Just as *Tom Sawyer* is a child-like ramble, *Huckleberry Finn* is the purposeful voyage through the past, pausing here and there to sample the southern way of life. *Tom Sawyer* could not have had a "nigger Jim" or a Tom Driscoll, and *Huckleberry Finn* could not very well house an unquestioning and uncritical Tom Sawyer as hero. Whereas Tom Sawyer lived in a world where nothing disturbed his tranquility, Huckleberry Finn passed through a world in which everything is rotten by fraud, cruelty, and intolerance. *Tom Sawyer* is static; there is no real examination of the implications of the southern culture in St. Petersburg. *Huckleberry Finn*, on the other hand, is predicated on movement, and a shifting of position to maintain a semblance of freedom. Yet, however, there is still no detailed study of the tragedy and terrible nature of southern life. This comes in *Pudd'Nhead Wilson*, a structurally crude and imperfect literary vehicle for carrying such a weighty burden.

With *Pudd'Nhead Wilson*, Twain returns to St. Petersburg, in a thematic sense, and portrays the village more explicitly than in *Tom Sawyer*. Here Twain turns his jaundiced eye on the culture that spawned him, and he finds it contradictory, static, and disgusting. The point of view has shifted from childlike "Tom Sawyers" to such
characters as adults. Here in 

Pudd'nhead Wilson, Twain writes from the kitchen and the slave quarters, and the bitterness of his indictment is complete.

Of the trends taking place in the development of these three novels, perhaps the most interesting is Twain's increasing preoccupation with establishing a definition of humanity. In Tom Sawyer, the burlesque, the light satire, and the comedy are punctuated with the hint of things to come in Huckleberry Finn and Pudd'nhead Wilson. These hints are not discussed in Tom Sawyer, but Twain cannot ignore them completely. Twain writes from the insiders' point of view, and only the outsiders in the society are capable of indicating humanity. In Huckleberry Finn and Pudd'nhead Wilson, the outsiders as central characters are the focal points for determining the level of humanity in the southern society. It is Huck Finn in Tom Sawyer who admits to dealing with Negro slaves as human beings, and he is the outcast, the outlaw. In Huckleberry Finn it is the outlaw who comes to understand the southern society.

The "white nigger" of Pudd'nhead Wilson is the totally isolated creature, and it is he who experiences the bitter and the sweet of southern life. Such a trend would almost indicate, at least in light of these three novels, that Twain is an outsider himself. After all, he had, in these novels, morally denied his home and heritage. Perhaps it was guilt which drove him to point out the grotesque
nature of the South he had rejected. He seems to say that
here in Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Pudd'nhead
Wilson is the whole sordid picture of what he knew and
found distasteful.

In these novels, the southern experience becomes the
point/counter point of his final philosophy. In the South
Twain found models of human behavior which furnished him
with enough literary material to build the most homogenous
novels of his career. The South provided a lesson of life,
and he never had to look outside the realm of his own
southern experience to find an all-encompassing definition
of mankind. His definition of mankind which becomes so
bitter and terrible springs from his roots. As William C.
Spengeman notes:

"The ideals of optimism, confidence, hope, divine
purpose, individualism, and absolute freedom had
been questioned before, by such members of the
"devil's party" as Hawthorne, Melville, and
Emily Dickinson. But Hawthorne and Melville
leapt upon their culture from behind and above--
from the forgotten convictions of Puritan theology
and from the lofty and brooding peaks inhabited
by Shakespeare and the Biblical Prophets. And
Emily Dickinson waged her battle in secret and
reserved her tale of death and doubt for her own
ears. But Clemens rose directly cut of the very
culture he attacked, and he used its own weapons--
its language and its dreams (5, pp. 61-62).

"Rising above and beyond one's culture is not an easy
process, and Twain's inability to escape his southern exper-
ience probably is instrumental in creating his pessimism.
He was ridden with guilt of the sort he expressed in "A
Private History of a Campaign that Failed.’ This guilt involves an immense paradox ultimately expressed in the creation of his ‘white nigger.’ As Twain was forced by circumstances and his own conscience to leave the South during the Civil War, he was confronted with the black and white choices he later explored in these southern novels.

Until *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is written, Twain seems to have avoided a confrontation with the implacable nature of the South. His western years, his travels abroad, his life in the Hartford circle, his work seems to avoid the South; the South is most conspicuous in its absence. *Tom Sawyer* skilfully skirted the confrontation, and it was nine years before he wrote another southern novel. It is as if he had exhausted all the "nice" possibilities in *Tom Sawyer*, and the companion piece to *Tom Sawyer* became an investigation of the true nature of the South. In nine more years he produced *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, and the confrontation can no longer be delayed. Here he denies the southern option and chooses humanity, but there is no happiness at all in this book. *Pudd'nhead Wilson* presents only despair and disillusionment.

Over a period of some twenty years Twain found in the South the motivation and the raw material which inspired him to create his most cohesive, effective, and artistic satire on the human condition. Similar effort in his other
It seems remarkable that Twain is so often overlooked in discussion of the literature of the Nineteenth century. Critics tend to credit him with finding his humor in the American West; his sophistication in the East, and are then content with calling him America's product. This is undoubtedly true, but it seems that he found his bitterness, pessimism, and disappointment in the South. His reflection of the South of the 1840s and 1850s stands as a landmark of reaction to what Twain came to view as the entire human condition. In the South Twain saw the depravity of man, and the nobility man could occasionally muster. However, in Twain's South, depravity finally chokes nobility, and in the end there seems to be no redeeming virtue.

These three books are linked into a powerful drama of life, growth, and finally death; not of physical life, but the death of Twain's faith in mankind. His development from faith to bitterness was a struggle from which he created in his greatest works a relationship between the South and the inmost American imagination of things we scarcely find in writers we more assuredly call southern, not even in William Faulkner (6, p. 492).

The propelling forces which produced Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Puddinhead Wilson still pulse in our...
society. The conflicts in southern society which provided the inspiration for Twain's novels now provide legal matter for our nation's courts. Those same themes continue to fuel the fire of racial controversy today, even as they did in Huckleberry Finn's Mississippi world. The meanings and implications of Twain's satire have not changed.
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