HUCK AND JIM: ROMANTIC FOOLS

by

WAYNE KEAN

B.A., University of British Columbia, 1967

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
Department of English

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
August, 1977

© Wayne Kean, 1977
ABSTRACT

The thesis of this paper is that Huck, in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, is not the romantic outcast that he was in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and that both he and Jim would rather belong to shore society than flee from it. Thus, the disappointment that readers feel in the Phelps' farm ending stems from their own sentimental responses to Huck and Jim, rather than from any flaw in the structure of the novel itself.

A close look at Jim and his relationships with other negroes and with Huck shows him to be "monstrous proud," insincere and duplicitous. He lies to Huck, for example, about Pap Finn's death—to protect himself more than Huck. He seldom knows what to do next to attain his freedom; he spends most of the river journey either bound hand and foot or painted a dull blue, looking like a "sick Arab."

When Huck joins Tom Sawyer's gang, he is symbolically coming to terms with society. He agrees to be respectable and is allowed to enjoy the fellowship of the gangs. He makes a similar transaction at the widow's and at the Grangerford's, where he wears good clothes and uses good manners and in return enjoys the comforts of having a home. One of the most crucial decisions he makes is to betray the two outcasts, the king and the duke, (whom he admires and calls "our gang"), and save the innocent Wilks girls.
Partly because he is so attracted by society, Huck is reluctant to help Jim attain freedom. The first part of the river journey is just an adventure for Huck, as is made clear by his behaviour on the Walter Scott. His decisions at Cairo and at the end of the river journey to help Jim are prompted primarily by selfish motives. Freeing Jim will cure his loneliness and assuage his guilt. Besides, sending that letter to Miss Watson would reveal that Huck was still alive—and he would wind up in pap's clutches again.

At the Phelps' farm, Huck makes his final crucial decision: he decides to abandon Jim and Tom on the raft and stay home, so as not to grieve Aunt Sally any more. In the end he discovers that both Jim and Tom have been lying to him, and it is them he wishes to be free of, not Aunt Sally. We must beware being taken in by his last protest against civilization.

Although there are parts of the river journey that are indeed "lovely," and that represent freedom for most readers, a realistic view of the whole novel indicates that it is a story of return to society rather than escape from it.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Sentimental responses to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Mark Twain and the river-shore dichotomy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE FOOLISHNESS OF NIGGER JIM</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. HUCK'S INVOLVEMENT WITH SOCIETY</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. HUCK'S INVOLVEMENT WITH JIM.</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE GOINGS-ON AT THE PHELPS FARM</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected List of References</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HUCK AND JIM: ROMANTIC FOOLS

I. INTRODUCTION

For most readers, critics or not, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is the heartwarming story of a boy and a runaway slave who float down the Mississippi River on a raft, seeking freedom from the vices that characterize the shore. The boy, Huck Finn, is a barefooted, sharp-eyed, good-hearted outlaw, who grows in stature as he recognizes the dignity and humanity of his noble friend, Jim. The major conflict or tension in the book is between freedom, symbolized by Huck and Jim on the raft, and slavery, represented by the ignorant, sentimental, fearful and cruel "sapheads" (to use Huck's word) who live in the towns along the shore. Leo Marx, for example, writes, "The truly profound meanings of the novel are generated by the impingement of the actual world of slavery, feuds, lynching, murder, and a spurious Christian morality upon the ideal of the raft."¹ Henry Nash Smith suggests that "happiness, peace, freedom are to be found, if at all, only on the River, on the raft."² And, of course, as Huck puts it, "other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft."³ In general, the book is remembered as an expression of revolt against society.

However, Twain's satire is aimed not only at society, but also at individual attempts to escape from society,
specifically, at Huck and Jim. Huck and Jim are as foolish as the people who live along the shore. They are alternately vain, sentimental, cowardly, and cruel. In short, they are human: much more human than most readers like to admit. In this paper I would like to first outline the sentimental responses to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, examine Twain's attitude towards river and shore, and then take a close look at Huck and Jim and their share of society's vices. I hope to show that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* proves that while lasting peace and security are not easy to find on the shore, they are impossible to find on the river; that man, in his attempts to find happiness outside society, must eventually, like Ishmael, "lower, or at least shift, his conceit of attainable felicity." Finally, I hope to show that the ending of the book is not the failure that critics like Leo Marx think it is.

A. Sentimental responses to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

The sentimental response to Huckleberry Finn usually includes the following ideas. First, he is primitive: he loves bare feet, old clothes, hogsheads and table scraps. Second, he is a realist: he tests Miss Watson's notions about prayer and Tom Sawyer's notions about magic lamps. Third, he is humane: he responds from the heart to Jim's predicament, and gains an impressive victory over the voice of society that tells him to turn Jim in. He is remembered pretty much as he is described in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*: 
Shortly Tom came upon the juvenile pariah of the village, Huckleberry Finn, son of the town drunkard. Huckleberry was 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. Tom was like the rest of the respectable boys, in that he envied Huckleberry his gaudy outcast condition... Huckleberry came and went at his own free will. He slept on door-steps in fine weather, and in empty hogsheads in wet; he did not have to go to school or to church, or call any being master, or obey anybody; he could go fishing or swimming when and where he chose, and stay as long as it suited him; nobody forbade him to fight; he could sit up as late as he pleased; he was always the first boy that went barefoot in the spring and the last to resume leather in the fall; he never had to wash, nor put on clean clothes; he could swear wonderfully. In a word, everything that goes to make life precious, that boy had. So thought every harassed, hampered, respectable boy in St. Petersburg. Tom hailed the romantic outcast.

Albert Bigelow Paine was moved to say of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, "One may pettily pick a flaw here and there in the tale's construction if so minded, but the moral character of Huck himself is not open to criticism." Van Wyck Brooks saw Huck as a generally outrageous little rebel:

Huck's illiteracy, Huck's disreputableness and general outrageousness are so many shields behind which Mark Twain can let all the cats out of the bag with impunity... Mark Twain himself was free at last!—That raft and river to him were something more than mere material facts. His whole unconscious life, the pent-up river of his own soul, had burst its bonds and rushed forth, a joyous torrent! Do we need any other explanation of the abandon, the beauty, the eternal freshness of Huckleberry Finn? Perhaps we can say that a lifetime of moral slavery and repression was not too much to pay for it... we have to thank it, after all, for the vengeful solace we find in the promiscuous and general revolt of Huckleberry Finn.

This quite passionate response to Huck Finn inspired an equally passionate response from Bernard DeVoto:
Yet the fabric on which all this richness is embroidered is the journey of Huck and Jim down the Mississippi on the June rise. There, finally, the book's glamour resides. To discuss that glamour would be futile. In a sense, Huck speaks to the national shrewdness, facing adequately what he meets, succeeding by means of native intelligence whose roots are ours—and ours only. In a sense, he exists for a delight or wonder inseparable from the American race. This passage down the flooded river, through pageantry and spectacle, amidst an infinite variety of life, something of surprise or gratification surely to be met with each new incident—it is the heritage of a nation not unjustly symbolized by the river's flow.8

The debate between Brooks and DeVoto imprinted firmly in the minds of critics for decades to follow two very important ideas: that Huck Finn is engaged in "promiscuous and general revolt," and that to criticize him is to criticize the American race.

Edgar Branch hypothesises two alternatives for Huck: "self-centered, conventional morality and humanitarian idealism. . . . Thus the theme becomes the conflict between the drive for individual freedom and the restraints imposed by convention and force; or, within Huck's consciousness, the conflict between his intuitive morality and his conventional conscience. . . . The rich, full-bodied content, especially the river trip in its brilliant particularity, provides the indispensable conditions for Huck's moral struggle and victory: the triumph of free human development over inflexible restrictions in the natural, supernatural, and social worlds."9

Perhaps no two critics have praised Huck Finn and his story as have Lionel Trilling and T. S. Eliot. Trilling labelled the book "one of the world's great books and one of
the central documents of American culture" and its chief
characters, Huck and Jim, "a family, a primitive community--
and it is a community of saints . . . because they do not have
an ounce of pride between them."\(^{10}\)

T. S. Eliot suggests that Huck Finn's existence
"questions the values of America as much as the values of
Europe; he is as much an affront to the 'pioneer spirit'
as he is to the 'business enterprise'; he is in a state of
nature as detached as the state of the saint."\(^{11}\)

Leo Marx responded vociferously to Trilling and Eliot,
claiming that the book had serious flaws, yet he too saw Huck
in a romantic light: "From the electrifying moment when Huck
comes back to Jackson's Island and rouses Jim with the news
that a search party is on the way, we are meant to believe
that Huck is enlisted in the cause of freedom."\(^{12}\)

Henry Nash Smith sees Huck and his moral struggle in
simple terms:

Huck's conscience is simply the attitudes he has
taken over from his environment. What is still sound
in him is an impulse from the deepest level of his
personality that struggles against the overlay of pre-
judice and false valuation imposed on all members of
the society in the name of religion, morality, law, and
refinement . . . The conflict in which Huck is involved
is not that of a lower against an upper class or of
an alienated fringe of outcasts against a cultivated
elite . . . but of fidelity to the uncoerced self versus
the blurring of attitudes caused by social conformity.\(^{13}\)

William Van O'Connor, like Leo Marx, sets out to show
Trilling and Eliot that there were glaring flaws in the novel,
but he still adheres to the generalized and glowing view of
Huck.
Huckleberry Finn is involved with the mystique of America. The chief symbols are The Boy and The River. Huck is the break not merely with Europe but with civilization, the westward push. Self sufficient and yet dependable, he is the proper kind of individualist. He is also youth, a rugged Peter Pan who lives eternally. Huck belongs also with Cooper's Leatherstocking and Faulkner's Ike McCaslin, symbolic figures who reject the evils of civilization. (A weakness in all of them is that they do not acknowledge the virtues of civilization or try to live, as one must, inside it.)

Ironically, O'Connor concludes that "Huck is, finally, a sentimental figure, not in himself of course, since he is a boy, but in the minds of those who unduly admire his departure for the territory."

Gilbert Rubenstein contends "that Huckleberry Finn should be approached simply, directly, realistically—precisely as Mark Twain wrote it." He describes Huck as "no drifter but a plucky, lovable boy who, after painful self-examination, achieves an iron determination to help his friend Jim reach free territory." He goes on to say that any ordinary reader, "not given to supersubtle speculations and distortions, but possessed only of common sense and a responsive heart," could not fail to understand and appreciate what Huckleberry Finn is all about: that human love between human beings everywhere triumphs over human cruelty, and that "human beings are superior to one another only in the goodness of their hearts and in their love for other people."就连Twain himself said some pretty silly things about Huck if my reading of the novel is valid. In his autobiography, he said:
In *Huckleberry Finn* I have drawn Tom Blankenship exactly as he was. He was ignorant, unwashed, insufficiently fed; but he had as good a heart as ever any boy had. His liberties were totally unrestricted. He was the only really independent person--boy or man--in the community, and by consequence he was tranquilly and continuously happy, and was envied by all of the rest of us. We liked him; we enjoyed his society. And as his society was forbidden us by our parents, the prohibition trebled and quadrupled its value, and therefore we sought and got more of his society than of any other boy's.16

Now, of course, Twain did not draw Tom Blankenship exactly as he was. But when Twain wrote this indirect description of Huck, he was only four years away from his death. We can forgive an old man for reminiscing about a time that could only exist in his imagination, a time when a boy enjoyed "totally unrestricted" liberty and was "tranquilly and continuously happy." But we cannot be so generous with critics who insist on seeing Huck only in glowing terms. Granted, Huck is lovable, and we admire him. Like the boys in St. Petersburg, we all admire Huck's "gaudy outcast condition," his apparent freedom to do and say what he pleases. We admire his dogged realism, his ability to see through Tom Sawyer's "A-rabs" and elephants. We admire his response to Jim; by the end of the river journey, Huck genuinely loves Jim. But a close look at *Huck Finn* reveals that he is more attracted by society than repelled by it, that his realism is only partial, and that his involvement in Jim's attempts to keep out of bondage is for the most part, hesitant and rationalized by thought processes that are sentimental and vain. To ignore the full range of Huck's humanity is to ignore Mark Twain's creative power--and
to miss the point of Huck's story.

B. Mark Twain and the river-shore dichotomy

Of course, a great part of the sentimental response to Huckleberry Finn can be tied to the reverence for the popular notion that Mark Twain was a romantic outcast too. I would like to examine briefly how critics like Van Wyck Brooks were led to believe from biographical evidence that Adventures of Huckleberry Finn was Twain's personal expression of revolt against American society. Then I would like to show that a more realistic look at Twain's life and work reveals that he was not a romantic outcast, any more than Huckleberry Finn was.

Twain's early life seemed to place him apart from society. A riverboat pilot was, according to Twain, "the only unfettered and entirely independent human being that lived in the earth." His later employment as reporter, lecturer and writer made him more often an observer than a participant in mankind's interactions. His separateness seemed to become even more obvious when he was, like Huck Finn, thrust suddenly into wealth and high society. Huck found six thousand dollars and went to live with the Widow Douglas. Mark Twain published Innocents Abroad and became engaged to Olivia Langdon. Five years later, he was living in the handsomest mansion in Hartford, Connecticut.

The social circle in Hartford looked askance at the "wild humorist from the Pacific Slope." Mrs. Aldrich described
him as "too well acquainted with all the coarser types of
human nature . . . a man untrained and unpolished." Twain
himself admitted he had been "a mighty rough, coarse, unpromising subject when Livy took charge." Jervis Langdon
once forbade Twain to court Livy at all. Further, living in
Hartford provided many distractions that Twain often wished
to escape. When he had first become engaged in 1869, he had
looked forward to a home that would provide "peace and quiet--
rest, and seclusion--from the rush and roar and discord of the
world." However, life at Hartford included over-night
guests, salesmen, celebrity hunters, and interviewers--an end-
less line of people demanding to see Mark Twain. Enormous
piles of letters asked for autographs, literary advice and
money. There was the Monday Evening Club, the Friday night
billiard games, and the Saturday Night Club. There were civic
obligations and heavy business obligations as well. All of
this frustrated Twain's desire to work and made him want to
get away. Huck Finn had said at the end of Tom Sawyer, "being
rich ain't what it's cracked up to be. It's just worry and
worry, and sweat and sweat, and a-wishing you was dead all the
time. . . . I wouldn't ever got into this trouble if it hadn't
'a' been for that money." In 1876, the year Tom Sawyer was
published, Twain wrote to Mrs. Fairbanks, congratulating her
briefly that her son Charles was happy and then said,

Let him go it now when he's young! Never mind about
that grisly future season when he shall have made a
dazzling success and shall sit with folded hands in well-
earned ease and look around upon his corpses and mine,
and contemplate his daughters and mine in the same house, and his sons and mine gone to the devil.\textsuperscript{22}

That same summer Twain escaped to Quarry Farm and began work on \textit{Adventures of Huckleberry Finn}.

Quarry Farm afforded marvellous relief from the harassments of Hartford. Twain was able to work undisturbed for as long as eight or nine hours a day; and as \textit{Adventures of Huckleberry Finn} took form, Twain began to identify with the escapism of the book's central character. The civilizing forces that torture Huck in the initial chapters of the book parallel some of Twain's experiences at Hartford. Huck's laying off, smoking and fishing in the woods, his Edenic experiences on Jackson's Island, and his days and nights on the raft, sliding along so quietly and lovely, parallel Twain's escape to the peace and quiet of Quarry Farm.

Seven more years would go by before Twain would finish his novel and those seven years would be marked by many attempts to get away from the continually increasing social and financial burdens that weighed so heavily on him. In addition to further trips to Quarry Farm, Twain went to Bermuda with Joe Twichell in 1877, to Europe with his family from April 1878 to September 1879, and down the Mississippi in 1882. Thus, Van Wyck Brooks concluded that Twain was stifled by his involvement with society, and that "through the character of Huck, that disreputable, illiterate little boy ... he was licensed to let himself go."\textsuperscript{23}

However, we must remember that the greater part of Twain longed to be accepted by society. His courting of
Olivia Langdon and his locating in Nook Farm were partly inspired by his strong desire to belong to respectable society. The mansion itself was intended to be a token not only of opulence but also of good taste—and it was admired as its owners hoped it would be. In fact, Twain had begun his reformation before he met Livy. Walter Blair suggests that Twain's self-improvement was accelerated when he met Mrs. Abel W. Fairbanks on the Holy Land cruise: "In a period when (as in some other periods) 'good women' enjoyed reforming misguided young men, she immediately spotted Clemens and pounced." And Twain, unlike Huck in the hands of the widow, loved every minute of it. Mrs. Fairbanks' influence was pervasive and long lasting and resulted in substantial refinement of Twain's writing and his manners.

Livy, too, encouraged refinement in Twain, but she was never the raging tyrant roaring her husband into servile obedience that earlier biographies of this century would have her. Neither Livy's gentle domestic lobbying nor Howells' editing were ever pressures that Twain wished to escape. Figuratively speaking, Twain had left the river and decided to live in the towns along the shore years before he began work on *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

In "Old Times on the Mississippi," in which he had proclaimed the freedom of the riverboat pilot, he had also made clear how much the pilot depended on society for the adulation that made his life so special. He had also made clear his terrible responsibilities: maintaining a knowledge
of a treacherous river that was always changing.

In truth, the passenger who could not read this book [the river] saw nothing but all manner of pretty pictures in it, painted by the sun and shaded by the clouds, whereas to the trained eye these were not pictures at all, but the grimmest and most dead-earnest of reading matter.

Now when I mastered the language of this water, and I had come to know every trifling feature that bordered the great river as familiarly as I knew the letters of the alphabet, I had made a valuable acquisition. But I had lost something, too. I had lost something which could never be restored to me while I lived. All the grace, the beauty, the poetry, had gone out of the majestic river!

For Twain, the romance and beauty had gone from the river long ago. In 1862, he had written his sister from California, "I never once thought of returning home to go on the river again, and I never expect to do any more piloting at any price."27

If we look briefly at books Twain wrote before and after Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, we find further plain evidence that Twain's stance toward shore society was not primarily rebellious or cynical. In both The Innocents Abroad and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Twain celebrates the virtues of an American society that provides, more so than any other civilization on earth, an opportunity for human comfort and fulfillment. The Innocents Abroad is the chronicle of an escape from American society, an excursion across the ocean to "many a strange clime and in many a land renowned in history."28 However, the lands of renown pale by comparison with America, and Twain is more moved by the poverty and wretchedness of the people than by the works
of art and buildings that he sees. In Chapter XXVI he expresses what a Roman might say of America:

"I saw common men and common women who could read; I even saw small children of common country people reading from books. . . . I saw real glass windows in the houses of even the commonest people. . . . There are hundreds and thousands of schools, and anybody may go and learn to be wise, like a priest. In that singular country, if a rich man dies a sinner, he is damned; he cannot buy salvation with money for masses. There is really not much use in being rich, there. . . . I saw common men there—men who were neither priests nor princes—who yet absolutely owned the land they tilled. It was not rented from the church, nor from the nobles. . . . at this very day, in that curious country, a Jew is allowed to vote, hold office, yea, get up on a rostrum in the public street and express his opinion of the government if the government don't suit him! Ah, it is wonderful. The common people there know a great deal; they even have the effrontery to complain if they are not properly governed, and to take hold and help conduct the government themselves. . . ."29

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court might well be named a hymn praising nineteenth century America. Hank Morgan brings American know-how to medieval England and improves the human condition a hundredfold. Thus, when we turn to Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, we should not be surprised to discover that Twain neither glorifies individual attempts to escape from society nor condemns American society itself.

II. THE FOOLISHNESS OF NIGGER JIM

In taking a realistic approach to Huck and Jim and their journey down the river, I would like to deal with Jim first, since it is his presence in the novel that creates much of the central conflict. Jim is best remembered for his
rebuke of Huck, after they had been separated in the fog. When Jim realizes that Huck has been fooling him, he says that only "trash" would do what Huck had done—lie to him. This scene has inspired many sentimental responses to Jim.³⁰

But some people in Huck's world live consistently from the heart. These persons are guileless, trusting, spontaneous in their affections. They respect human life. Although they are likely to be victims of organized ignorance or fraud, they are not revengeful or self-seeking. Jim, of course, is foremost in selflessness and magnanimity. Because he is incapable of deceit, his innocence, whether comic or pathetic, is haloed with grandeur. His search for freedom is carried forth in humility and sanctified by elemental justice.³¹

Dixon Wecter states that Jim's "unshakable loyalty, generous heart, and unconscious dignity—even when Huck makes game of his credulity—raise him to the rank of Mark Twain's noblest creation."³² Kenneth Lynn went so far as to claim that Jim was a "mythical figure . . . a figure out of a dream, passionate, loyal, immensely dignified—a Black Christ, in sum, but with a very human sense of humour."³³ Well, Jim is not without virtue, but to elevate him to Christhood or to claim that he is selfless or incapable of deceit is to ignore most of the things he says or does.

I do not deny that Jim commands respect in the fog scene, but I will argue that that scene is the only scene in the book in which Jim enjoys such freedom of expression and partakes in that freedom with such dignity. That Jim is a genuine saphead with all the flaws of the shore-dwelling society is made clear much earlier in the book. In the second chapter, when Tom and Huck are sneaking out one night,
Jim hears them and investigates, but eventually falls asleep. While he is sleeping, Tom leaves a five-cent piece on the kitchen table in payment for three candles that he has taken, and then steals Jim's hat and hangs it in a tree. Later, what Jim makes of the nickel and the hat establishes Jim as one of the noblest windbags Twain ever created. Jim decides that witches had ridden him all over the state; then he enlarges upon his story until they had ridden him all over the world, "and tired him most to death, and his back was all over saddle boils" (p.10).

Jim was monstrous proud about it, and he got so he wouldn't hardly notice the other niggers. Niggers would come miles to hear Jim tell about it, and he was more looked up to than any nigger in that country... Jim always kept that five-center piece around his neck with a string and said it was a charm the devil gave to him with his own hands and told him he could cure anybody with it and fetch witches whenever he wanted to, just by saying something to it; but he never told what it was he said to it... Jim was most ruined, for a servant, because he got so stuck up on account of having seen the devil and been rode by witches. (p.10-11)

We can admire Jim's imagination—but we should be careful about what we expect from someone with such a gift for romanticizing trivial experiences. Also, we should not be led to believe, as Lionel Trilling was, that Huck and Jim "do not have an ounce of pride between them." 34

The next time we see Jim we see how much guile is in the man. Huck comes to Jim to ask advice about his father. Jim pulls out his hairball, which he claims has a spirit in it that "knowed everything," and drops it on the floor three
times. Then he claims that sometimes the hairball won't talk without money. Huck gives Jim a counterfeit quarter; Jim then comments that he would "split open a raw Irish potato and stick the quarter in between and keep it there all night, and next morning . . . anybody in town would take it in a minute" (p.19). Finally, with the aid of the hairball, Jim tells Huck his fortune, and, to put it succinctly, Huck gets his money's worth. The fact that Jim passes counterfeit money and tells bogus fortunes does not establish him as a heinous criminal, but it does shed light on his capacity for honesty.

These early chapters show Jim to be a romantic fool and a con artist. When he decides to run away, we see that he is also stupid, and a poor candidate for freedom. His initial dash for freedom is precipitous and totally unplanned. One night, when he overhears Miss Watson tell her sister that she wants to sell Jim because she can't resist the eight hundred dollars she could get for him, Jim gets scared and runs away. He admits to Huck later that the widow was trying to dissuade Miss Watson (and without doubt, the widow would have convinced her sister not to sell Jim), but Jim "never waited to hear de res" (p.39). Jim gets as far as the cooper's shop and hides, then spends the night and the next day there waiting for a good chance to escape unseen. This gives him time to think; he decides at last to catch a raft and ride it down river about twenty-five miles and then take to the woods on the Illinois side. However, the men on the raft he catches
move around too much and, fearing capture, Jim gets off at Jackson's Island. Jackson's Island is as far as he can go. Suddenly his predicament is clear. He doesn't want to be sold down river, but trying to find his way to the free states is too risky, so he stays on Jackson's Island, not knowing what to do. Perhaps he would have starved to death there, if Huck hadn't come along.

If Jim did have any notions of ever going farther than Jackson's Island, they evaporate when Huck arrives. They go exploring and discover a large cavern. Jim immediately suggests they make a permanent home there.

Jim was for putting our traps in there, right away, but I said we didn't want to be climbing up and down there all the time.

Jim said if we had the canoe hid in a good place, and had all the traps in the cavern, we could rush there if anybody was to come to the island, and they would never find us without dogs. (p. 43). Jim was quite satisfied to remain on Jackson's Island. Surely it is clear that Jim is not fiercely dedicated to seeking permanent freedom.

To the lengthening list of Jim's human foibles I would like to add duplicity and insincerity. I refer specifically to the lie he tells Huck about the identity of the man in the floating house and to the flattery he uses on Huck to manipulate him. When Jim finds Pap Finn dead in the floating house, he quickly throws some old rags over him and warns Huck not to look at his face. We assume immediately that Jim is protecting Huck from something horrible; the dead man not only looks ghastly, but also is Huck's father. We learn
later, however, that Jim is really protecting himself. Back at the cave, when Huck wants to talk about the dead man, Jim refuses to, claiming that talking about him would bring bad luck—and of course it would, for Jim. Jim knows that pap is Huck's reason for running away; Huck "told him the whole thing" (p. 38) about what went on in pap's cabin. He also must realize that if Huck knew that pap was dead, he would go back to St. Petersburg, rather than stay on Jackson's Island with Jim. Jim keeps pap's death a secret until it is safe to reveal it—when he himself is free, and it is no longer "bad luck" to talk about the dead man.

Jim's deceit takes another form; when he is unsure of Huck's loyalty, he flatters him. Before Jim extracts a promise from Huck not to tell on him, he tells him that even Tom Sawyer could not have planned his own murder as well as Huck did. But after he has Huck's promise not to tell, all flattery stops until they are down by Cairo. Jim gets very excited about being so close to freedom, and Huck begins to feel "mean and miserable" about his involvement with the runaway negro. Huck decides to tell on Jim, and when they finally spot a light, Huck suggests he go and see if it is Cairo; he intends to take the opportunity to tell. Suddenly Jim starts to behave like a servant. He lays his coat on the bottom of the canoe for Huck to sit on and as Huck shoves off, he says,

Pooty soon I'll be a shout'n for joy, en I'll say, it's all on accounts 'o' Huck; I's a free man, en I
couldn't ever been free ef it hadn' been for Huck; Huck done it. Jim won't ever forgit you, Huck; you's de bes' fren' Jim's ever had; en you's de only fren' ole Jim's got now. (p.74).

To this point, Jim has probably just been feeling grateful to Huck for helping him get this far, although he may have sensed from Huck's fidgeting up and down the raft that Huck has misgivings about what he is doing. But when Jim says Huck is the only friend Jim has now, Huck suddenly stops paddling hard (Huck had been "all in a sweat" to tell on Jim) and goes along slowly, not knowing what to do. Jim watches him paddle along slowly in uncertainty and then yells, "Dah you goes, de ole true Huck; de on'y white genlman dat ever kep' his promise to ole Jim" (p. 74). Jim senses that something must be wrong and decides he'd better remind Huck of his promise not to tell on him, and throws in the highly inappropriate title, "white genlman" as well. Again, I would like to say that I am not trying to prove that Jim is a despicable creature; he isn't. I'm only trying to show that his relationship with Huck isn't always an honest one.

Jim had said earlier that if they missed Cairo he'd "be in slave country again and [have] no more show for freedom" (p. 72). When Jim realizes that they have indeed passed by Cairo, and when their canoe disappears as well, he seems to give up on ever getting to the free states. Although Jim and Huck talk about buying a canoe to go back in, they never do. And, when three days after their escape from the Grangerford-Shepherdson feud, they find a canoe, Jim doesn't suggest
they head back up river. Huck paddles up a creek to pick berries—and brings the king and the duke aboard.

Critics have noted that Twain introduces the king and the duke so that he can continue the river journey and expose the folly of the townspeople who live along the shore. But the king and the duke help to expose the folly of Huck and Jim, too. I have mentioned before that Jim had achieved a certain dignity when he rebuked Huck for playing with his feelings. But when the king and the duke come aboard we see how special those circumstances were that allowed Jim such freedom with Huck, and how limited is his dignity.

Jim, like Huck, recognizes the king and the duke for what they are. Very soon after they come aboard, Jim is asking the king to talk French, to see if he really can (p. 109). Jim knows they are just "reg'lar rapscallions," and he tells Huck so (p. 123). Yet Jim gets down on one knee to them, serves them, lets them sleep in his bed, and calls them "your Grace," and "your Majesty." After only two days with the king and the duke, Jim finds himself bound hand and foot with ropes, "lying tied a couple of years everyday, and trembling all over every time there was a sound" (p. 126). Jim eventually does protest mildly; he expresses the hope that the duke and the king and Huck wouldn't be gone all day since it was "mighty heavy and tiresome" (p. 125) to spend a whole day in the wigwam tied up. The duke soon devises a solution that gives Jim greater freedom; but it is a solution that is paid for in human dignity.
He dressed Jim up in King Lear's outfit—it was a long curtain-calico gown, and a white horse-hair wig and whiskers; and then he took his theatre paint and painted Jim's face and hands and ears and neck all over a dead dull solid blue, like a man that's been drowned nine days. Blamed if he warn't the horriblest looking outrage I ever see. Then the duke took and wrote out a sign on a shingle so--Sick Arab but harmless when not out of his head. . . . Jim was satisfied. . . . Why, he didn't only look like he was dead, he looked considerable more than that. (p. 125-126).

Jim spends the remainder of the river journey looking like a sick Arab; yet critics are disappointed when he gives in to Tom's games at the Phelps' farm. Chadwick Hansen, for example, claims that at the Phelps' farm, "Jim is not the character Twain had so carefully developed, moving him from the lowest of roles to the highest. This Jim has lost all dignity and become a sub-human creature who feels no pain and bleeds fresh ink. This Jim is a flat, cheap type, and this Jim is a measure of the failure of the ending of Huckleberry Finn." I suggest, however, that we should not be the least surprised when Jim decides to do everything exactly as "Mars Tom" says. Jim allows that Tom and Huck are "white folks and knowed better than him" (p. 193). We have known all along that Jim believes in the superiority of whites; we need only remember when Huck asked him what he would do if someone said "Polly-voo-franzy" to him. Jim had replied, "I'd take en bust him over de head. Dat is if he warn't white. I wouldn't 'low no nigger to call me dat" (p. 66). In the company of whites, even if those whites are only "Mars Tom" or the king and the duke, Jim is a slave.
Critics have isolated one scene late in the book as being a final demonstration of Jim's goodness. The night that Jim escapes from the Phelps', he gives up his chance for freedom by helping the doctor treat Tom's wounded leg. Henry Nash Smith comments, "Jim attains an impressive dignity when he refuses to escape at the cost of deserting the wounded Tom." Thomas Arthur Gullason rates Jim's decision to stay behind as overwhelming nobility. But what, we need to ask, is Jim sacrificing? He has already shown that he can't make his own way to freedom, and now he is eleven hundred miles south of St. Petersburg. Ever since the night he arrived on Jackson's Island, he hasn't known what to do next. Now, at the Phelps' farm, he explains his decision to stay with Tom as being the kind of decision that Tom would make. But what runaway negro with an ounce of determination to be free would give up his chance for freedom to help nurse a boy like Tom Sawyer, especially after all Tom Sawyer has put Jim through? What runaway negro would have allowed himself to get so far south and wind up on a raft with Tom Sawyer in the first place? Jim's decision to stick by Tom because it is the honorable thing to do, what Tom himself would do, is the final measure of the foolishness of Nigger Jim. Jim is no hero, he is not seriously devoted to a quest for freedom, and he is not particularly virtuous. He is given to false pride, duplicity, cowardice and silly sentimentality.
III. HUCK'S INVOLVEMENT WITH SOCIETY

Most critics admit that Huck is involved with society, in the sense that he is concerned about the welfare of others. Lionel Trilling, for example, points out that "Huck's intense and even complex moral quality may possibly not appear on a first reading, for one may be caught and convinced by his own estimate of himself, by his brags about his lazy hedonism, his avowed preference for being alone, his dislike of civilization. The fact is, of course, that he is involved in civilization up to his ears. . . . Responsibility is the very essence of his character . . . he is always 'in a sweat' over the predicament of someone else." I would like to take what Trilling has to say about Huck's morality a step further and suggest that both his avowed dislike of civilization and his obvious concern for humanity spring from the same source: a deep sense of his own unworthiness. It is too easy to forget that Huck has been cast out of society: the children of St. Petersburg have been forbidden by their mothers to even speak to Huck. He has no bed to sleep in, like other children, and he has to beg or steal food and clothing. Although his outcast condition may appear to be "gaudy," in reality, Huck's life has been mean and deprived. He cannot recall ever having heard the word, "welcome." The words that Huck uses most often to describe himself are, "low down" "mean" and "ornery." Until he finds the six thousand dollars and is adopted by the Widow Douglas, Huck is like Frankenstein's
monster, living outside of society, staying out of sight, doing good deeds whenever he can, and as I hope to show, wishing desperately to belong to the society that rejects him.

When the widow adopts him, Huck's first response is painful embarrassment: "The widow . . . heaped so many compliments and so much gratitude upon Huck, that he almost forgot the nearly intolerable discomfort of his new clothes in the entirely intolerable discomfort of being set up as a target for everybody's gaze and everybody's laudations." Before long, Huck is "courted, admired, stared at," and his sayings are "treasured and repeated." There is little Huck can do about his new status; after three weeks of clean living, he runs away, but this one rebellion lasts only three days. All Tom has to do is point out to Huck, "we can't let you into the Gang if you ain't respectable, you know." Huck swears to go back and stick to the widow until he rots, and the stage is set for Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

The pattern of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is announced on the first page:

The Widow Douglas, she took me for her son, and allowed she would civilize me; but it was rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn't stand it no longer, I lit out. I got into my old rags, and my sugar-hogshead again, and was free and satisfied. But Tom Sawyer, he hunted me up and said he was going to start a band of robbers, and I might join if I would go back to the widow and be respectable. So I went back.(p. 7, italics mine)

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is not about escape,
it is about escape and return. From beginning to end, Huck moves further into society, not out of it, and by the end of the story Huck is a civilized, well-mannered young man.\textsuperscript{43}

At first, Huck tolerates respectability in order to belong to Tom's gang. Huck is desperate to join this mini-society and is ready to cry when Ben Rogers questions Huck's legitimacy as a member, on the basis that he has no family to kill if he tells the gang's secrets. Huck, of course, offers them Miss Watson to kill, and he is accepted by the gang. Even at this comic level, the theme of the story is clear: to enjoy the fellowship of society, one must be respectable.

Tom Sawyer's gang breaks up after a month, but Huck Finn never goes back to his hogsheads again. Huck has begun to appreciate something else that makes respectability worth suffering: the widow's kindness to him. The widow makes Miss Watson "ease up." She doesn't scold him when he returns all grease and clay from his nights out with Tom Sawyer, but just looks "so sorry" that Huck thinks he will behave for awhile if he can. Huck admits "a poor chap would stand considerable show with the widow's providence" (p.15). The widow praises Huck and says that she is not ashamed of him. When he turns over the salt cellar, Miss Watson scolds, but the widow puts in a good word for Huck.

After three or four months pass by, Huck admits that although he liked the old ways best, he was getting to like the new ones, too, "a little bit."
Living in a house, and sleeping in a bed, pulled on me pretty tight, mostly, but before the cold weather I used to slide out and sleep in the woods, sometimes, so that was a rest to me (p. 18, italics mine).

Though critics would have it otherwise, Huck even seems to be enjoying school. Huck understates the case: "I got so I could stand it." In fact, his attendance has been excellent, and he has already learned to spell, and read, and write, "just a little."

The effect that the widow has had on Huck becomes obvious when Pap Finn returns. Huck must feel very safe under the widow's roof, because as his father mumbles and growls around in Huck's bedroom, knocking books about and tearing up pictures, Huck is unusually impertinent:

By and by he says:
"Starchy clothes--very. You think you're a good deal of a big bug don't you?"
"Maybe I am, maybe I ain't," I says.
"Don't you give me none o' your lip," says he. "You've put on considerable many frills since I been away. I'll take you down a peg before I get done with you. You're educated, too, they say; can read and write. You think you're better'n your father, now, don't you, because he can't? I'll take it out of you. Who told you you might meddle with such hifalutin' foolishness, hey?--who told you you could?"
"The widow. She told me."
"The widow, hey?--and who told the widow she could put in her shovel about a thing that ain't none of her business?"
"Nobody never told her."(p. 20-21)

Even though a new judge denies the widow's petition for guardianship of Huck, Huck stays on at the widow's, and continues to go to school, "to spite pap." In fact, Huck stays on for seven or eight months, from summer until "one day in the
spring" when pap kidnapns him. In all that time the oath that he made on the last page of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, "I'll stick to the widder till I rot," remains unbroken.

True, once Huck has been away in the woods with pap for two months, he claims he doesn't understand how he'd gotten to like it so well at the widow's (p. 24). He also claims to be shaken up considerably when pap tells him that the widow would eventually win in her efforts to become his guardian. Huck states plainly, "I didn't want to go back to the widow's any more and be so cramped up and civilized, as they called it" (p. 25). Finally, when he makes his plans to run away, he says he wants to "get so far away that the old man nor the widow" could find him. (Twain interpreted the story similarly: he said Huck was running from "his persecuting father, and from a persecuting good widow." However, Twain was probably confusing the widow with Miss Watson; he went on to say, "and with him a slave of the widow's has also escaped."). However, we know that Huck had decided long ago to stay at the widow's. I suggest that when he says he doesn't want to go back to the widow's "no more," he means that he had wanted to go back at first, but doesn't any more. The reason why he doesn't want to go back "no more" is clear:

The widow she found out where I was by-and-by, and she sent a man over to try and get hold of me, but pap drove him off with the gun, and it warn't long after that till I was used to being where I was. (p. 24)

I suggest that Huck was hoping that somehow the widow
would rescue him, and that when pap foils her efforts, he simply resigns himself, stóic that he is, to being the son of the town drunk, the "juvenile pariah" once more. There just isn't any point in trying to see himself as the son of the most highly respected lady in the village as long as pap is still alive. His protests about his treatment at the widow's are just sour grapes. Whether he can admit it at this point or not, the widow has had a deep and lasting effect on Huck.

He mentions the widow time and again as the novel progresses. The first day that he is on Jackson's Island, he catches a loaf of "baker's bread—what the quality eat—none of your low-down corn-pone" (p. 34). He sits munching on this bread for awhile and then it occurs to him that the widow had probably prayed that that bread would find him, and it had. This proves to him that prayer does work, at least, "there's something in it when a body like the widow or the parson prays" (p. 34). Later, when Huck and Jim are surviving by lifting chickens that weren't "roosting comfortable," and "borrowing" watermelons and pumpkins, Huck remembers that "pap always said it warn't no harm to borrow things, if you was meaning to pay them back, sometime; but the widow said it warn't anything but a soft name for stealing" (p. 55).

He is concerned enough about what the widow had said to decide to curtail his thieving, even if it is only crabapples and persimmons that he decides to leave alone. He also claims that his concern for the robbers on the wrecked steamboat is
motivated partly by what the widow would think of him:

But take it all around, I was feeling ruther comfortable on accounts of taking all this trouble for that gang, for not many would a done it. I wished the widow knowed about it. I judged she would be proud of me for helping these rapsclllions, because rapsclllions and dead beats is the kind the widow and the good people takes the most interest in. (p. 63).

In his debates with Jim he quotes the widow as an authority who should be respected: "he [Solomon] was the wisest man, anyway; because the widow she told me so, her own self" (p. 65).

When Huck meets the Grangerfords he is impressed by the Colonel because he was "well born." Again, he quotes the widow as an authority on these things:

He was well born, as the saying is, and that's worth as much in a man as it is in a horse, so the Widow Douglas said, and nobody ever denied that she was the first aristocracy in our town; and pap he always said it, too, though he warn't no more quality than a mudcat, himself. (p. 86)

All these recollections of the widow give us a clear picture of the relationship between her and Huck and the kind of civilizing effect she has had on him. He has come to half-believe in the efficacy of prayer. He has become concerned about his stealing. He has tried to do what the widow said he must do: to "help other people, and do everything I could for other people, and look out for them all the time" (p. 14).

The widow has made the Bible stories come to life for Huck. At first, Huck had been unable to understand why anyone would be concerned about dead people like Moses. But later, his argument with Jim about Solomon indicates that he has developed a genuine and deep interest in the Bible and the meaning of its
stories. Finally, Huck has become more class conscious. His comments about the widow and the "quality" indicate that he has come to associate some good things with the aristocracy. He has also become more painfully aware of his own status since pap stole him away from the widow. As Huck gets farther and farther away from St. Petersburg, more and more he laments the wickedness which was in his "line," which he was "brung up to" by a man who had no more quality than a mudcat.

Huck's appreciation of civilized life becomes even more clear when he is adopted by the Grangerfords. The Grangerfords are generally regarded as examples of the worst kind of sentimentality, the kind that romanticizes death and values honour above human life. But to Huck, they are a dream come true. Ever since he left St. Petersburg, Huck has been inventing families for himself. He tells Judith Loftus that he is Sarah Williams, a girl on her way to get help from her uncle for her sick mother (p. 48). He tells the captain of the ferry boat that his family includes "pap, and mam, and sis" (p. 61). He tells the slave hunters that "pap and mam and Mary Ann" are on the raft. At the Grangerford's, he has time to embellish the story a little and explains that he is George Jackson from the bottom of Arkansas, whose sister Mary Ann eloped, whose brother Bill went to hunt for her and was never heard of again and whose father and brothers Tom and Mort all died. All these tragic stories that Huck fabricates illustrate his acute sense of being an orphan and help us understand his love for the Grangerfords.
When he first enters the door at the Grangerford's, Huck is quite sure that they mean to shoot him. Huck is used to being treated badly, and has expected hostility at every turn since he left Jackson's Island. Huck is surprised when he is treated so kindly by the Grangerfords. The Colonel tells him to make himself at home. Servants busy themselves to get him something to eat, Buck gives him fresh dry clothes, the whole family sits up to hear his story, and he is immediately adopted.

Huck's account of what he sees and does at the Grangerford's reveals a marked change in his attitude towards food, clothing, and class. It also reveals how limited is his realism, his ability to recognize and distinguish between the fake and the genuine. First let us remember that Huck has declared early in the book a disdain for being "cramped up and civilized." He has also expressed impatience with the formalities of civilized dining:

The widow rung a bell for supper, and you had to come to time. When you got to the table you couldn't go right to eating, but you had to wait for the widow to tuck down her head and grumble a little over the victuals, though there warn't really anything the matter with them. That is, nothing only everything was cooked by itself. In a barrel of odds and ends it is different, things get mixed up, and the juice kind of swaps around, and the things go better. (p. 7).

When Huck arrives at the Grangerford's, the first thing that Buck announces is that his mother makes him "comb up, Sundays, and all that kind of foolishness" (p. 81). But Huck never once considers refusing to wear the tight clothes he is given, or running away to the nearest hogshead. In fact,
when Huck does go to church with the Grangerfords, it is the preaching he complains about, not the "combing up." Later, when he is back on the raft with Jim, Huck comments, "we was always naked, day and night, whenever the mosquitoes would let us--the new clothes Buck's folks made for me was too good to be comfortable, and besides I didn't go much on clothes, no how" (p. 97, italics mine). His protests against clothing have toned down considerably, and he is confessing here that he does wear his good clothes, if only because they are more comfortable than being bitten all over by mosquitoes.

Huck's taste in food and table manners has changed considerably, too. He praises the good cooking and speaks with pride of the dinner rituals at the Grangerford's:

And warn't the cooking good, and just bushels of it too! (p. 86).

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, and Bob and Tom poured a spoonful of water on the sugar and the mite of whiskey or apple brandy in the bottom of their tumblers, and give it to me and Buck, and we drank to the old people too. (p. 87).

Huck is also deeply impressed by the "quality" of this family. Of course, at one level, everything Huck says about the aristocratic Grangerfords is meant by Twain to be hard-hitting satire. But from Huck's point of view, the Grangerford family is the best thing he has ever seen. He describes the Colonel in minute detail: he is a "gentleman"
who is "well born," he wears a clean shirt "every day of his life," and a full suit "made out of linen so white it hurt your eyes to look at it," and "everybody was always good mannered where he was" (pp. 86-87). Most important for Huck, the Colonel "was as kind as he could be—you could feel that, you know, and so you had confidence" (p. 86, italics mine). For all their faults, the Grangerfords are genuinely kind, and they seem to have no ulterior motives for taking Huck in (when the feud breaks out, no one wakes Huck to ask him to help). All the kindnesses the Grangerfords show him inspire Huck, and he is able to admit that he has confidence in himself and his ability to fit in at the Grangerfords. This represents a dramatic change for the boy who has so often seen himself as low-down, mean, and ornery.

Huck describes the rest of the family and their house and relatives in glowing terms. Rachel Grangerford is "the sweetest old gray-headed lady" (p. 80), Bob and Tom are "tall, beautiful men with very broad shoulders and brown faces, and long black hair and black eyes" (p. 87). Miss Charlotte was "tall and proud and grand, but as good as she could be . . . beautiful" (p. 87), and Miss Sophia is beautiful, too, only "gentle and sweet, like a dove" (p. 87). Huck notes that the house has a real brass door knob, no beds in the parlour, a clean brick fireplace with brass dog-irons, and an impressive collection of crockery, books and pictures. Huck describes the friends and relatives of the family who stay for five or six days at a time and have "such junketings round about and
on the river, and dances and picnics in the woods, day-times, and balls at the house, nights," as a "handsome lot of quality" (p. 87).

Huck is even impressed by the morbid Emmeline. Again, although we laugh at Huck's descriptions of Emmeline's paintings and poetry, Huck himself is deadly serious. He is taken with her in an ambiguous way; though her pictures give him the "fantods" sometimes when he is depressed, he is strangely fascinated by her. When her pictures "aggravate" him, he goes up to her room and reads in her scrapbook in an attempt to like her. He says "I liked all that family, dead ones and all, and warn't going to let anything come between us." Huck feels that he is supposed to revere Emmeline, and works hard to develop a feeling of reverence towards her. He even tries to take Emmeline's place: "it didn't seem right that there warn't nobody to make some [poetry] about her, now she was gone; so I tried to sweat out a verse or two myself, but I couldn't seem to make it go, somehow" (p. 85).

Huck is drawn to Emmeline perhaps because her obsession with death strikes a chord somewhere in him, but what is more important here is Huck's complete failure to trust his own judgement. The sharp-eyed realism that he has been admired for, deserts him completely.

At the Grangerford's, Huck is determined to fit in and does. His sojourn with them demonstrates how willing Huck is to adopt the manners and customs of civilization, particularly if the small sacrifice of wearing tight clothes and observing
social rituals gains him entry into an aristocratic family like the Grangerfords, where he even has his own servant. His visit there also illustrates how easily Huck is taken in by the rich appearance of society, and how quickly he can cast off the "sour grapes" perspective of the homeless outcast.

Huck's stay with the Grangerfords ends in horrifying violence. Huck sees things that he can't even talk about, that make him sick, that he has nightmares about. Huck's chance to belong to the family of his dreams is gone forever. Typically, Huck reverts to the kind of rationalization that had helped him when he had been stolen away from the widow. As soon as he and Jim are out in the middle of the Mississippi and he judges he is "free and safe once more," he comments,

We said there warn't no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft. (p. 95).

This comment by Huck is regarded by many as the epitome of the contrast of river and shore. Yet, Huck's comparison of the raft with "other places" is a gross oversimplification. The raft is a dangerous home, too: a steamboat almost killed them before Huck arrived at the Grangerford's. Further, the "other places" have their redeeming qualities. The Grangerfords were kind and good-humoured, and at least one member of each of the warring factions managed to transcend the bitterness between the two families and fall in love. We are not meant to believe that Huck prefers living with Jim on a raft to living with the Grangerfords.
Three days after their escape from the feud, Huck brings the bogus king and duke aboard. I have mentioned before that the two frauds serve in the novel partly to expose the folly of Huck and Jim. Huck's relationship with them further exposes Huck's weakness for "style." Even though Huck claims to see through them, he is still quite taken in by the king and the duke. He is unable to recognize, for example, that their acting is a complete fraud:

The way they laid on, and pranced around the raft was grand to see . . . (p. 109) just knocked the spots out of any acting ever I see before . . . (p. 110) he [the king] could do it [Hamlet's soliloquy] first rate . . . it was perfectly lovely the way he would rip and tear. (p. 111)

There is no hint of disgust in Huck's description of the king's antics at the Pokeville camp-meeting, and he describes the duke as "pretty smart" for his day's work at the printing shop. After the Nonesuch performance, Huck says,

Them rapscallions took in four hundred and sixty-five dollars in that three nights. I never see money hauled in by the wagon-load like that, before. (p. 122)

It is plain Huck admires the duke and the king for their ability to rake in the money. Further, he has a lot of fun with them. He gets to have a ride on a steamboat, he gets to attend a circus, and, in general, has a pretty exciting time in the villages along the shore. In a way, he adopts them. When they are well enough rehearsed to put on their "Shakesperean Revival," Huck says, "all of us but Jim took the canoe and went down there to see if there was any chance in that place for our show" (p. 111, italics mine). When the
Royal Nonesuch is going on, Huck says, "we sold this crowd the same way" (p. 122, italics mine). Later, Huck refers to the king and duke as "our tribe" once (p. 142), and as "our gang" three times (pp. 145 and 155). Actually, being with the king and the duke is like being a member of Tom Sawyer's gang again, only now the gang is successful. Parallels between Tom and the two frauds abound.

Virginia Wexman correctly identifies similarities between Tom's scheme and the scheme of the duke and king involving the Wilks girls:

In both the Wilks and the Phelps sequences we see two imposters attempting to put an elaborate deception over on warm-hearted, trusting families. Later, both sets of dissemblers are set upon by local townsfolk. Even more strikingly, Tom himself recalls our image of the "aristocratic" duke and king through his insistence that Jim be rescued in the manner of the nobility he has read about in books.

The parallels between Tom and the two frauds, however, are much more specific than this. Tom, like the duke and the king, is engaged in a double pretense of being someone else. Tom is pretending to be Sid Sawyer, pretending to be a stranger from Hicksville, Ohio. The two frauds, likewise, are pretending to be a king and a duke pretending to be a parson and his brother. When Tom discovers Jim's whereabouts "detective-fashion," Huck is amazed at Tom's intelligence: "What a head for just a boy to have. If I had Tom Sawyer's head, I wouldn't trade it off to be a duke" (p. 181). Huck was similarly impressed with the duke's intelligence when he thought up a way of keeping Jim free: "he was
uncommon bright, the duke was" (p. 125). In fact, Tom's words, "now you work your mind and study out a plan to steal Jim, and I will study out one, too" (p. 181), echo the duke's, "leave me alone to cipher out a way . . . I'll think the thing over--I'll invent a plan that'll fix it" (p. 102). Tom's plans to free Jim change; the duke's plans also change. The duke's first plan to keep Jim tied up all day, is as physically discomforting for Jim as Tom's plans, which include sleeping with a grind-stone and assorted animals. Further, the duke disguises Jim in one of his own costumes, the "King Lear outfit." Tom also disguises Jim in his costume, a dress he has stolen from Aunt Sally. Tom's overriding concern for authenticity in his elaborate scheme--"It don't make no difference how foolish it is, it's the right way--and it's the regular way" (p. 190)--reminds us of the duke's similar concern for authenticity: "Handcuffs and chains would look still better on Jim, but it wouldn't go well with the story of us being so poor. Too much like jewelry. Ropes are the correct thing--we must preserve the unities, as we say on the boards" (p. 108). Tom's disdain for the Phelpses--"They're so confiding and mullet-headed they don't take notice of nothing at all" (p. 207), echoes the duke's disdain for townsfolk that he gulls: "Greenhorns, flatheads! I knew the first house would keep mum and let the rest of the town get roped in" (p. 122). Tom's memory of coats of arms is as confused as the duke's memory of Shakespeare. The "mournful" inscriptions that Tom
composes for Jim:

1. Here a captive heart busted.
2. Here a poor prisoner, forsook by the world and
   friends, fretted out his sorrowful life.
3. Here a lonely heart broke, and a worn spirit
   went to its rest, after thirty-seven years of
   solitary captivity.
4. Here, homeless and friendless, after thirty-seven
   years of bitter captivity, perished a noble
   stranger, natural son of Louis XIV. (p. 201).

reminds us of the duke:

   . . . here am I, forlorn, torn from my high estate,
   hunted of men, despised by the cold world, ragged, worn,
   heart-broken, and degraded to the companionship of
   felons on a raft! (p. 100)

and the king:

   . . . trouble has brung these gray hairs and this
   premature balditude. Yes, gentlemen, you see before
   you, in blue jeans and misery, the wanderin', exiled,
   trampled-on and sufferin' rightful King of France.
(p. 101)

And, of course, Tom's voice trembles as he reads these "mournful"
inscriptions and he almost breaks down, not unlike the
two frauds, who are not unfamiliar with "tears and flapdoodle."

Finally, Tom's posing as a "cutthroat" who has got religion
and wants to warn the Phelpses, not wishing any reward but to
know he has done the right thing, reminds us of the king,
posing as a pirate who gets religion and wants to save all
the pirates in the Indian Ocean and give all the credit to
the dear people in Pokeville.

The significance of all these parallels between Tom
and the two frauds is to be found in Huck's responses to
them. When Tom indulges in self romanticizing, Huck sees
through it and questions it. When Tom is busy being an actor,
Huck tires of it, and complains of it. Huck, for example, strongly resists all the pretense necessary, according to Tom, to deliver the "nonnamous letters." But when the king and the duke are acting, Huck feels little else besides admiration. Only when the king and the duke masquerade as the long lost brothers of Peter Wilks does Huck begin to object to their behaviour. And even then, Huck is still full of compliments for the acting ability of the king and the duke. When the real brothers show up, Huck comments,

... nary a pale did they turn. The duke he never let on he suspicioned what was up ... and as for the king, he just gazed and gazed down sorrowful on them newcomers like it give him the stomach-ache in his very heart to think there could be such frauds and rascals in the world. Oh, he done it admirable........I see, straight off, he pronounced like an Englishman, not the king's way, though the king's was pretty good, for an imitation. (p. 154).

Another reality entirely cuts through Huck's perception of the king and the duke and his own situation when Huck himself is put on the witness stand. Huck corroborates the king's story that the servants have made off with the gold. The doctor asks Huck if he is English too. Huck answers yes, and the doctor and "some others" laugh at him (p. 156). Later, when Huck tells about Sheffield and the English Wilkses, the doctor bursts out laughing and Levi Bell says, "Set down, my boy, I wouldn't strain myself, if I was you. I reckon you ain't used to lying, it don't seem to come handy; what you want is practice. You do it pretty awkward" (p. 156). Huck is insulted. He says, "I didn't care nothing for the compliment, but I was glad to be let off anyway" (p. 156).
This scene reminds us of the scene in which Huck talks with Joanna, the hare-lip. Huck is trying to convince Joanna that he is a genuine "valley" (not a common servant) from Sheffield (not London) where Uncle Harvey shares the pulpit with sixteen other preachers. Joanna easily catches Huck in one lie after another until he is finally rescued by Mary Jane. In these scenes, Twain is using Huck as a foil for people who dwell on the shore who are not only virtuous, but quicker to perceive a fake or a lie than Huck is.

The king and the duke serve another purpose, too. Their quite disgusting deception of the Wilks girls finally inspires Huck to betray them and tell the truth to Mary Jane. Up to this point, Huck's sympathy has been pretty much with outcasts like himself. Jim, of course, won his sympathy, as did the robbers on the Walter Scott. His encounter with the robbers on the Walter Scott prompts Huck to observe, "There ain't no telling but I might come to be a murderer myself, yet" (p. 60). While we may find that hard to believe, it is true that Huck sees himself most of the time as a criminal. He survives by lying and stealing, and he could grow up to be just like the duke. In fact, most of his admiration for the duke and the king is inspired by their talent for deception. Thus, it is quite a turnaround for Huck, who has steadfastly allowed the duke and the king to have their own way, to decide to betray their identity to Mary Jane. I suggest that this decision represents a major step towards more civilized behaviour, and it opens Huck's eyes to yet another
good thing about the shore society: romantic love.

It is clear that Huck is infatuated with Mary Jane, and in a way, she becomes the Becky Thatcher of Huck's book. Of course Mary Jane is kind and hospitable to Huck, and we know Huck responds quickly to kindness. But Huck seems ready to love Mary Jane Wilks from the moment he hears her name. Before he meets her, he knows three things about her: she has been recently orphaned, she is nineteen and she has red hair. When he first sees her, he picks her out of the crowd and says, "Mary Jane was red-headed, but that don't make no difference, she was most awful beautiful, and her face and her eyes was all lit up like glory" (p. 130). Everyone around her is a "saphead" to be taken in by the duke and the king, but even when Mary Jane is handing over the bag of gold to them, she is "handsome" in Huck's eyes (p. 135).

When Huck cannot bear to see Mary Jane sorrowing over the sale of the negroes, he blurts out that the mother and two sons will be reunited again. The experience is a novel one for Huck and he takes a minute to "study it out:"

... I says to myself, I reckon a body that ups and tells the truth when he is in a tight place, is taking considerable many risks, though I ain't had no experience, and can't say for certain; but it looks so to me, anyway; and yet here's a case where I'm blest if it don't look to me like the truth is better, and actually safer, than a lie. I must lay it by in my mind, and think it over some time or other, it's so kind of strange and unregular. I never see nothing like it. Well, I says to myself at last, I'm agoing to chance it; I'll up and tell the truth this time, though it does seem most like setting down on a kag of powder and touching it off just to see where you'll go to. (p. 147)
And what happens to Huck when he sits on his "kag of powder" and touches it off? Huck will never forget the scene that follows. He and Mary Jane agree to a plan that will get the two frauds jailed and get Huck and Jim free. (Neither Mary Jane nor the reader ever get to know the whole plan.) Their parting moves both of them to tears and Huck concludes:

... she had the grit to pray for Judas. . . . there weren't no backdown to her. . . . She had more sand in her than any girl I ever see. . . . And when it comes to beauty--and goodness too--she lays over them all. . . . I hain't ever seen her since, but I reckon I've thought of her a many and a many a million times, and of her saying she would pray for me. (p. 151)

Telling the truth isn't so bad after all. Later, as Huck flees the graveyard and races past the Wilks house, he says,

... when I begun to get towards our (italics mine) house I aimed my eye and set it. No light there; the house all dark--which made me feel sorry and disappointed, I didn't know why. But at last, just as I was sailing by, flash comes the light in Mary Jane's window! and my heart swelled up sudden, like to bust; and the same second the house and all was behind me in the dark, and wasn't ever going to be before me no more in this world. She was the best girl I ever see, and had the most sand. (p. 160).

One might point out that Huck's response to Mary Jane is yet another example of his inability to be the sharp-eyed realist. In truth, his attachment to her is quite sentimental, and a more perceptive Huck might have been less blinded by Mary Jane's good looks. A more perceptive Huck might have appreciated the virtues of someone like Joanna, for example. However, what I think is more important here is the shift that occurs in Huck's sympathy as a result of his attachment to Mary Jane. He has betrayed two outlaws that he
admires and has risked his own neck to save three innocent members of society. This represents a complete reversal for the boy who back in St. Petersburg had belonged to a gang of outlaws and had raided innocent women and children. After the Wilks episode, Huck is much closer to becoming a civilized young man.

IV. HUCK'S INVOLVEMENT WITH JIM

Before I discuss the "ending" of the novel, I would like to examine more closely Huck's response to Jim. More than anything else, it is Huck's involvement in Jim's "quest for freedom" that he is most loved and admired for. Most critics seem to think that Huck, motivated by his love for Jim, is an enthusiastic participant in the "quest." I have already tried to show how half-hearted Jim's efforts to get free are; I would like to now demonstrate how reluctant Huck is to help Jim.

First, Huck becomes involved with Jim without really knowing what he is getting into. When he asks Jim what he is doing on Jackson's Island, Jim gets Huck to swear not to tell his secret before Huck knows what that secret is.

"... you wouldn't tell on me if I 'uz to tell you, would you, Huck?"
"Blamed if I would, Jim."
"Well, I b'lieve you, Huck. I-I run off."
"Jim!"
"But mind, you said you wouldn't tell--you know you said you wouldn't tell, Huck."
"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 Abolitionist and despise me for keeping mum--but
that don't make no difference. I ain't agoing to tell, and I ain't agoing back there anyways. (pp. 38-39).

I think it is clear that Huck is shocked by Jim's announcement that he has run away. Huck immediately thinks out loud what people are going to think of him, but then it occurs to him that everybody thinks he's dead, and no one will ever know what he has sworn to do, anyway.

The time Huck and Jim spend on Jackson's Island together may seem Edenic at first glance, as they paddle around in the cool and shady deep woods, petting rabbits. But Huck gets bored very quickly. Even playing tricks on Jim and nearly getting him killed doesn't provide enough excitement, and before long, Huck wants to go back to St. Petersburg:

Next morning I said it was getting slow and dull, and I wanted to get a stirring up, someway. I said I reckoned I would slip over the river and find out what was going on. (p. 47).

Huck wants to find out what people think of his having been murdered. This becomes clear in his interview with Judith Loftus. Huck begins to think he has made a mistake coming to her for news until she begins to talk about "pap and the murder" (p. 48). The first question Huck asks her is, "Who done it? We've heard considerable about these goings on, down in Hookerville, but we don't know who 'twas that killed Huck Finn" (p. 48). Of course, Huck has been through this kind of thing before. When he and Tom Sawyer and Joe Harper had run away in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, they all returned to attend their own funerals to see what kind of reaction the town has had to their deaths.
But this time his concern is more specific; he wants to know who is supposed to have killed him. He is not surprised when he discovers Pap Finn is suspected, and he becomes very uneasy when he finds out that Jim is also suspected and that Mr. Loftus and another man are on their way to Jackson's Island to look for him. With this knowledge, he rushes back to the island, tells Jim to hump himself because someone is after them. The two of them take to the raft, and the river journey has begun. This is the moment that Leo Marx, for example, thinks is so special:

"There ain't a minute to lose. They're after us!"
What particularly counts here is the us. No one is after Huck; no one but Jim knows he is alive. In that small word Clemens compresses the exhilarating power of Huck's instinctive humanity. His unpremeditated identification with Jim's flight from slavery is an unforgettable moment in American experience, and it may be said at once that any culmination of the journey which detracts from the urgency and dignity with which it begins will necessarily be unsatisfactory. 

Marx is, however, overly enthusiastic about the beginning of the river journey. It is urgent, but it is not dignified, nor is it an encompassing of the "exhilarating power of Huck's instinctive humanity." In fact, Huck describes what he is doing as "low-down," and later he will say, "I had as good as helped Jim to run away" (p. 73, italics mine). Granted, Huck probably doesn't want to see Jim captured and sold down the river. But he doesn't have much choice anyway. In Huck's mind, there is someone after him: pap. If Huck wants to keep his existence a secret, he has to run with Jim. He cannot desert Jim because if Jim is found, he will tell everyone that Huck
is alive (if he is unable to convince his captors that Huck is alive, he will be hung for Huck's murder). Furthermore, if Huck has to be on the run, he might as well have Jim's company. Huck hasn't yet recognized that Jim has feelings like white folks, but he has recognized that Jim is handy to have around: Jim knows "signs" and keeps Huck in out of the rain. Finally, Huck has given his word to Jim. He hasn't sworn to help him get free, but he has sworn not to tell—and that oath has created a bond of honour that Huck respects.

We have already seen how important oaths are to Huck. He is inordinately impressed by the oath that binds Tom Sawyer's gang, for example, even though little Tommy Barnes threatens to break it by the end of the evening. For Huck, oaths are a bond of friendship. For Huck, who is so well acquainted with loneliness, anything that binds him and other members of a group to be loyal to each other is precious. It is because Huck feels so strongly about "keeping your word" that Jim is able to manipulate his feelings so successfully down by Cairo.

That Huck is not serious about Jim's quest for freedom becomes plain when they drift down onto the Walter Scott. Huck's determination to board the wréck indicates that now that he is free of the danger of being recaptured by Pap Finn, the river journey is just a boy's lark. Sidney Krause comments that Huck at this point in the story is still, like Tom Sawyer, eager to turn reality into "adventures." He points out that
"Huck's story is one of a developing sensitivity to human values. The Walter Scott episode gives us an idea of the moral distance he had to travel in that development."

First, in spite of Jim's warning to "let blame' well alone," Huck is determined to board the wreck and "slink around" (p. 56), simply because he "felt just the way any other boy would a felt" (p. 56, italics mine) and because Tom Sawyer wouldn't go by that wreck "for pie" (p. 57). Next, when Huck discovers men on the wreck he again, with no thought for Jim's safety, does what he thinks Tom Sawyer would do: he investigates, endangering both his own life and Jim's. He and Jim are almost trapped on the boat, but manage to escape in the robbers' skiff. Next, he begins to worry about the three robbers trapped on the steamboat, and decides to go ashore at the first light and "fix up some kind of a yarn, and get somebody to go for that gang and get them out of their scrape, so they can be hung when their time comes" (p. 60). Then, without thinking what the three robbers might do to the innocent ferry boatman, Huck tricks him into going out to the wreck to try and save them. Fortunately for the ferry boatman, the wreck breaks loose before he can get to it and the three men are drowned. Huck is quite nonchalant about having just caused the deaths of the three men. He comments, "I felt a little bit heavy-hearted about the gang, but not much, for I reckoned if they could stand it, I could" (p. 63). Clearly, Huck is not concerned about Jim's "quest," let alone his safety, and his behaviour in this scene suggests that, morally, Huck has not
left Tom Sawyer's gang yet. He is playing Tom Sawyer games not only with his own life, but with other peoples' lives as well.

Huck finally does begin to take Jim's quest seriously down by Cairo. As they get closer to Cairo, Jim gets more and more excited about being closer to freedom and suddenly Huck realizes what he is doing.

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 got to troubling me so I couldn't rest; I couldn't stay still in one place. It hadn't ever come home to me before, what this thing was that I was doing. But now it did; and it staid with me, and scorched me more and more. (p. 73).

When Jim says he may even get an abolitionist to steal his wife and children out of slavery, Huck says, "It most froze me to hear such talk" (p. 73). This is the boy who had said, back at Jackson's Island, "People would call me a low-down Abolitionist and despise me for keeping mum--but that don't make no difference" (p. 39).

Huck's rather sudden reluctance to help Jim here indicates a number of things about the river journey so far. I suggest that Huck has been drifting along with Jim, relieved to be out of pap's clutches, and enjoying what is to him an adventure. He has accepted keeping company with a runaway slave, but until he approaches Cairo, he hasn't had to deal with the fact that he is an accomplice in helping a slave to get free. Further, there is something terribly final about leaving the Missouri River and going up the Ohio. Huck does not want to totally destroy any chance that he may
have of ever returning to St. Petersburg, and going up the Ohio would accomplish just that. This is why, when he decides to tell on Jim, he says, "it ain't too late, yet" (p. 74). As Kenneth Lynn points out, "once Huck committed the 'sin' of helping Jim to freedom he would place himself forever beyond the pale of heavenly St. Petersburg; he would be carrying his irresolute rebellion against the Happy Valley to the point of no return; he would be electing to become an outcast and a renegade." 48

Huck paddles off, "all in a sweat to tell," when Jim reminds him of "his promise to ole Jim," and calls him a "white genlman." This final appeal to Huck's integrity makes it impossible for Huck to tell on Jim: it is Jim he has given his word to, it is Jim he must face, and it is Jim he decides to protect. Huck's solution to his dilemma at Cairo establishes the real meaning of the river journey. The river journey is not a "quest for freedom;" it is a temporary escape from slavery. Huck is willing to lie to keep Jim out of the hands of slave hunters, but he is not willing to go up the Ohio with him.

Huck's reluctance to help Jim get free shows through clearly right up to the end of the river journey. At the end of his stay at the Grangerford's, Huck's servant takes him to see Jim. Huck is quite upset when he sees Jim again. Everything had turned out so well for him at the Grangerford's, and suddenly he is again faced with the old problem of what to do about Jim. When he asks him why he didn't get Jack to
fetch him sooner, Huck means "Why didn't you get in touch with me before I was adopted here? It's too late—you can't expect me to help you now." Huck isn't very enthusiastic when he says, "You mean to say our old raft warn't smashed all to flinders?" (p. 92). Their conversation ends with Huck's admission of his awareness of what a nasty business he is involved in. He agrees that Jack was pretty smart: "He ain't ever told me you was here; told me to come, and he'd show me a lot of water-moccasins. If anything happens, he ain't mixed up in it. He can say he never seen'us together, and it'll be the truth" (p. 92).

After they leave the Grangerford's, Huck effectively squashes any chance Jim has of ever going up the Ohio when he brings the king and the duke aboard the canoe that was supposed to take Jim to freedom. After Huck and Jim had realized that they had missed Cairo, they had planned to go back up river in their canoe. However, while they were sleeping during the day, their canoe had mysteriously disappeared. They had continued floating down the river, supposedly looking for a chance to buy another canoe. When Providence finally did provide a canoe, however, neither Huck nor Jim even talked about going back up river. Huck took the canoe and went berry-picking, as I have mentioned.

We can only wonder what Huck is thinking of when he lets the king and the duke come into the canoe. His first impulse is to flee, but he is afraid that the two men are too close and will catch him. Further, they beg him to save
their lives, and Huck sympathizes with these two men who are fugitives like himself. Even so, he convinces them to "crowd through the brush and get up the crick a little ways" (p. 98), supposedly to throw the dogs off the scent. As the king and duke move off through the brush, away from Huck, Huck has a chance to escape, but he chooses not to. Can he be wondering what will happen to Jim's chances for finding freedom if he brings the two fugitives on board? Whether he realizes it at the time or not, when he decides to let the king and duke in the canoe, the flight from slavery, such as it has been, is ended. For most of the remainder of the river journey, Huck is content to go along with the two frauds, having adventures on the shore, and leaving Jim alone on the raft, either tied up all day or dressed like a sick Arab, moaning about how he'll never see his wife and family again. Granted, when Huck finally does try to get away from the duke and the king, he plans his escape with Jim's protection in mind. He explains to Mary Jane, "if you was to blow on them this town would get me out of their claws, and I'd be all right, but there'd be another person that you don't know about who'd be in big trouble. Well, we got to save him, hain't we? Of course" (p. 148). Yet, Huck has been ignoring Jim for so long, that he forgets completely Jim's bizarre disguise. When he joins Jim on the raft and Jim comes toward him with arms open wide, Huck is so scared he falls overboard:
... when I glimpsed him in the lightning, my heart shot up in my mouth, and I went overboard backwards; for I forgot he was old King Lear and a drowned A-rab all in one, and it most scared the livers and lights out of me. (p. 161).

This time, Huck can't tell a fake Arab when he sees one.

The river journey finally comes to an end when the king sells Jim to Silas Phelps for forty dollars. Much has been said about Huck's struggle with his conscience and his final decision to tear up his letter to Miss Watson revealing Jim's whereabouts and "go to hell." All readers agree that this decision is a real victory over the prevailing morality. But in fact, it is not a victory at all. Huck still does not condemn or even question the prevailing morality; he still believes that there is nothing wrong with slavery. His decision to tear up the fateful letter is prompted by purely selfish motives.

We should notice first that more than half of the passage leading to his decision is really a full and final expression of his reluctance to help Jim. He feels deeply ashamed of having associated with Jim:

And then think of me! 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 low-down thing, and then he don't want to take no consequences of it. (p. 166).

He is genuinely fearful of the "consequences" of helping Jim; he says, "'people that acts as I'd been acting about that nigger goes to everlasting fire.' It made me shiver" (p. 167). It is interesting to note that when he does write
the letter, he makes no mention of his complicity in Jim's flight down river:

Miss Watson your runaway nigger Jim is down here two mile below Pikesville and Mr. Phelps has got him and he will give him up for the reward if you send.

HUCK FINN (p. 167)

What then, motivates Huck to tear up this letter that has made him feel so "washed clean of sin?" Huck rationalizes it this way: first, he can't remember anything to "harden" himself against Jim. In glowing terms, he remembers only the "talking, and singing, and laughing," and "how good he always was" (p. 167). Second, he remembers saving Jim from the slave hunters at Cairo, and how Jim had been so grateful, and had said Huck was "the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the only one he's got now" (p. 167). Ostensibly, Huck tears up the letter because Jim is a good man and Huck had given his word not to tell on Jim. At this level, the decision is based on sentiment and codes of honour.

But there are, of course, much stronger motives prompting Huck that he does not put into words. When he discovers that Jim is gone, Huck feels deep fear and loneliness.

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 set down and cried; I couldn't help it. (p. 165)

Nowhere else in the book does Huck so completely lose his composure. Second, he feels guilty about Jim's recapture.
After all, it was Huck who brought the king and duke aboard, and he is shattered by what they have done to Jim:

After all this long journey, and after all we'd done for them scoundrels, here was it all come to nothing, everything all busted up and ruined, because they could have the heart to serve Jim such a trick as that, and make him a slave again all his life, and amongst strangers, too, for forty dirty dollars. (p. 166).

Thus, working to free Jim will cure his loneliness and assuage his guilt—emotions that he feels more strongly than the shame connected with helping to free a slave.

Finally, Huck cannot send the letter to Miss Watson because doing so would reveal that he was still alive. (Huck does not yet know what a "nonnamous letter" is.) Writing the letter would alert pap of Huck's whereabouts and Huck would soon be back in pap's cabin again. After all, Huck ran away originally to escape what he fears more than anything else—pap's brutality. Thus, Huck's decision to steal Jim is not really heroic at all. He has no intention of going back up river to the free states to seek permanent freedom. As he explains to Tom later, he plans to "shove off down the river on the raft, with Jim, hiding daytimes and running nights, the way [he] and Jim used to do before" (p. 181).

V. THE GOINGS-ON AT THE PHELPS FARM

Critics have been extremely disappointed with the ending of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Leo Marx expressed the critical objections to the ending most forcibly:

I believe that the ending of *Huckleberry Finn* makes
so many readers uneasy because they rightly sense that it jeopardizes the significance of the entire novel.

... The most serious motive in the novel, Jim's yearning for freedom, is made the object of nonsense.

... Huck knows how he feels about Jim, but he also knows what he is expected to do about Jim. This division within his mind corresponds to the division of the novel's moral terrain into the areas represented by the raft on the one hand and society on the other. His victory over his "yaller dog" conscience therefore assumes heroic size: it is a victory over the prevailing morality. But the last fifth of the novel has the effect of diminishing the importance and uniqueness of Huck's victory.

Marx wrote his objections to the ending of *Huck Finn* in 1953. Many attempts to justify the ending have been made since, but nearly twenty years later, critics like Maxwell Geismar were still convinced that the real ending of the novel comes when Huck decides to "go to hell" and steal Jim out of slavery. As I have tried to show, however, critics who are dissatisfied with the ending of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* have just taken the river journey too seriously, and failed to see the essential foolishness of Huck and Jim. Once we admit that there is a Tom Sawyer in both Huck and Jim, we can see the ending in a different light. At the Phelps' farm, all romantic notions about escaping from the shore society are dispelled.

Huck receives his first shock when Tom Sawyer agrees to help him steal Jim. Huck shows up at the Phelps' farm filled with a left-handed kind of self-righteousness: he is determined to steal Jim out of slavery and "anything worse" that he can think up. He has convinced himself that he is wicked, and is glorying in it: "as long as I was in, and in
for good, I might as well go the whole hog" (p. 168). When he tells Tom that he plans to steal Jim, he dramatizes himself:

I know what you'll say. You'll say it's dirty, low-down business; but what if it is?--I'm low-down; and I'm going to steal him, and I want you to keep mum and not let on. (p. 176).

When Tom agrees to help Huck, Huck is astonished:

Well, I let go all holts then, like I was shot. It was the most astonishing speech I ever heard--and I'm bound to say Tom Sawyer fell, considerable, in my estimation. Only I couldn't believe it. Tom Sawyer a nigger stealer. (p. 176).

Late in the evening on the same day, Huck still can't believe it. Tom reassures him and Huck is finally convinced, but he is still stunned by the revelation:

Well, one thing was dead sure; and that was, that Tom Sawyer was in earnest and was actually going to help steal that nigger out of slavery. That was the thing that was too many for me. Here was a boy that was respectable, and well brung up; and had a character to lose; and folks at home that had characters; and he was bright and not leather-headed; and knowing and not ignorant; and not mean, but kind; and yet here he was, without any more pride, or rightness, or feeling, than to stoop to this business, and make himself a shame, and his family a shame, before everybody. I couldn't understand it, no way at all. It was outrageous. (p. 182).

We should not underestimate the tremendous impact Tom's decision has on Huck. It has taken a summer-long eleven hundred mile journey for Huck to eventually make up his mind what to do about Jim. Much of the difficulty in making the decision to steal Jim stemmed from Huck's knowledge of what Tom Sawyer would have done: we know how often Huck asks himself what Tom Sawyer would do in one situation or another. Yet, here at last is Tom Sawyer, the epitome of respectability,
reaching the same decision in fifteen seconds! The seriousness of Huck's moral struggle is badly undercut, and from this point on, Huck is very confused about what is happening around him. Huck's confusion grows when he notices how Jim is behaving. Huck has developed a certain respect for Jim; after all, Jim had pointed out to Huck long ago that people who play tricks on their friends are just trash. Thus, when Tom begins to fabricate nonsensical things to do in order to add glory and honour to Jim's escape, Huck begins to protest.

"Good land!" I says; "why, there ain't no necessity for it... Why, Tom Sawyer, how you talk." (p. 187)
Journal your granny--Jim can't write. (p. 188)
... Confound it, it's foolish, Tom. (p. 189)
I don't give a dead rat what the authorities thinks about it... (p. 192)

Huck's protests against sawed-off legs, rope ladders, journals, and case-knives reaches a climax the first night the three of them are together in the cabin. Tom explains to Jim all the silly things he plans to do, including smuggling things into the cabin by Uncle Silas and Aunt Sally. Huck says, "Don't do nothing of the kind; it's one of the most jackass ideas I ever struck" (p. 193). But Jim ignores Huck's protests on his behalf:

Jim he couldn't see no sense in the most of it, but he allowed we was white folks and knowed better than him; so he was satisfied, and said he would do it all just as Tom said. (p. 193)

The negro that Huck had humbled himself to and sworn to go to hell for has lost his dignity and is willing to be the butt of all manner of pranks. Although Huck does not say that he is surprised or disappointed in Jim's behaviour, after this
servile display by Jim, he begins to join in the fun. The next morning, while Huck distracts Nat, Tom shoves a piece of candlestick into the middle of a corn-pone in Jim's pan. Huck says, "we went along with Nat to see how it would work, and it just worked noble; when Jim bit into it it most mashed all his teeth out; and there warn't ever anything could a worked better. Tom said so himself" (p. 194). Although Huck doesn't really understand what is going on, he is probably relieved to have Tom be in charge of stealing Jim out of slavery. He repeatedly asserts that things are all right, because Tom said so. And although he grows tired of Tom's determination to do everything according to some authority that Huck hasn't heard about, Huck still goes along with everything and even seems to enjoy himself.

The day of the "grand bulge," Huck seems quite pleased with the way things are working out:

... We was feeling pretty good, after breakfast, and took my canoe and went over the river a fishing, with a lunch, and had a good time, and had a look at the raft and found her all right, and got home late to supper, and found them in such a sweat and worry they didn't know which end they was standing on, and made us go right off to bed the minute we was done supper ... and as soon as we was half upstairs and her back was turned, we slid for the cellar cupboard and loaded up a good lunch.(p. 209)

The way Huck is talking here, he may as well be on a picnic. But suddenly, reality crashes through; in the parlour are fifteen farmers, and every one of them has a gun. The events that follow are horrifying for Huck. When Huck sees the farmers, he is "most powerful sick;" he realizes that
they have "overdone this thing," and gotten into a "thundering hornet's nest" (p. 210). When Aunt Sally questions him he says, "here was aunty pegging away at the questions, and me a shaking all over and ready to sink down in my tracks I was that scared" (p. 211). When he does rejoin Tom and Jim in the cabin, the scene is nightmarish, like something from one of pap's delirium tremens:

But then we heard the tramp of men, coming to the door, and heard them begin to fumble with the padlock; and heard a man say, . . . "Here, I'll lock some of you into the cabin and you lay for 'em in the dark and kill 'em when they come . . . ."

So in they come, but couldn't see us in the dark, and most trod on us whilst we was hustling to get under the bed. But we got under all right, and out through the hole, swift and soft . . . Now we was in the lean-to, and heard trampings close by outside. So we crept to the door, . . . but couldn't make out nothing, it was so dark . . . and the steps a scraping around, out there, all the time; and at last he nudged us, and we slid out, and stooped down, not breathing, and not making the least noise, and slipped stealthy towards the fence . . . Tom's britches caught fast . . . and made a noise . . . somebody sings out . . . we didn't answer; we just unfurled out heels and shoved. Then there was a rush, and a bang, bang, bang! and the bullets fairly whizzed around us! (pp. 211-213)

The next day, while Tom lies on the raft out of his head with fever, Huck has to sit around and listen to Aunt Sally and her neighbours discuss the events of the night before. He hears yet another opinion of Jim, and indirectly, of himself and Tom. Sister Hotchkiss thinks that Jim must have been crazy:

"he's crazy, s'I; everything shows it, s'I. Look at that-air grindstone, s'I; want to tell me't any cretur 'ts in his right mind's agoin' to scrubble all them crazy things onto a grindstone, s'I . . . natch'erl son o'Louis somebody, 'n' sich everlast'n rubbage. He's plumb crazy . . . . " (p. 215)
Huck is also made aware of another reality, the mental anguish that Aunt Sally has been going through. Huck seems to have been enjoying her distress to this point, but now he realizes that Aunt Sally was as worried for her "two poor boys" as much as for herself. She says:

"Fraid to live!—why I was that scared I dasn't hardly go to bed, or get up, or lay down, or set down, Sister Ridgeway. Why, they'd steal the very—why, goodness sakes, you can guess what kind of a fluster I was in by the time midnight come, last night. I hope to gracious if I warn't afraid they'd steal some 'o' the family! (p. 217)

Finally, that night, Huck abandons Jim's cause. Aunt Sally tucks him into bed and mothers him "so good [he] felt mean . . . and couldn't look her in the face" (p. 218).

She set down on the bed and talked with me a long time, and said what a splendid boy Sid was, and didn't seem to want to ever stop talking about him; and kept asking me every now and then, if I reckoned he could a got lost, or hurt, or maybe drowned, and might be laying at this minute, somewheres, suffering or dead, and she not by him to help him, and so the tears would drip down, silent, and I would tell her that Sid was all right . . . and when she was going away, she looked down in my eyes, so steady and gentle, and says:

"The door ain't going to be locked, Tom; and there's the window and the rod; but you'll be good, won't you? And you won't go? For my sake? (p. 218)

Once again, Huck must decide between two things. He makes his mind up very quickly:

Laws knows I wanted to go, bad enough, to see about Tom, and was all intending to go; but after that, I wouldn't a went, not for kingdoms. (p. 218)

The horrifying events of the night before and the sorrow of Aunt Sally prove to be too much for Huck. He has discovered that trying to steal a negro can get you killed,
and he has also realized how much pain Aunt Sally is in. When he sees her sitting up all night with her "eyes towards the road and the tears in them," he concludes, "I wished I could do something for her, but I couldn't only to swear that I wouldn't do nothing to grieve her any more" (p. 218). Eric Solomon comments that Uncle Silas and Aunt Sally become the family Huck has been looking for through the novel. We know that the Phelps' farm is patterned after the farm of John Quarles, which Twain called "a heavenly place for a boy."\(^{52}\)

What more inevitable climax for a novel of search for family than this recreation of the place Twain recalled in association with the lyric joy of his glorious childhood summers? To be sure, Huck spends one-fourth of his adventure at Phelps Farm. Rather than an artistic flaw, the farm is the proper objective correlative for the happy family of Huck's dreams.\(^{53}\)

One last word needs to be said about the way Huck ends his story:

I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and civilize me and I can't stand it. I been there before. (p. 226)

We must resist here being taken in by Huck's last brag. Really, it is Tom and Jim that he is disappointed in. He has just discovered that his two best friends have been lying to him and playing him for a fool all along. Tom has kept Jim's freedom a secret, and Jim has kept pap's death a secret.\(^{54}\) We know, too, that if Huck lights out for the Territory, it would "grieve" Aunt Sally, and Huck has already sworn not to grieve her any more. Besides, Huck already is civilized, so he should
have an easy time of it, now. And since there isn't a Pap Finn around anymore to snatch him away, I think Huck will decide to stay, if only for Aunt Sally's good cooking. After all, Huck began his story with the warning, "I never seen anybody but lied, one time or another."

VI. CONCLUSION

In my attempt to view Huck and Jim realistically, I have virtually ignored the very short but very special time that Huck and Jim spend alone together on the raft. The parts of the river journey that include Jim's rebuke of Huck and the two or three days and nights that "swum by" after the Grangerford-Shepherdson feud are indeed, "lovely." Jim and Huck do gain their freedom, however briefly; for a short time, they say and do what they want. Their experiences on the raft—slipping away from violence and sham into darkness, silence and communion—represent an ideal that I am sure all North Americans who read the book wish to attain.

However, Mark Twain does not allow Huck and Jim—or the reader—to stay on the raft, and herein lies the disappointment that readers feel when Tom Sawyer makes his appearance at the Phelps' farm. (They should begin to feel it when the king and the duke come aboard.) Indeed, it is the beauty of the raft passages that makes this disappointment so wrenching.

However, as I have suggested, Mark Twain was writing a book not about escape from society, but about return to
society. Huck's experiences are civilizing ones; at the end of this story he is no longer the "romantic outcast" that he was in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. And if we do see Huck's decision to go to hell for Jim as heroic or highly moral, we must confess too that this ideal state of morality is impossible to maintain. As Michael J. Hoffman points out,

Huck's falling off from this step of almost transcendent goodness is not Twain's failure of vision, but his further feeling that the forces of society are stronger than the individual's will or ability to maintain a constant naked confrontation with the world. . . . it is important that Twain both begins the novel within society and ends by returning to it.

The middle section is the most attractive because, at least in part, it is the most seductive. In it, Twain can point out all the ills of society in a series of episodes and can show how attractive life is when lived outside it. And yet, he knows that escape is only temporary, that sooner or later one must return and make his peace with the established order.55
FOOTNOTES

1 Leo Marx, "Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and Huckleberry Finn," American Scholar, XXII (Autumn, 1953), p. 431.


3 Samuel Clemens, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1961), p. 95. All subsequent page references to Adventures of Huckleberry Finn will be to this edition and will be included in my text.


12 Marx, p. 425.


20. Quoted in Blair, p. 83.


22. Quoted in Blair, p. 89.


24. Blair, p. 29.


27. Quoted in Blair, p. 38.


Critics have been partly misled too, by Twain's description of Jim. In his autobiography he claimed that "Uncle Dan'l" was a model for Jim and described "Uncle Dan'l" as "a faithful and affectionate good friend, ally, and adviser . . . whose head was the best one in the negro quarter, whose sympathies were wide and warm, and whose heart was honest and simple and knew no guile."—from Mark Twain's Autobiography, Vol. I, p. 100.

Branch, p. 205.


Trilling, p. xi.


Actually Jim resists Tom somewhat. He tells him that if he brings a rattlesnake into the cabin for him to tame, he'll leave for sure (p. 203). Also, he "found so much fault . . . with the work and bother" of being a prisoner, that Tom "most lost all patience with him."

Smith, Mark Twain: The Development of a Writer, p. 123.


Trilling, p. ix.

Clemens, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, p. 318. I believe I am justified in quoting heavily from Tom Sawyer. Huck begins his own story with the statement, "You don't know about me, without you have read a book by the name of "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" (p. 7).

Clemens, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, p. 320.
There are two groups of characters in the story, those who live within society, and those who live without. In a story that is supposedly an expression of general revolt against society, we might expect a more kindly treatment of those in the second group. But the reverse is true. All the outcasts and outlaws meet violent ends: Pap Finn and Boggs are shot to death; the thieves on the 

Walter Scott 
drown; and the king and the duke are tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail.

These are Leo Marx's words.


Kenneth Lynn, p. 218.

One wonders if Huck was responsible for the disappearance of the canoe. It could only have disappeared because someone hadn't properly secured it to the raft.

Leo Marx, pp. 425, 428, and 436.


Tom and Jim make quite a pair. Tom runs around showing off his bullet which he carries around his neck on a watch-guard. Jim, of course, carries the five-cent piece around his neck which the "devil" himself gave to him.

SELECTED LIST OF REFERENCES


Doyno, Victor A. "Over Twain's shoulder: The Composition and Structure of Huckleberry Finn." Modern Fiction Studies, XIV (Spring, 1960), pp. 3-9.


