CHAPTER - VII

The Impeccable Maestro
Nineteenth-century America was a hot bed of old and new systems, theories and beliefs regarding man's personality and intellectual potential. Leading social and literary figures openly admired and investigated a wide range of ideas pertaining to man's personal abilities. One such investigator was Mark Twain. Most Americans regard Mark Twain with special affection, and it may not be out of place to say that Twain was the first American author of world rank to write genuinely colloquial and native American life. Americans know him as a shaggy man who told stories of boy adventures so much like their own or those who could like to have them become intimately a part of their personal experience. His cheerful irreverence and unhurried pace seem antidotes for attitudes to which they necessarily but reluctantly surrender. His is the image of what they like to think Americans have been or can be: humorously perceptive, undeceived by sham, successful in spite of unfavorable circumstances. No doubt, Twain shot into fame as humourist. The common man looked to Twain for laughter, but the fact is that he is more than a humourist. This fact was well said by Thomas Hardy when he wrote to Dean Howells mentioning it as, "Mark Twain is not merely a great humourist. He is a remarkable fellow in a very different way."!

That is why there is no wonder when Ernest Hemingway found that all American literature started with Mark Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn in which more serious matters are discussed. His escape to adventure, to bygone times, to humour which moves through and beyond reality, is not unlike Hemingway's escape form thinking through the simpler pleasures of wine, women, and manly exercise. Not only is Mark Twain's simple declarative style a parent of Hemingway's style; not only is his boy's eye-view of the world like Hemingway's view, like Willa Cather's, Sherwood Anderson's, J.D. Salinger's the publication of The Older Times of Henry Adams,' as well as the despair of the 'Lost Generation of Hemingway and Scott-Fitzgerald,' and The Wasteland of T.S. Eliot.
Mark Twain’s age was fastidious age; it was not so easy to make them believe anything. Mark Twain never really existed except as a character, costumed and carefully rehearsed, cannily crowd-pleaser. For both in a literary and psychological sense the but perceptive humanist remembered as Mark Twain is Mark, a controlled, drawling, and whimsical voice, a posturing and flamboyant figure, behind which exists the man, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, who with the help of circumstance and receptive wit created him. The image is partly self-portrait, but shrewdly retouched until the character who is Mark Twain becomes Clemens’ most successful achievement, and the voice of Mark Twain speaks in a special literary relation to its creator.

It is probably true that the two became as confused in Clemens’ mind as they have in the minds of people who have talked about Mark Twain, but the distinction is radical. Mark Twain was a character who inserted himself, sometimes with joyous abandon, into almost everything which Samuel Clemens wrote. He was irresponsible but self-conscious, alert to his responsibilities of much which wove itself into the pattern of contemporary nations of success. But failure to remember that Mark Twain was a medium through whom stories were told, and that he was only in an indirect sense their author is to fall into the attractively baited trap which opens even more invitingly before commentators on such other American writers as Whitman, Thoreau, and Hemming way, whose masks are more subtle and less clearly designated. Mark Twain’s works are like water and the books of great geniuses are like wine, but it was surely Mark Twain who supplied the twister to remind us everyone drinks water. Part of his character was that of a man among littérature, a journalist who detested, the sad, novels and poetry, but who liked history, biography, curious facts, and strange happenings.

Mark Twain is one of the best loved writers of America. Immediately popular in his own days, he has been luckier than the most popular writers who fell into obscurity immediately after their death, for he remains today, years after his death one of the great figures of American literature and his fame seems to be in no danger. Mark Twain’s appeal to the readers is
based on various factors. Some see in his humour the explanation for his great popularity. Others feel that it is the least of his attractive features. John Eskine and W. P Trent in their book Great Writers of America declare that Mark Twain is more certain of remembrance as a novelist than as a humorist and a satirist.

It is sure, Mark Twain started his career as a humorous writer, but later on in his chequered career he worked as a printer's devil, journeyman printer, steamboat pilot, and soldier he went out to the Far West. It was there that Mark Twain finally got into journalism of the masculine humorous sort which flourished in the Far West. Van Wyck Brooks in his book The Ordeal of Mark Twain points out it as, "it was- in Nevada and California that Mark Twain's literary career of which we have evidence during the whole of his adolescence came to the front."²

During this period his literary career blossomed and his first story The Celebrated Jumping Frog won him recognition all over the country. He was sent abroad by the editorial staff of the newspaper for which he wrote his sketches. The idea was that he should report the trip humorously and the result was The Innocents Abroad (1869) which firmly established his fame. The book is one of the finest examples of the old extravagant American humour. In The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876) and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1880) Mark Twain's literary techniques can be seen in abundance in all these works. Even his trip around the world was delightful to his audience and none who heard him could forget his unique drollery. In spite of his prodigious appeal as a humorist, it must be borne in mind that Mark Twain was reluctant to adopt the humorist's career and that he was in revolt against a role which, as he vaguely felt, had been thrust upon him because laughter was to him a mask behind which he hid a lot of stress and strain. "I am tired to death all the time," wrote Mark Twain in 1895 and his biographer Albert B. Paine, comments: "Perhaps, after all it was his comic outlook on things in general that was his chief lifesaver."³ If it was Mark Twain's humour or any other sole literary technique alone that made him known and loved as a writer, had he no
other qualities, he might by now have been almost forgotten like the many American jokers who have gone out of fashion, like Joseph Billinges or Artemus Ward.

Mark Twain is literary genius and his personal traits have contributed to his becoming almost a legend. He was both a personality and a personage. The stories about him are endless. His liking for cats, his addiction to tobacco and whisky and billiards, his passion for dressing in white, his willingness to back inventions, his colorful profanity, his fondness for hoaxes, his hatred of intolerance and cruelty and despotism, and his personal kindnesses and everything about him was hot topic and interesting. In the writings of this beloved American author, his personality was an important element. In the midst of a baffling variety of traits, there was in him a certain delicacy, which according to his friend Howells, was an intrinsic trait. Howells wrote about Mark Twain as, "Among the half-dozen... personalities that each of us becomes, I should say that Clemens' central and final personality was something exquisite. His casual acquaintances might know him, perhaps, from his fierce intensity, his wild pleasure in shocking people... as anything but exquisite, and yet that was what in the last analysis he was...One could not know him well without realizing him the most serious, the most humane, the most conscientious of men."\(^4\)

Gifted with a marvelous mimetic ability, Mark Twain was superb storyteller. This enabled him to hold his readers enthralled and to entertain audiences in his home and in public auditoriums with equal facility. Gladys Bellamy in *Mark Twain as a Literary Artist* points out how Mark Twain was adept at carefully leading his readers and audience through calculated effects and contrived suspense to effective climaxes. He was a consummate master of the 'tall tale' as is proved by his stories about *The Jumping Frog* and *The Blue Joy*. These along with *The Man that Corrupted Handleyburg* are imperishable narratives of American literature. Beginning with *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain showed himself to be a novelist of the first rank. The books that followed fulfilled the expectation created by this work.
The greatest success of Mark Twain as a novelist is his genius for creating memorable characters and for breathing life into them. Perhaps his portrait gallery is small, yet it is memorable: Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn and the runaway nigger Jim, Colonel Sellers and Roxy all are unforgettable characters. Mark Twain is a remarkable analyzer of character. Tom Sawyer proves his phenomenal understanding of the American small boy, and of those aspects of human nature which expand in the small, wide-settled villages of inland America. The tramp, the loafer, the peddler all the local characters that might have significance in the eyes of the small boy, are represented with fascinating realism, as well as the more respectable but less interesting domestic characters—but all of them viewed at all times through the eyes of the boy. 'he wanders into immortality, swinging a dead cat. 'This lovable boy with his moral improvisation,' as W. H. Auden puts, 'is indeed immortal.' Jim with his superstitions and his inherent goodness—he refuses to leave Tom Sawyer till a doctor is called to attend to his leg—is also sure to stay in our imagination forever. Aunt Polly, widow Douglas Aunt Sally, Uncle Silas are all vividly drawn characters. Yet more interesting are the lowdown humbugs and frauds who get on board Huck's and Jim's canoe, and pretend to be the late Dauphin son of Louis Sixteen and Mary Antoinette and the rightful Duke of Bridgewater. Among the characters of Mark Twain not the least important the river Mississippi for him even endowed this river with personality, making it vibrant, mysterious and powerful.

As a painter of manners and customs Mark Twain is a master. The French critic Maurice Le Breton says, "Mark Twain’s work is a panorama of the West in all its variety." Twain has observed everything landscapes, environments, physical characteristics of the inhabitants. Ways of life, customs, beliefs, superstitions. Through him we know the little Missouri town, asleep on the banks of the river, with its houses rising in steps from the levee, surrounded by its circle of wooded hills terminating near the Mississippi in sheer cliffs pierced by caves. American landscape assures for readers, native and foreign, a vividness and reality that is rarely seen in
other writers. No other American writer has so faithfully described the Mississippi river with its rapids and its half-submerged logs feared by the navigators, the wooded isles and dismal cotton plantations of the south. The Arkansas farm introduced in Huckleberry Finn is minutely described. The novelist does not write on it the clean rooms, the floors covered with rugs, the heart framed in well scrubbed red brick, the naive knick-knacks on the mantelpiece and the popular prints on the wall. The entire West flies past the reader in a succession of precise, faithful images.

Mark Twain's realism does not stop at externals. In describing scenes that he knew, he often relies on memory and hence he interests in reality and to a certain extent colours it. His realism is not the photographic realism of Dreiser. For this reason of all Mark Twain's books those that posterity will best remember are Tom Sawyer, Life on the Mississippi, The Prince and the Pauper and above all Huckleberry Finn.

Mark Twain did not stop with depicting social customs and manners. He went a step further and satirized them. In Life on the Mississippi and in Huckleberry Finn, he evinces his keen penchant for social satire. His hatred of social injustice which he associated historically with feudalism and absolute monarchy was developed in the two stories with English setting, The Prince and the Pauper (1882) and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. (1889). There has been difference of opinion regarding Mark Twain as a social critic. Bernard Shaw regarded him as "a socialist before all else."

One of the great things that Mark Twain achieved in Huckleberry Finn and other novels is the creation of a prose style suited to the American ethos. Though many writers before Twain had tried to exploit the possibilities of the American idiom, it was only in his hands that, we get a rich style with simplicity and informality of phrases, bold and incongruous simplicity and flavored colloquialisms. In his hands comic jargon and dialect became a finished literary weapon, un-empathetic, visual, and deceptively simple, sounding like speech and yet not quite the same. Howells said that
Orthodox English, as written by the accepted masters is scholarly and conscious; it knows who its grandfather was. With Mark Twain cement—like Western life—had a mongrel incongruity but form began the lineage that has led to Hemingway. His basic reliance on colloquial idiom encouraged many later writers who, but for his example would not have dared to deviate from the 'literary' style of his contemporaries.

a thinker Mark Twain is rather disappointing. He was full of prejudices and in his likes and his dislikes he tended to be irrational. He had minor artistic lapses too, for he was seldom a disciplined writer, but these faults fade into insignificance when compared with the overwhelming greatness of Mark Twain, the buoyant story-teller, the delineator of character and the master of idiomatic prose. Optimist and pessimist dupe of his own emotions, or coerced by his audience, Mark Twain does not appear to the American reader as a man of letters imprisoned by the demands of his vocation, but rather as a free spirit to whom one turns in order to breathe the virile, joyous, healthy atmosphere of an America which has disappeared. He survives as the evocator, the poet of a unique phase of American experience. There is an understanding between him and his public, just as there was during his lifetime. He continues to have an almost seductive charm for his readers. The reasons for his success are sentimental; America sees him with real affection, as the first of her writers to draw from the American soil, the material for an original and lasting work. Such is the fame that this great novelist enjoyed himself during his own hay days. That is why it is strongly felt by any researcher to do research on this great writer on any select theme.

Mark Twain's literary genius started unfolding itself in stories, sketches, but his real fame as a literary giant started with the publication of *The celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras Country and other Sketches* in 1867, which relates the mining operations in Nevada. In this book the jumping frog is used as a symbol representing an adventurer who with a single jump gets into limelight of popularity. In 1869 *The Innocents Abroad* was authored on Mark Twain's lecture tours abroad. Next in 1872 *Roughing*
It was published with the subject matter of the harsh realities of mining operations in Nevada.

The Gilded Age (1874) was written in collaboration with C.D. Warner. In this book, the authors attack the hypocrisy and dirty deals of political leaders. This book is very famous for its characterization of Colonel and Laura who are the two important characters in the book. Next one is his beauty: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer in 1876, which is aptly called a hymn turned into prose by the critics. This is a boy's book. It is full of rich humour, adventure, satire, ruffianism and it if the river Mississippi the pet subject of the author also plays a dominant role. This is one of the select novels of our present study. After the great success of The Adventure of Tom Sawyer, A Tramp Abroad was published in 1880, it is an average book written on the author's long stay in Europe. Next in 1882, The Prince and the Pauper was written, it is an historical satire on social and economical injustice, the monarchical system and the class – distinctions. Because of that it was rightly called by a reviewer as a manual of republicanism. This novel is also selected for our study as it is a rich source of humour, satire, adventure, slavery, ruffianism, roguery, sentiment and other techniques.

After a lapse of many years Twain again returns to his favorite topic the river Mississippi in Life on the Mississippi. It was published in 1883 after a considerable delay in writing the second part of the book. The primary subject matter of the book is the river itself in fact, Apart from the river, the book is a store-house of native humour, satire, adventure, the frontier roguery and slavery. Because of this thematic unity with the other select works this book is also selected for the present study. In 1885 the greatest novel of Mark Twain The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn was written and at first the novel was abandoned by the literary and religious pedantic as 'Variest trash'. But later the same novel shot the novelists to dizzy heights of fame and popularity. This book is also a good source of humour, satire, adventure, slavery roguery, ruffianism, humanism, sentiment, love, and etc which are the main themes of our present study. Hence this novel was

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Amongst all these works that have been authored by Mark Twain, the most striking, entertaining enlightening and popular works are - The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Life on the Mississippi and The Price and the Pauper. Since these four books have the same thematic unity, they have been selected for this research programme. The themes that are chosen chapter wise are –

Chapter-I, which is entitled My God-like Mark Twain, gives a bird's eye view of Mark Twain's life and his literary career.

Chapter II, which is christened as Mark Twain's Mississippi dwells upon the river Mississippi, and its surrounding milieu, which are the constant subject matters that we find in Mark Twain's work. Especially out of the four works that we have selected for our present study, three works are completely set either on the river or on its shores. In our first novel Huck Finn the role of river starts with the running- away of Huck and Jim for freedom. Thence till the end of the novel it is a constant character in the novel. In the other novel The Adventure of Tom Sawyer also the river plays a dominant role, it's presence was felt when Tom Huck and Joe Harper ran-away to Jackson Island from the tyrannical village of St. Petersberg. From that point till the end of the novel the river is a constant character in the novel. In our next work Life on the Mississippi, the primary subject matter itself is the river Mississippi. In this work the entire drama of Twain piloting and aftermath days are clearly enacted on the yellow god, the river Mississippi. Thus in this chapter mark Twain's treatment and portrayal of the river Mississippi had been vividly depicted.

Chapter III, which is named as Mark Twain and Humour entirely, deals with the creation of Mark Twain's humour in the select works. Mark Twain is considered to be one of the greatest humourists in the world. In
America he is the greatest by shadowing Armett Ward. Twain's creation of rich native humour can be found abundantly in *Huckleberry Finn* from beginning to the end. It starts with the sham religious lectures of Miss Watson and continues with Jim superstitions, Pap's blasphemy of the Government and religion, Jim mistaking of Huck as ghost, Duke and Dauphins enactment of drama, Boggs's killing, and ends with Tom's romantic plans.

**Tom Sawyer** is also a rich store-house of Twain's humour. It starts with Tom's befooling of his Aunt Silas and Continues with the befooling of Joe Harper, Tom's pretension of tooth ache, his unwillingness to go to Sunday School, his meeting with Huck Finn, these discussion of curing warts, and visiting graveyard, preparing a bond with blood, their running-away to Jackson Island and their planning of piratical activities, their attending of their own funeral, Tom boyish promise and love flittering in the school, his recitation of the Bible, Tom and Huck's treasure hunting and ends with Tom's assurance of starting a gang of robbers. In the next work, *Life on the Mississippi* the first fifteen chapters are full of humour, which will surely demand a second reading. Apart from that there are some good touches in opening portion of the book, as where the author refers to Louis XIV, of inflated memory. Besides that the portrayal of Horace Bixeby and the other political jokes really entertain us with the native frontier humour of those times.

**The Prince and the Pauper** the other select novel for the present study is surely a scathing satire on the inequalities of the poor and the rich during the reign of Henry VIII. Yet it has fantastic sods and stretches of humour in it, when Tom Canty the poor boy of Offal court conducts the mock royal court, in describing his father John Canty and his grandmother. The humour in the novel gets its momentum with the two boys changing their dresses and roles. Tom Canty's baffling situation in the Royal Court, his funny struggle with the royal etiquette, learning, his supposed madness, his conversation with the whipping - boy, his way of giving judgments and
finally his innocent confession of using the Royal seal for cracking nuts etc., will undoubtedly create a lot of humour.

Parallel to that, Edward the crown prince's encounter with John Canty, his royal language, his difficulty to acclimatize to the sordid situations, his funny conversation with Miles Hendon, his running-away from the ruffians gang, his cleaning of wooden-dishes in a country home, his claiming of the Royal throne and the confused state and dilly-dallying of the nobles are all the humorous instances which makes us forget that we are reading a scathing political satire of Twain. Thus the third chapter dotes the readers with a lot of divergent humorous situations.

In Chapter IV, Sam and Satire Twain's satirical aspects in the select works have been thoroughly studied. It is sure that Twain's fame rests on his unique technique of a pure fun maker, as he brought the entire cavalcade of the frontier people on the operation table. Nothing escapes the severity of the thrust with which Mark Twain explodes. His satirical process becomes more apparent and effective as the novelist wades through the vast expanses of the American landscape and this fact can be clearly seen in our select works.

In Huck Finn, we see this satirization from the beginning to the end of the novel. It starts with Miss Watson's sham religiosity, pap's attack on the Niggers, Huck, and the government, Pap's treatment of Huck, Huck and Jims escapade, their encounter with slave-hunters, ruffians and rouges, Col Sherbrum and Boggs incident, Ganger Fords and Shepherdson's false feuds, Duke and Dauphins incident, and their selling-away of Jim, and Tom's romantic traits are the best instances of Twain's satirization in the novel.

In The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Twain's satirization starts with sunday school and Church incident Tom's smoking and love affair, treatment meted to Huck Finn, superstition of Tom and Huck, Dr. Robison's murder, in the grave yard Muff Potter's trial, Tom and Huck's fears about In Jun Joe, Tom's running-away to Jackson island, Tom and Huck's treasure
hunt and Injun Joe's forced death are the most glaring satirical aspect, through which Twain attacked the contemporary society.

In *Life on the Mississippi*, the political buffoonery, billings-gate, ruffianism and piratical activities, frontier sham, hypocrisy, duplicity, the bogus sentiments, false values of Sir Walter Confederacy, the Veneer of the House Beautiful, the brutal treachery of John Murrel, the absurd extravagances of funeral customs are directly satirized by the author.

In the novel *The Prince and the Pauper*, Twain's satire reaches its highest water mark as the author pungently attacks the financial inequalities and the barbarian laws. This satirical attack starts with the vivid comparison of Offal Court and its genteel people. Tom Canty's brutal treatment by John Canty and his grandmother, the poor and humble living of Father Andrews, the wretched lives of the Offal courtiers, and poor plight of their starved children, Royal courtiers unnecessary formalities and customs, the etiquette of the nobles the power hunger of King Henry VIII, the ill behavior of the residents of the Christ Hospital, the ill treatment of Edward by John Canty, the language of the Prince Edward, the barbarian laws, the corrupt officialdom, the selfish country people, the religion, the treachery of the nobles, the hasty and illegal judgments, the buffoonery of the nobles, and ends with power monger ship of the English Kings. Thus the fourth chapter throws light on the satirical aspects of Mark Twain in our select works.

Chapter V, *Slavery and Ruffianism*, deals with the twin themes of Slavery and Ruffianism. In the boyhood days of Mark Twain owning slaves was considered to be a mark of respect and slaves were openly sold and bought like animals in the open market. Jim's case is the best example for this instance. Their owners can use them in any manner that they wish they were not entitled to any kind of right. Thus their lives were miserable. This institution of slavery, its implications and complications and it's impact on the American society then and now have been thoroughly discussed in this chapter.
Regarding ruffianism, during the times of Mark Twain there had been no organized law and order. The frontier was considered to be the best hub of all ruffinastic behavior. Everybody carried a gun with him all the times in order to save himself. Because of the Westward push money was be all and end all in the lives of the frontier people. Many of them became dupes, frauds, cheats, scoundrels, cut throat robbers, murderers, slave hunters and pirates for the sake money. The hub of these ruffians is also the setting for our three select works. Hence this topic had been chosen for the present study. Even in The Prince and the Pauper also there is the same menace, but it is in different setting.

Chapter VI, Technique and Twain covers the different and divergent technical themes of Mark Twain like search for freedom, Adventure element, sentiment superstitions, love, ending styles of his novels, in the select works of our present study. Some of the above topics and techniques are untouched by the scholars hitherto. Hence it has been felt pertinent to study on those virgin themes.

Chapter VII, The Impeccable Maestro sums-up the entire themes of the various chapters, besides covering the untouched topics and the highlights of the author's life and literary career.

Thus attempting Mark Twain was a successful endeavor in every literary aspect, especially his adventure, humour, portrayal of river Mississippi, satire and technique are fantastic and laudable. Besides that he touched slavery, ruffianism and humanism, in his short stories novels and travelogues. He was a profound thinker and philosopher without putting forward any systematic doctrine. He desired the inner reform of man, rather the outer. He advocated personal morality rather than institutional and convention alone for propagating his moral agenda. He effectively used satire irony, paradox and boisterous humour. In using all these he was very political, he never pained anybody with scathing attack but crept into their hearts through his writings like a nocturnal thief and thus tried to reform them. That's why he was always good with crowds and he was very popular.
during his own days alike others. This fact was well said by Kurt Vonnegut Jr, when he says it as, “Twain was good with crowds that he became in competition with singers and dancers and actors and acrobats, one of the most popular performers of his times. It is so unusual and so psychologically unlikely for a great writer to be a great performer too, that I can think of only two similar cases – Homer’s, perhaps and Moliere’s”.

Thus, Mark Twain was not only put on the highest literary pedestal on a par with Homer and Moliere and Voltaire, but also he was believed to be ‘god like’ by the Noble laureate, Rudyard Kipling, when he praises Twain stepping a foot ahead as, “I love to think of the great and godlike Clemens.”

So it is great pleasure and pride for any researcher to do research on such a great writer like Mark Twain, who had gained laurels from literary giants like, Rudyard Kipling, T.S. Eliot, Hemingway, William Dean Howells, De Vottos and Lionel Trilling. That’s why the researcher has chosen his god like Mark Twain for his research programme.
REFERENCES


