



American Prose: Mark Twain's Social Viewpoints

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Abstract: *this article analyzes the social views, writing style, and important aspects of the great American writer Mark Twain, along with the prose genre of American literature. How he enriched the American short story with Native American humor and pointed out the way for the social novel in America. Profoundly humane Twain was above all, an uncompromising fighter for democracy and justice.*

Keywords: *American literature, prose, social viewpoints, Golden Age, humour, satire, short story.*

Date of Submission: 04-11-2021

Date of Acceptance: 06-12-2021

INTRODUCTION. American Literature: Prose, fiction and nonfiction of the American colonies and the United States, written in the English language from about 1600 to the present. This literature captures America's quest to understand and define itself. From the beginning America was unique in the diversity of its inhabitants; over time they arrived from all parts of the world. Although English quickly became the language of America, regional and ethnic dialects have enlivened and enriched the country's literature almost from the start. Today American prose encompasses a variety of traditions and voices that share a common context: the geographical region now known as the United States. Native American literatures, which were largely oral at the time of colonial settlement, stand apart as a separate tradition that is itself strong and varied.

For its first 200 years American prose reflected the settlement and growth of the American colonies, largely through histories, religious writings, and expedition and travel narratives. Biography also played an important role, especially in America's search for native heroes. Fiction appeared only after the colonies gained independence, when the clamor for a uniquely American literature brought forth novels based on events in America's past. With a flowering of prose in the mid-1800s, the young nation found its own voice. By then fiction had become the dominant literary genre in America. In the 20th century, American literature took its place on the world stage and began to exert influence on other literatures.

American Literature: Drama, literature intended for performance, written by Americans in the English language. American drama begins in the American colonies in the 17th century and continues to the present.

We know that two great talents: Herman Melville and Mark Twain are towering figures of American literature in the 1800s. Melville traveled widely and later wrote of his adventures at sea. His masterpiece is *Moby Dick*, the story of one man's destructive hunt for a white whale. In the book, Melville looks at good and evil in people and in nature. Mark Twain wrote stories about life along the Mississippi River, where he grew up. His childhood adventures figure in his best-known book, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The boy Huck Finn makes up his mind about right and wrong when he decides to break the law and help a runaway slave escape to freedom.

THE MATERIALS FOR THE RESEARCH: The concrete empirical examples of structure of translating problems; linguistic analysis of scenery of voyage in the novels by Mark Twain taken from the fiction from the mass media, internet, textbooks and lecture materials etc.

THE METHODS OF THE RESEARCH: historical analyzing method, transformational method, comparative method, distributional method, statistical method, method of componential analysis, oppositional method, method of modeling, deductive and inductive methods.

DISCUSSION. So, Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) enriched the American short story with Native American humour and pointed out the way for the social novel in America. Profoundly humane Twain was above all, an uncompromising fighter for democracy and justice. His political pamphlets are outstanding examples of merciless satire. As a social critic Twain ranks with Milton, Swift, Defoe, Voltaire, T. Paine and Bernard Shaw.

Samuel Clemens was born on November 30, 1835, in a tiny settlement in Missouri not far from the little town of Hannibal on the banks of the Mississippi River. The family soon moved to Hannibal and there young Sam spent the first fourteen years of his life, the years in which the writer's character and outlook on life began to be formed. Much later Twain wrote: "All that goes to make the me in me was in a Missourian village. His father died when Sam was not yet twelve years old and the boy had to work to help the family. He became a printer's apprentice and then a journeyman (picture) printer. Twain was very fond of reading in all his life. While he was a printer he spent his spare time in libraries and so it came about that he read the works of Poe, Shakespeare, Gold Smith, Dickens, Cervantes, Voltaire and T. Paine in his early youth. It was also while he was a printer that Twain began to write for newspapers and other publications, sending travel letters to them as he journeyed about the country from job to job. One of Sam Clemens' dreams as a boy had been to pilot a steamboat on the Mississippi. But it cost a lot of money to learn piloting and he knew his family couldn't afford it even if they would have agreed to let him take up such a rough and dangerous profession. The desire to run a steamboat, however, never left him and (family) finally the opportunity to do so came.

He had been working several years as a printer when one of the best pilots on the Mississippi agreed to teach him his skill. Sam borrowed the necessary money to pay for training from one of his relatives and by 1858 he was piloting a steamboat. In his "Life on the Mississippi" (1883) Mark Twain tells how he became a steamboat pilot. The four years that he worked as a pilot gave Clemens much valuable experience and knowledge of human nature. But most important for him as a future writer were the people he came in contact with. He wrote later that he became personally acquainted "with all the different types of the human nature that are to be found in fiction, biography or history" It was while working for the Enterprise that Mark Twain's career as a journalist really began. His materials began to appear in the paper regularly and on February 2, 1863, the Enterprise carried on; item signed "Mark Twain!" This was the first time the writer's pen-name appeared in print. "Mark Twain!" was a call used by steamboat men when sounding the depth of the water and meant the depth was two (12 feet and that it was safe for the boat to move ahead. On his return from Europe, Mark Twain had written and published his book "The Innocents Abroad"(1869) the years 1874 to 1885 were the most productive. Among the books that he published in that period were his greatest works: "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" (1870), "A Tramp Abroad" (1880), "The Prince and the Pauper"(1882) and "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" (1885). Mark Twain was by his very nature an ardent champion of the rights of man. In 1885 he sent a letter to the United States Government protesting against barbaric treatment of Indians in the west and urged the President to use his powers to put a stop to it immediately. With the letter Mark Twain enclosed an official notice that had been published in a newspaper in New Mexico which said that the local government there would pay a \$ 250 reward to any citizen for "Each and every" Indian killed by that citizen on presentation of the scalp of such Indian.

In the last decade of his life Mark Twain wrote several of his best political articles and pamphlets, among them "The United States of Lyncherdom" (1901), "To the Person sitting in Darkness" (1902). The latter two were powerful satirical pamphlets on imperialist policy being conducted by America. "The United States of Lyncherdom" was a bitter indignant article written by Mark Twain when he heard of a particularly brutal lynching of Negroes in Missouri. After lynching the Negroes the mob had burned down Negro homes and drove Negro families into the woods. No newspaper in America would print the article. Mark Twain died on April 12, 1910, at the age of 74.

MARK TWAIN'S SOCIAL VIEWS. With rare exceptions American literary critics classified Mark Twain as a humorist. His editorials and articles were reprinted in leading papers. When soon after the Civil war the press began to shout jubilantly that the "golden age" had begun in America and that all had limitless opportunities to get rich and to get elected to government. Mark Twain exposed this propaganda as a screen to deceive the public and conceal the loath some reality behind it. This exposure of the so called "golden age" was given striking literary form in Mark Twain's first novel "The Gilded Age" this was one of the first social novels to be written in America. Attempts were made by the critics to discredit the book and discourage the public from reading it, but in vain. The book became very popular among wide section of the reading public. The aggressive imperialist policy conducted by the United States in Hawaii the Philippines and Cuba angered Mark Twain and he wrote bitter satirical articles and pamphlets in protest Among the letters was "A Defence of General Funston", a masterpiece of social satire. His "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" was about the disgraceful behaviour towards the Chinese people by American missionaries during the Boxers rebellion in China at the turn of the century. In "We Are Americans Europe" Mark Twain said American business methods and American "yellow journalism" were being exported to Europe and all in good time we shall get the job perfected. "It was as though Mark Twain had looked into the future and had seen that in a comparatively few years the powers that be in America would began to subordinate Western Europe economically and politically in the drive to make it a satellite of America. Mark Twain is one of the greatest American writers. His books are full of American places, everyday language that Americans speak, memorable American characters, and a hatred of injustice. Most of all they're full of humor. Tall tales and life on the Mississippi: Twain's real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens, and he was born in 1835 in Florida, Missouri. His childhood in Hannibal, Missouri, a port on the Mississippi River, influenced his writing. Before Twain became a writer, he tried being a newspaper printer, a steamboat pilot, and a miner of silver. During the California Gold Rush, he failed to find anything of value. He found success in words, once he began writing down his experiences. With a story called "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," he became a national sensation. The story was based on a tall tale. Tall tales form the basis of much of Twain's humor. By this time, he was signing his stories with the name Mark Twain. This Mississippi River riverboat phrase means "two fathoms deep." (Fathom is a measure of water depth.) Twain married Olivia Langdon in 1870. They had three daughters and lived with their children in Hartford, Connecticut. Twain's books brought him fame. In *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain wrote about some of his own childhood adventures. Both Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn take risks in order to help others. *Huckleberry Finn* is considered Twain's masterpiece. Huck is a boy who flees his cruel father by rafting down the Mississippi River with a runaway slave, Jim. The book shows what life was like along the Mississippi before the Civil War. The story is told through the eyes of Huck. In later life, Twain was a frequent speaker on issues of the day. He was probably the most famous American by the time he died in 1910.

Twain's importance: Twain helped create a truly American literature. His language was humorous yet poetic. His books helped American writers break away from the influence of European culture. His use of American themes and settings had a powerful effect on later writers such as Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and many, many others.

MARK TWAIN'S WRITING STYLE. We know that, Mark Twain use a lot of humour in his works as much as he can. Mark Twain was of the opinion that humour was "only a fragrance, a decoration" in literature: that it must "preach" some idea teach something the writer wanted the reader to understand and respond to I have always preached" he said. "If the humour came of its own accord and I have allowed it a place in my sermon". He said he did not write his "sermons" for the same of the humour: "I would have written the sermon just the same whether any humour applied for admission or not" Mark Twain's first short story "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" was of this category. He first heard the story told in the gold mining camp. The incident that forms the plot of the story-a frog that couldn't jump because it was loaded with something heavy could have originated at any place where frogs are found. It has even been said that the ancient Greek had a similar story. The gold miner who told the story told it as a fact that he had witnessed: he told it not as a funny story, but in the typical slow Western manner, drawing it out and adding humorous details. Ma Twain alone was aware that" a first rate story had been told in a first rate way" and that it was "Brimful of humour . The story was not so much about the frog that had been loaded with shot as about its owner. In his version of the story, Mark Twain added a few details of his own and used the specific flavour of Western humour. The story was almost immediately republished by many American papers and Mark Twain became known throughout the country as a writer of funny stories. Mark Twain's humour came from the people themselves. Mark Twain frequently aimed the more deadly forms of his humour-ridicule and satire at the unsavory practices of American politicians and the press. His story "Running for Governor" is typical in this respect. In it he ridicules a particularly disgraceful feature of American election Campaigns the malicious slandering of each other's candidates by the leading parties using the bourgeois press for the purpose. It is the story of an honest man without a blemish on his character who was a candidate running for governor of his state. The newspapers which support his opponents pour column of dirty slander on him. Being a simple trusting man, who believes what the papers write, he decides that he is not fit to run for public office. He signs the letter in which he withdraws from the campaign, with the words "Truly yours, once a decent man". Mark Twain tells the story in the first person as though it all happened to him personally.

In order to give at least some idea of Mark Twain's varied methods and story of writing, four of his works will be dealt with here: his first short story "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County", one of his social satires "The man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" and his books for boys and about boys "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn".

RESULTS. From his next voyage, a circumnavigation of the world, Mark emerged as an important explorer and hydrographer. Sailing from Virginia to Africa and back to Cape Horn in 1683, he crossed the Atlantic Ocean twice, then crossed the Pacific Ocean to the present-day Philippines and China, sailed south to the Australian coast and Sumatra, and finally, in 1691, reached England. Throughout the voyage he made meticulous surveys, charts, and logs. Published as *Voyage Round the World* (1697) and *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699), they excited interest in the seas they described.

As a result, the English Admiralty office sent Dampier in 1699 on a voyage of exploration to the South Seas. Charting currents and the coastline, Dampier explored Australia and New Guinea. He named New Britain upon discovering that it was an island; he also discovered and named Dampier Archipelago, a group of islands off northwestern Australia, and Dampier Strait, which lies between New Britain and Umboi Island. He described this voyage in *Voyage to New Holland* (1703-1609).

Conclusion. In spite of the fact that a court-martial was put in command of a two-vessel privateering expedition to the South Seas in 1703. A member of the crew on this voyage, the Scottish mariner Alexander Selkirk, who had quarreled with a superior officer, asked to be marooned in the Juan Fernández Islands; thus began the adventures that inspired the English

novelist Daniel Defoe to write the classic tale of Robinson Crusoe (1719). Dampier's expedition, which lasted four years, was financially unsuccessful; upon their return to England, his crew charged Dampier with cowardice, brutality, and drunkenness.

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