Are "We" Comrades?: Some Considerations on Class, Race and Fatherhood in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

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This thesis reexamines one of the most beloved and problematic classics, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. In the Introduction, I review the career of the arguments on this work in terms of race issue, and discuss the following proposals: understanding the ironies and satires of Mark Twain, who wrote Huck Finn reflecting himself in the text; the necessity to focus on Jim's role in relation to Huck. Focusing on Huck's sense of belonging, his "we-relation," and his development during the course of the adventures, makes it possible to compare the first and last "we-relation" with Tom Sawyer. This will help clear some enigmas of the "evasion chapters," around which arguments have been continued.

In Chapter One, I analyze Tom and Pap Finn's characteristics of the antebellum South, which Twain criticizes, in terms of race and class. In Chapter Two, I focus on Huck and Jim's "we-relation," and discuss the influences of the Southern society that penetrate into the outcast boy. In Chapter Three, I focus on the "we-relation" with the two and the King and the Duke, namely, "Pap's kind of people," in terms of fatherhood and classes. I also consider the background of Huck's torments, which affect his self-analysis. Finally, I consider the "evasion chapters" in Chapter Four. I compare Huck with Tom in order to reveal what Huck has
learned through his adventures and what he has been given from Jim, and consider the reasons for his running off to the Territory. In the conclusion, I sum up my thesis, and reconsider the meaning of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn for contemporary readers.

"Mark Twain is a humorist. The others I do not know."
"All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn. If you read it, you must stop where the Nigger Jim is stolen from the boys. This is the real end. The rest is just cheating. But it's the best book we've had. All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since."

Ernest Hemingway

Introduction

In "A Fable", Mark Twain gives a "moral": "You can find in a text whatever you bring, if you will stand between it and the mirror of your imagination. You may not see your ears, but they will be there" (879). Readers of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn have found themselves in the text. This work has been not only the most beloved American classic but also one of the most problematic texts that America has ever produced. It was criticized and rejected as an indecent work when it was published in America. However, as Jonathan Arac points out, Huck came to be regarded as a representation of a "morally idealized best American self," and he has been "the character with whom American readers — white American readers — have most deeply identified" (Arac 3). They had a belief: "American solved any problems involved in blacks and whites living together as free human beings, and we had done so already by the 1880s" (Arac 12). However, whereas African Americans, who did not want to join that "we," came to criticize Huck Finn as a racist work in the 1950s, white readers "hypercanonized" the work in order to reject the criticism. According to Arac, Shelly Fisher Fishkin proposes in the New York Times that arguments for the sake of readers' belief, had eventuated in preventing the understanding of saires and ironies in this work; it might make readers not only "miss the point" and "get the wrong point," but "confront our own hypocrisy and arrogance" (Arac 12). Arguments have been
focused on the so-called “evasion chapters” that follow the climax where Huck declares that he will go to hell, or the part which Hemingway describes as “just cheating.”

It is notable that Fishkin writes a critique entitled Was Huck Black?, where she proposes that the model for Huck’s voice was a black child instead of a white one. She mentions that Richard Wright found Twain’s work “strangely familiar” (Fishkin 4). Is it only Huck’s voice that made Wright, who fought against racism, feel “strangely familiar”?

Readers have reflected themselves in the text, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, but Twain also wrote his novels by standing between his text and the mirror of his imagination. Twain comments on fictional characters:

I don’t believe an author . . . who create [s] a character. It was always drawn from his recollection of someone he had known. (Bloom 5)

As many materials such as his autobiography and Life on the Mississippi show, not a few Twain’s fictional characters derive from his past in the South, including his family and himself; writing novels was an act to confront with his past. Huck is modeled after Twain’s boyhood friend, Tom Blankenship, a poor white. Pap Finn as well is modeled after Tom’s drunkard father. How did Twain transform Tom Blankenship into Huck with his imagination and compose Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, where he confronted his past?

When Twain looked back at his past in the South, he could not do so without dealing with the race issue. Twain says,

All the negroes were friends of ours, and with those of our own age we were in effect comrades . . . . We were comrades and yet not comrades; color and condition interposed a subtle line which both parties were conscious of and which rendered complete fusion impossible . . . .
In my schooldays I had no aversion to slavery. I was not aware that there was anything wrong about it. (Autobiography, 6)

Twain challenges “a subtle line” between races, and gives the role to a fourteen-
year-boy, Huckleberry Finn. Toni Morrison proposes,

... it is absolutely necessary that the term *nigger* be inextricable from
Huck's deliberations about who and what he himself is -- or, more
precisely, is not.

It is not what Jim seems that warrants inquiry, but what Mark Twain,
Huck, and especially Tom need from him that should solicit out
attention. (Morrison 55, 57)

Huck's frequent use of the term "nigger" has come to be criticized, but Twain
used the term intentionally in *Huck Finn*. According to Arthur G Pettit, Twain did
not use the term, "nigger," without quotation marks since 1867 -- except in
*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, where "Mark Twain is replaced by Huck"
(Pettit 42-43). Therefore, it is possible to see Twain's outlook on race relations in
*Huck Finn*: how does Twain manipulate the characters of "niggers," especially
that of Jim? How does he depict white Southerners, and how different are they from
Jim? How does he depict Huck's comrade, Tom Sawyer? With whom does Twain
make Huck identify himself? "The most 'desouthernized Southerner' -- a title
William Dean Howells gave to Twain as the most hated and greatest man of letters
in the deep South (Pettit 132) -- leads Huck eventually to reject Southern people,
including Tom, and to establish a "we-relation" -- almost a father-son relation
beyond a comradeship -- with Jim. This is why I think Wright felt "strangely
familiar." The South was, on the one hand, a place to be criticized, for it was the
place Huck had to "go to hell" in order to free Jim. On the other hand, it was also
the place where Huck could declare that he would "go to hell" for Jim, who gave
him what he could not find in white fatherhood. To trace Huck's "we-relation" in
terms of race, class, and fatherhood, and to focus on the difference between the first
and the last "we-relation" with Tom Sawyer, will help to solve some of the
enigmas of the problematic ending. What does Huck learn through his adventures
with Jim, and what does he find in "we"?
Chapter One

The General Landscape of Race-and Class-Relations
in the Antebellum South:
“We” before Adventures

In *Huckleberry Finn*, I have drawn Tom Blankenship exactly as he was. He was ignorant, unwashed, insufficiently fed; but he had as good 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 the rest of us. (*Autobiography*, 68)

Huck’s model, Tom Blankenship, was an outcast in Southern society. If Huck is exactly what Tom Blankenship was, it is relatively easy for Huck to erase “a subtle line” between races, unlike other white people in his community, because of his independence and “good heart”; however, by and by we notice that Huck is actually more civilized than Tom Blankenship. Huck’s liberties are not “totally unrestricted,” including his inner liberties, nor is he “tranquilly and continuously happy.” He is subjected to the “civilization” of Widow Douglas and Miss Watson and to the menace of his father. In addition, he can not be independent. When Huck is alone, he feels “so lonesome” that he wishes he were dead. Even nature looks mournful and direful. He wishes he had some company (*Huck*, 51) and he does. He establishes his first “we-relation” with Tom Sawyer.

Huck uses the term “we” for the first time in Chapter One, where he talks about Tom; Chapter Two also starts, “We went tip-toeing along a path...” (53) and they meet “Miss Watson’s big nigger, Jim” (53). As long as Huck establishes a “we-relation” with Tom, Jim remains an easy-to-mock, stereotypical, superstitious “nigger,” depicted as if he were a handy toy to play with. Tom proposes “to tie Jim to the tree for fun” (54). Huck says no, thinking about himself: Jim “might wake and make a disturbance, and then they’d find out I warn’t in” (54). Huck is not much different from Tom so far as Jim is concerned. He is, as the subtitle shows, “Tom Sawyer’s Comrade.”
Other boys join Huck and Tom's "we-relation" as members of Tom Sawyer's Gang. It is a boys' game, but it is notable that Tom Sawyer's Gang is potentially Southernized in its characteristic. As Richard Poirier points out that "Tom's world is dominated by games and fantasies imitated from literature" (Poirier 184), Tom is addicted to authorities of romantic literature such as Don Quixote, which his actions are based on. Twain criticizes romantic literature, which influenced Southern society in *Life on the Mississippi*, written in parallel with *Huck Finn*:

A curious exemplification of the power of a single book for good or harm is shown in the effects wrought by *Don Quixote* and those wrought by *Ivanhoe*. The first swept the world admiration for the medieval chivalry-silliness out of existence; and the other restored it (267)

Tom is absorbed in "the medieval chivalry-silliness," which Sir Walter Scott restores. Twain denounces "the Sir Walter disease" as "the character of the Southerner" (*Life*, 266), which is criticized through *Huck Finn*. Tom, a conformist of romantic literature and "the Sir Walter disease" addict, is dictatorial to the other boys in order to make them conform. Everett Emerson points out that whereas Twain describes approvingly Tom's gradual socialization in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Tom is introduced as an egoistic and aggressive instrument of conformity, who has techniques for controlling others in *Huck Finn* (130).

On the other hand, Huck thinks practically because of his ignorance. Huck is fascinated, only to find "lies" of Tom's games — Huck comes to be disillusioned and disappointed at Tom's fantastic games, for what Tom does looks ridiculous and does not make sense to him. He says, "so then I judged that all that stuff was only just Tom Sawyer's lies... but as for me I think different. It had all the marks of Sunday school" (64). Seeing "no profit in it," (62) Huck resigns Tom Sawyer Gang ahead of others, and dissolves their "we-relation."

Although Tom bears characteristics of Southern society, that the author denounces, unlike the real southern society built on games, tricks, and illusions, the games of Tom Sawyer's Gang are not harmful and serious yet, because they only
pretend to do harm. Readers can yearn for and laugh at the boys’ games, though
the real society is merely superficially different from children’s games. Dissolving
the “we-relation” with Tom, Huck continues to long for some kind of tie with
Tom in his narrative; Huck is not aware of the games’ potential harmfulness, nor
does he identify “rank and caste” (Life, 266) in their relation yet. These are what
he is going to see and learn during the course of his adventures.

Parting company with Tom, Huck is alone for a while; however, he can not be
freed from another dictator yet: his father, pap Finn, who menaces him for his
money. Pap Finn is a poor white, drunken outcast, but he also bears the Southern
social characteristics that Twain criticizes. For example, he becomes angry when he
finds that Huck is educated and literate, whereas he is not. He can not stand his son
stepping out his place.

You drop that school, you hear? I’ll learn people to bring up a boy to
put on airs over his own father and let on to be better’n what he is . . . .
Your mother couldn’t read, and she couldn’t write, nuther, before she
died. None of the family couldn’t, before they died. I can’t; and here
you’re a-swelling yourself up like this. I ain’t the man to stand it. (70)

Twain writes in Life on the Mississippi, where he criticizes Sir Walter Scott, that
it was Walter Scott who created “rank and caste,” “reverence for rank and caste,”
and “pride and pleasure in them,” which “fathered slavery” (Life, 266). Pap
Finn tries to keep the rank and caste in the father-son relation, for the sake of his
pride and pleasure.

The “rank and caste” that fathered slavery are wreathed with racism-Pap Finn is
a severe racist. As a poor white placed at the bottom of society, he gains a sense of
dignity from racism. He believes that “niggers” must be placed under white men;
he can not stand “niggers” who can vote as white men in some other states,
stepping out of “niggers” place.

Afraid of being killed by his father, Huck tries to find a way to escape from his
father. He kills a pig, in order to make others believe that burglars killed him. This
ceremony has two connotations: suicide and patricide. Suicide suggests that Huck
is nobody in the society by himself. Patricide suggests that he wants to kill his
father, who often sleeps with pigs, and to be freed from his bonds. Huck's adventures and his development start at the point when he breaks the social bonds by himself.

Chapter Two
"We" on the Raft: Huck and Jim Becoming Comrades

Even if Huck escapes from Pap, he is not freed from his influence, namely racism, as his frequent use of the term "nigger” shows. It is necessary to focus on when Huck uses the term “nigger” to Jim, or when he dehumanizes Jim, because that is the moment Huck is aware that he is white, excludes Jim from "we,” and sees Jim as a “nigger”; he thinks and acts in accordance with Southern social standards of the time.

Huck gets freedom by running away from the society and becoming nobody in it, but it does not give him happiness; he feels free and contented for a while, but he comes to feel lonely again. When Huck finds Jim, he establishes a “we-relation” with Jim, who dispels his lonesomeness. They confess their secrets as if they had made a contract, which is kept secret to anybody in the society, until Huck meets Tom, confesses the secrets, and resumes a “we-relation” with him again. The secrets are as follows: Huck faked his death and ran away; Jim ran off. Whereas Huck’s is an excusable “smart” plan, which even “Tom Sawyer couldn’t get up no better plan,” (95) Jim’s case is so serious, as Huck says, that “people would call me a low down Abolitionist and despise for keeping mum” (95). Jim decides to tell his secret, and Huck decides to keep it, for they are both runaways, who will not go back to their community again; their “we-relation” beyond race is possible because they are both “nobody” in society. Whenever Huck incorporates himself in the slave-holding society as a white, he must disguise himself and treat Jim as a "nigger.”

Right after Huck and Jim make their “we-relation,” Jim finds Pap Finn’s corpse, and yet he does not tell Huck that it is Pap Finn. Huck does not have to be afraid, nor does he have to run away anymore, something only Jim knows. Some possibilities are arguable for Jim’s withholding the truth. First, Jim is aware of the
fact that he is a slave and Huck is a white, and he does not tell fact disadvantageous to himself. Second, it would collapse the whole reason for the adventures, if the prime element, namely the menace of Pap Finn, were removed. Third, the act springs from Jim’s charity, as Jim’s reluctance to inform Pap Finn’s death in last chapter shows — it is too severe and ironic to inform Huck that Pap Finn was killed, that Huck is orphaned, even though Huck may yearn for freedom and relief. Concerned about Huck’s emotional well-being, Jim judges at the moment he confirms the body that he does not need to tell it, and that instead of Pap Finn, he will look after Huck, who keeps his secret.

Jim does not allow Huck to talk about the dead man they find in spite of Huck’s eagerness. This is unusual for Jim lets Huck do whatever he wants in the end. Huck tells readers that Jim says it will bring bad luck; but the fact is that Jim does not allow him to talk about the corpse chiefly because it is Pap Finn; Jim is trying to keep the fact from Huck. This is a part of Jim’s affection, which Huck does not know. Therefore, Huck feels irritated with Jim, who resorts to superstitions and directs him, stepping out his place. Huck plays the Tom Sawyer-like elf to Jim with a rattlesnake for fun, which he would not do if Jim were a white man, although he does not mean to hurt Jim. During the course of his adventures, Huck sees the real harms of mischief; the first one is his own mischief to Jim. He deeply feels regret for what he did to Jim, and yet he does not want to humble himself to confess his mischief and to apologize to Jim.

By visiting a woman in a town, Huck learns that Jim as well as Pap are suspected of Huck’s murder and that there are rewards for both of them. As soon as Huck goes back to Jim, Huck says, “They’re after us!” (117) though no one is after him. In order to consider this “us,” it is notable to focus on the following speechlessness between the two: Jim never asked questions, nor does Huck say anything after that. Looking at terrified Jim, what does Huck think in silence? Speechlessness shows his repressed guilt — his guilt in regard to Jim, who is in great danger because of his own faked murder; what he did more smartly than Tom Sawyer is unexpectedly victimizing Jim again — this time more seriously. Huck is the accomplice: “they are after us!”

Their raft is the society of “us,” Huck and Jim. They decide their criterion on borrowing/stealing, which is different from that of Pap, the widow Douglas or Tom
Sawyer, and their time flows like the river. However, the wrecked ship, the Sir Walter Scott, affects their relationship. Huck’s adventure is stirred; he persuades Jim to get them on the ship, by mentioning Tom Sawyer as his authority:

“Do you reckon Tom Sawyer would ever go by this thing? Not for pie, he wouldn’t. He’d call it an adventure. . . . I wish Tom Sawyer was there.” (122)

Jim, who was “dead against” Huck’s idea at first, finally gives way. Huck also says to himself that “Tom Sawyer wouldn’t back out now, and so I won’t either” when Jim has gone to the raft (223). Here, Huck identifies himself with Tom. He also thinks of the widow:

I wished the widow knowed about it. I judged she would be proud of me for helping these rapscallions, because rapscallions and dead beats is the kind the widow and good people takes the most interested in. (131)

This shows not only Twain’s satire on “good people,” who tread down “rapscallions and dead beats,” but also shows the shift of Huck’s sense of belonging. Huck manages to meet Jim again, but he is not what he used to be.

Huck excitedly looks back upon the “adventure,” whereas Jim tells how much he was frightened. In other words, it can be an “adventure” for Huck because he is not a runaway “nigger.” Huck, who has established a “we-relation” with Jim, begins to reveal his inherited racism. Huck tells readers, “he had an uncommon level head, for a nigger” (132). Huck’s actions as well begin to change. Huck, who regards Jim as a “nigger” with an uncommon level head, reads books to Jim, which he brought back from the Sir Walter Scott. He catches “the Sir Walter disease” (Life, 266). Huck has never enjoyed reading before, unlike Tom Sawyer. He also says that he does not care about dead people, when the widow tried to tell him about Moses. The same Huck tells Jim about what he learned from books — kings, dukes, and earls — just as Tom Sawyer does. When Jim argues about what Huck tells him, he tells readers instead of further retorts: “I see it warn’t no use
wasting words – you can’t learn a nigger to argue. So I quit” (136). This is the same strategy of evasion as that of Tom Sawyer, when he tried to show his superiority with his knowledge from books, and yet Huck did not show his understanding: “Shucks, it ain’t no use to talk to you, Huck Finn. You don’t seem to know anything, somehow – perfect sap-head” (64). Huck becomes Tom, or Tom’s comrade again, even though he is with Jim.

The dense fog separates Huck from Jim when they come close to Cairo, the city they are trying to reach in order to head northward for the free states. When Huck meets Jim at last, instead of showing his joy, he tricks Jim again, who has been worried about the boy almost to the point he broke his heart:

... En when I wake up en fine you back again’, safe en soun’, de tears come en I could a got down on my knees en kiss’ yo foot I’s so thankful. En all you wuz thinkin’ ‘bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is trash; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey ’ren’s en makes’ em ashamed. (143)

Jim’s affection for Huck is like that of a father for his son. Beyond his place as a slave, Jim expostulates to a white boy, Huck, or lets him learn in the way his white father, Pap Finn, never did – lets Huck learn not by resorting to absolute power, but by showing his bottomless affection. Huck learns his lesson:

It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger – but I done it, and I warn’t ever sorry for it afterward, neither. I didn’t do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn’t done that one if I’d a known it would make him feel that way. (143)

The time shows how much the class-consciousness tangles with racism and widens the psychological gap between races in the antebellum South, even to an outcast boy, who is tied to Jim with a “we-relation.” What makes it possible to be humble and apologize is Jim’s paternal love to Huck, which he has never been given by his father – Huck humbles himself to his black father, rather than to a “nigger.”

Huck, however, agonizes, as the raft comes closer to Cairo and sees Jim’s
excitement. He comes to blame himself for helping Jim's escape to freedom. His
town people including Miss Watson, who took care of Huck, treat slaves much milder
than people down the river; even the treatments are not comparatively cruel, slaves
are properties in the slave-holding society, and Jim is not an exception. Huck's act is
regarded as a robbery — stealing a valuable piece of property from a woman who
helped to make him respectable. Being aware that he is socially and individually
responsible, his agony becomes suicidal: "I got to feeling so mean and so miserable
I most wished I was dead" (145). When Huck heard Jim's secret, he did not care
even people would call him "a low down Abolitionist" (95), for he would not return.
Now he feels responsible for what he is doing, for he thinks he is hurting good people
in his community. In other words, Huck has "no aversion to slavery" and is not
aware that there is anything wrong about it as the author used to (Autobiography, 6).
He is aware that he does harm to a slaveholder, but he is not aware that it is Jim who
is victimized. An outcast boy, who runs away from society, can not be free from its
influence. Hearing Jim's dream to free his family too — or a dreadful plan to
"steal his children — Children that belonged to a man I didn't even know; a man
that hadn't ever done me no harm" (146) Huck is greatly shocked, feels
disappointed at Jim, and tells readers: "give a nigger an inch and he'll take an ell" (146).

While Huck paddles to the shore in order to inform people that he is with a
fugitive slave, Jim cries,

"Jim won't ever forgit you, Huck; you's de bes' fren' Jim's ever had;
en you's de only fren' ole Jim got now."
"...de on' y white gentleman dat ever kep' his promise to ole Jim."
(146-147)

Whereas Huck regards Jim as a fugitive or as a property, Jim regards Huck as an
irreplaceable man for him, and the best and truthful white man, something Huck
has never been regarded as in his life.

Being asked by men pursuing fugitives if he is on board with a black, Huck
tries to inform in vain. He is discouraged; he thinks he is not "man enough" (147). He wades through with an adroit lie, which stirs disgust toward himself:
... feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong, and I see it warn't no use for me to try to learn to do right; a body that don't get started right when he's little, ain't got no show. (149)

His ill-breeding is an excuse for his antisocial action. He refers about it again when he meets Tom, and explains his antisocial action. Here, the breeding is tangled with his inferiority complex as an ill-bred outcast, and with his discouragement.

Huck, however, has a sound heart, which would be distressed if he had informed against his comrade. Huck decides not to be bothered any more, but to follow his state of mind — "always do whichever come handiest at the time" (149). Then he resumes his "we-relation" with Jim. They share forty dollars that Huck got from the men on the shore equally. Finding out they have already passed Cairo, Huck gives comfort to Jim, and talks over the alternative — to paddle southward until they find "a change to buy a canoe to go back in" (151).

Twain, however, does not allow them to go up the river to the free states — the author prepares enough troubles so that the two of them pass Cairo without knowing it. He forces them to continue the adventures down the river, which is criticized by African Americans. For example, John H. Wallace writes,

It is difficult to believe that Samuel Clemens would write a book against the institution of slavery; he did, after all, join a Confederate army bent on preserving that peculiar institution. Also, he could not allow Huck to help Jim to his freedom. It seems he was a hodgepodge of contradictions. (Wallace 23)

John C. Gerber points out that Mark Twain could not successfully have Huck and Jim paddle up the Ohio River, because he did not know the country well (Gerber 98). In other words, Twain, who used to be a pilot on the Mississippi, knew that if they passed Cairo, it was impossible for Jim to seek his freedom in the deep South; that if they passed Cairo, *Huck Finn* would be no longer "Tom Sawyer's comrade" type of book. Writing the time when the real freedom of black people was deferred. Twain endangered Jim as well as the Tom Sawyer-type of boys' novel, and antecedes Huck's serious adventures, not knowing how to pilot them
down the river. Why? — Huck has not developed yet, and he needs Jim, not others, for his development; he needs to be given something he can not get from his father, and from the white dominant society; he needs to experience both societies of the shore and the raft, in order to learn that the very victim of the slave-holding society is in front of him.

Huck experiences a society on the shore apart from Jim: he becomes a member of the Grangerfords, a clan in the countryside, who own over a hundred of slaves. Being given his own slave and a good living, Huck says: "I liked all that family, dead ones and all, and warn't going to let anything come between us" (162). It seems that Jim completely disappears from Huck's mind in Chapter Seventeen. However, he comes to experience baffling social pressures such as a feud, because of which Buck is killed without reason. Huck's sorrow and fear are enormous:

I ain't going to tell all that happened — it would make me sick again if I was to do that. I wished I hadn't ever come ashore that night, to see such things. I ain't ever going to get shut of them — lots of times I dream about them. (175)

Huck knows how fearful it is to be abused; being alone, he feels almost suicidal and he knows how comfortable it is to be with Jim, who loves him like his own child. When Huck goes back to Jim again and resumes their "we-relation," they talk to each other.

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 comfortable on a raft. (176)

Huck feels "mighty free and comfortable" because he is with Jim on the raft, which he will learn when their "we-relation" is intruded by uninvited guests, the Duke and the King. On their raft, there is no rank, consuetude, disquiet, solitude, pressure, constriction, nor chaos of the shore, but love, freedom, equality and jollity. Huck and Jim, who have been marginalized as outcasts, finally find their place, namely their "home" on the raft — the only place they can be themselves:
Huck does not have to disguise himself, and Jim does not have to be a “nigger.”

Huck and Jim enjoy their happiest time on the raft. Being invisible and distanced from society, their days “swum by, slid along so quiet and smooth and lovely” (177).

We had the sky, up there, all speckled with stars, and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them, and discuss about whether they was made, or only just happened — Jim he allowed they was made, but I allowed they happened; I judged it would have took too long to make so many. Jim said the moon could a laid them; well, that looked kind of reasonable, so I didn’t say nothing against it, because I’ve seen a frog lay most as many, so of course it could be done. We used to watch the stars that fell, too, and see them streak down. Jim allowed they’d got spoiled and was hove out of the nest. (178)

Huck used to be frightened and frequently suicidal when he was alone hiding from Pap. When he is with Jim on the raft, there is no fear, no sorrow — but beauty and comfort. Toni Morrison remarks, “unmanageable terror gives way to pastoral, idyllic, intimate timelessness minus the hierarchy of age, status or adult control,” and “real talk — comic, pointed, sad — takes place” (Morrison xxxv). In Huck’s narrative, there has been no “real talk” with anyone on the shore, even with Tom Sawyer, who resorts to his knowledge from romantic literature Huck does not know — not to mention with Pap Finn, who abuses him. It is when Huck and Jim are only “we” that they can create “real talk,” being equal and themselves.

**Chapter Three**

**Fathers-White and Black Intruders in the “We-Relation”**

The peace on the raft does not last long: uninvited guests, the Duke and the King, thrust themselves into Huck and Jim’s “we-relation.” Huck soon notices that “these liars warn’t no kings nor dukes, at all, but just low-down humbugs and frauds” — according to Huck, they are “[Pap]’s kind of people” (186). He
decides to take the best way to get along with them, which is the only thing Huck learned out of Pap — "let them have their own way" in order to "keep peace in the family" (187). As I said in regard to Pap Finn and "the Sir Walter disease," "Pap's kind of people," who are placed at the bottom of the society, also desire "rank and caste" which give them pride and pleasure. Huck does not mind subordinating himself to them for peace on the raft, "for what you want, above all things, on a raft, is for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind toward the others" (185).

Being asked if Jim is a "runaway nigger" by the King and the Duke, Huck answers, "Goodness sakes, would a runaway nigger run south?" (187) and disguises his and Jim's situation — Jim is Huck's "nigger": they are running in the dark, in order to get rid of troubles caused by Jim being taken for a "runaway nigger." Getting deeper and deeper into the south with "Pap's kind of people," Huck and Jim have to be much more concerned about not being sold than going up north. Hence, "rank and caste" are brought into their "we-relation." Jim becomes Huck's "nigger" even on the raft; on the shore, "we," namely, Huck, the King and the Duke, caught "a runaway nigger," who — or which — is worth two hundreds dollars, and are going down to get the reward.

When Jim feels disgusted at the frauds, whom he still believes are a real king and duke, Huck, who can not tell real kings from the frauds anyhow, persuades Jim:

"All I say is, kings is kings, and you got to make allowances. . . . It's way they're raised."
". . . We can't help the way a king smells. . . ."
". . . But we've got them on our hands, and we got to remember what they are, and make allowance. Sometimes I wish we could hear of a country that's out of kings." (218)

Huck assigns a reason for their behavior to the difference of breeding. He regards breeding as something "we can't help" and yearns for countries, in which there are no kings, those who bring "rank and caste" in to the human relation for their advantage. Although on the shore, Huck is compelled to cooperate with the King and the Duke, and to play a role in their burlesque, whenever Huck and Jim are
alone, the King and the Duke become strangers, whom they can never understand, until they are lynched:

I was sorry for them poor pitiful rascals, it seemed like I couldn’t ever feel any hardiness against them any more in the world. It was a dreadful thing to see. Human beings can be awful cruel to one another. (302)

Jim’s paternal affection and humanity — Jim’s inner whiteness — come to standout to Huck, who has witnessed chaos on the shore, inhumanity and inner blackness of “Pap’s kind of people”:

I went to sleep, and Jim didn’t call me when it was my turn. He often done that. When I waked up, just at day-break, he was sitting there with his head down betwixt his knees, moaning and mourning to himself. I didn’t take notice, nor let on. I knowd what it was about. He was thinking about his wife and children, away up yonder, and he was low and homesick; . . . and I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for their’n. It don’t seem natural, but I reckon it’s so. (218)

Huck has not experienced parental affection. Huck, who felt disappointed with Jim around Cairo when he learns of Jim’s dream to live with his family, has grown to show his understanding to Jim’s parental affections — because Huck, too, has been experienced them since they became “we.” Huck has nothing to say about Jim’s agonizing mourning for his deaf and dumb child. Readers know of Pap Finn’s abuse and Huck’s fear. By withholding Huck’s comment on fatherhood, or comparison with his own father, Twain questions fatherhood in terms of race and superiority.

A series of burlesque incidents follow the introduction of the King and the Duke; a distance emerges in Huck’s narrative, as if it corresponded with his psychic distance. Huck retreats and becomes an observer, a mere vehicle to tell what he witnesses, especially when he is not with Jim or when Huck touches the soil:
Grangerfords sequence, burlesques of the King and the Duke, the Arkansas episodes, and the Wilks sequence, for example. The exception is, however, in that Wilks sequence, where the King and the Duke auction Peter Wilks’ slaves — parents and children separately:

I thought them poor girls and them niggers would break their hearts for grief; they cried around each other, and took on so it most made me down sick to see it. The girls said they hadn’t ever dreamed of seeing the family separated or sold away from the town. I can’t ever get it out of my memory, the sight of them poor miserable girls and niggers hanging around each other’s necks and crying; . . . (248)

Leaving Jim and acting with “Pap’s kind of people,” Huck becomes sensitive to the separation of slave children from their parents, and that of slaveholders from slaves, both of whom regard themselves as family members. Huck knows how they feel, for he does feels the same way.

Huck has been fostered by Jim on the raft, has disguised and told numerous lies ably on the shore hitherto, and is disgusted at the King and the Duke’s lies and deceptions. Seeing Mary Jane’s bottomless sorrow, he tells “the truth this time” (253) to her. Huck is painfully confronted with the fact that the greatest victims are slaves and the girls: slaves and girls, who regard themselves as family members as Huck does to Jim, are entrapped by “Pap’s kind of people” for the sake of money, as Huck was.

Even the “we-relation” comes to be victimized for the sake of money: the King and the Duke make Jim a slave again among strangers “for forty dirty dollars” (281). Regarding that “it would be thousand times better for Jim to be a slave at home where his family was, as long as he’d got to be a slave” (281) he tries to write a letter in order to inform Miss Watson of Jim’s enslavement at the Phelps.

But I soon give up that notion, for two things: she’d be mad and disgusted at his rascality and ungratefulness for leaving her, and so she’d sell him straight down the river again; and if she didn’t, everybody naturally despises an ungrateful nigger, and they’d make Jim feel it all
the time, and so he'd feel ornery and disgraced. 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. (281)

Huck, who has nourished more than a comradeship with Jim, is now forced to face the fact that there is an irresistible color line in their "we-relation" — Jim is a runaway "nigger"; what Huck has done is antisocial, impermissible, and shameful. Moreover, it is regarded as a sin in the ante-bellum South, where moral codes are entwined with Christianity, which condones slavery:

There was the Sunday school, you could gone to it; and if you'd a done it they'd a learnt you, there, that people that acts as I'd been acting about that nigger goes to everlasting fire. (282)

Around Cairo, he is aware that "to steal a nigger" is a robbery; now he comes to feel that it is a sin, for which he deserves to go to hell.

Therefore, writing a letter to Miss Watson before he prays to see if he can "quite the kind of a boy I was, and be better" (282), he feels "all washed clean of sin for the first I had ever felt so in my life" (282). And yet, he declares, "All right, then, I'll go to hell" (283) and tears the letter up, thinking of "our trip down the river":

... and I see Jim before me, all the time, in the day, and in the nighttime, sometimes moonlight, sometimes storms, and we a floating along, talking, and singing, and laughing. But somehow I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against on him, but only the other kind. I'd see him standing my watch on top of his' n, stead of calling me, so I could go on sleeping; and see him how glad he was when I come back out of the fog; and when I come to him again in the swamp, up there where the feud was; and such-like times; and would always call me honey, and pet me, and do everything he could think of me, and how good he always was; and at last I struck the time I saved
him by telling the men we had small-pox aboard, and he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the only one he's got now; . . . (283)

Whereas Jim's humanity becomes invisible when he thinks in accordance with social consuetude, it appears vividly when he thinks of their adventures, through which they have nourished their "we-relation." Huck vividly relives in his mind. Jim's parental affections, his importance for Jim, and Jim's importance for him, which he did not know before the adventures, and which he can not he find in the white dominant society. Although Huck is not aware that it is not him but slavery that is morally wrong, he has grown to decide to "go to hell" for what Huck has got only from Jim. He decides to stick to his principles and perform an antisocial act, not because he is not "man enough" (147) as he used to think around Cairo.

Chapter Four

Tom's Reentry and the Final Disintegration of the "We-Relation"

At the Phelps's Farm where Jim is captured, Huck finally disguises himself as Tom Sawyer — his old comrade with whom he has longed to have some kind of ties. Finding out he is taken for Tom, Huck feels, "it was like being born again, I was so glad to find out who I was" (295). By disguising himself as Tom Sawyer, and by resuming a "we-relation" with him, does he really become Tom Sawyer or his comrade again? How does their comradeship differ from that before the adventures with Jim? What does Huck find in his "we-relations" with Tom and Jim?

Huck explains the whole circumstances, including the greatest secret he can never let out:

"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 mam and not let on. Will you?" (296)
“To steal out of slavery” (296) is sinful and immoral in the antebellum South, so that good people would never do it; therefore, he agonizes over finally deciding to “go to hell” for Jim, who is irreplaceable for him. Meeting his old comrade Tom Sawyer, Huck finds an excuse in his ill-breeding: he is “low down” and already helpless that he will “steal” Jim anyhow. Astonished to know that Tom is going to help him, Huck thinks, “Tom Sawyer fell, considerable, in my estimation. Only I couldn’t believe it. Tom Sawyer a nigger stealer!” (296)

Huck’s development can be found in the difference between Huck and Tom. Huck comes to notice that “nigger” stealing is not only a crime but also a sin; none the less, he has become courageous enough to go to hell for Jim. However, he can not get himself rid of racism entirely. For example, being asked the reason for his delay, he answers,

“We blowed out a cylinder-head.”

“Good gracious! Anybody hurt?”

“No’m. Killed a nigger.” (291)

Huck comes to understand Jim’s humanity, but the other black characters, whom he does not know, are still depicted as stereotypic “niggers,” as Jim used to be before the adventures.

On the other hand, Tom has not been changed at all — he does not have a serious thought in terms of race; all he wants is “adventures” based on romantic literature, as he wanted to do in the Tom Sawyer’s Gang. He already knows of Jim’s legal freedom by Miss Watson’s will: stealing a “nigger,” which is a valuable piece of enormous property, can be an exciting game for Tom. In order to make adventures out of this rare opportunity, he does not care to sacrifice Jim, nor does he know how dearly Huck comes to think of Jim — how could Tom know the strong ties that bind Huck and Jim during the adventures?

It is only Tom who has not been changed: we, readers, who have been with Huck, have been changed during the adventures. We have come to be more concerned about race, so that we feel bitter in reading the so-called “evasion chapters,” which follow Huck’s hell-or-heaven choice. C. Vann Woodward points out, “it was, after all, in the ’eighties and early ’nineties that lynching attained
the most staggering proportions ever reached in the history of that crime” (Woodward 44). Twain started to compose *Huck Finn* in 1876, and published it in 1884/5 — slavery was already abolished and African Americans were legally freed, but their complete freedom and equality were deferred. We feel unsettled to read the “evasion chapters,” where only Tom knows of Jim’s legal freedom. We literally have to go through a kind of “hell,” where chiefly Tom defers Jim’s freedom in agonizing play. Then, why does Huck, who declared himself ready to go to hell for Jim, obey Tom?

Huck is aware that to steal a “nigger” is a sin. He wants to save Jim, but as Tom’s “true friend,” he wants to save Tom, too, because the respectable boy should not have any reason to commit that sin. He does not have to be aware of the notion of class when he was with Tom before the adventures — they were comrades, regardless of whether they were ill-bred or well-bred; Huck was able to resign Tom Sawyer’s Gang when he was disgusted, and he did not subordinate himself to Tom. To let his “true friend” help to “steal Jim” is ill-bred Huck’s first allowance for “respectable” Tom.

Jim, too, is forced to know his place and to make allowances. Following a “nigger,” Tom and Huck go to see captured Jim for the first time. Tom “looks at Jim” and says,

“I wonder if Uncle Silas is going to hang this nigger. If I was to catch a nigger that was ungrateful enough to run away, I wouldn’t give him up. I’d hang him.” (309)

Then, he whispers, “we’re going to set you free” (308). Tom makes Jim aware that what he has done deserves to be punished with death, and that Tom could hang him if he were his master, before he tells the plan to free him. Being shown Tom’s absolute superiority, Jim has no alternative but to obey “Misto Tom” and Huck patiently.

Tom proposes his ridiculous plans in the same way he did in Tom Sawyer’s Gang. Tom tries to imitate the authors of romantic literature Huck does not know nor care to know. Tom finds great pleasures in the “adventures”; however, the more he defers Jim’s freedom, and the more Jim agonizes, the more Huck is
irritated. He continuously opposes his plans thinking of Jim: "Confound it, it's foolish, Tom" "Jim's too old to be dug out with a case-knife. He won't last" (316).

Huck resigns himself to obeying Tom, because class-consciousness has emerged in him: he is "low down," someone who has done "dirty low-down business" for Jim (296). Huck comes to be more conscious that Tom is a well-bred boy unlike Huck while he acts with him. For example, whereas Huck regards "stealing" as "borrowing" because Pap Finn called it so, Tom tells him it is "stealing," (314) as the Widow told him before.

"Rank and caste" exist in the "we-relation" in the evasion chapters, where there is no Pap nor anyone like Pap: "Misco" Tom, Huck, and "nigger" Jim:

Jim couldn't see no sense in the most of it, but he allowed we was white folks and knowed better than him; and he was satisfied, and said he would do it all just as Tom said. (321)

But the "white folks" are not equal. Tom repeatedly tells Huck: "... because you don't know no better; but it wouldn't for me, because I do know better" (319). Huck resigns, complaining repeatedly "it was his way" (321)-as he did when Huck persuaded Jim to make allowance to the King and the Duke: "It's way they're raised." "We can't help the way a king smells" "we got to remember what they are, and make allowance" (218). The distance between Huck and Tom emerges both in Huck's mentality and in his narrative — Huck stays back and becomes an observer again. Huck's narrative becomes Tom's burlesque.

The games of Tom Sawyer's Gang did not hurt anybody. Tom acts the same way in this burlesque, but it is harmful: Tom tortures Jim physically and mentally; he irritates and disgusts Huck; he bothers Aunt Sally and Uncle Silas; he flusters "niggers" and town people; finally, he hurts himself badly — he is shot. It is only Tom who is proud to be shot. He does not know at all how much Huck and Jim are anxious about him, and loses consciousness because of the injury.

Jim and Aunt Sally's parental affections bring Huck back. While Tom is insentient, and Jim, who is "white inside" (349), sacrifices himself to help Tom, Huck knows Aunt Sally's parental anxiety. The distance disappears, and his
narrative revives, even on the shore:

. . . and I wished I could do something for her, but I couldn’t, only to swear that I wouldn’t never do nothing to grieve her any more. (359)

Being given parental love plentifully by Jim, Huck comes to understand Jim’s affection for his family, sorrow for the family split, and now Aunt Sally’s profound emotions for children — how deeply adults think of children, and how much the burlesque hurts them.

When Tom is back and recovers his health, the adventures are over: Jim’s captivity is over, and it has been done legally, something which Tom already knows; Pap Finn’s menace is over, too, which Jim already knows — about which Huck has nothing to say. Huck decides not to go back to his hometown with Tom and Jim, but to run to the Territory:

Tom’s most well, now, and got his bullet around his neck on a watch-guard for a watch, and is seeing what time it is, and so there ain’t nothing more to write about, . . . But I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she’s going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can’t stand it. I been there before. THE END.

YOUR TRULY, HUCK FINN. (369)

Does Huck speak “truly” here? Is Huck running only from the “sivilization” of that affectionate Aunt Sally? Why doesn’t he go back to his hometown with Tom and Jim? Now, Tom, his old comrade and ideal respectable “sivilized” boy, gives “forty dollars” to Jim — the same amount as the money Huck got and shared with Jim around Cairo, and the “forty dirty dollars,” (281) for which Jim was sold away — and thinks he thus compensates Jim; and now Jim is so excited to be rich. Tom shows off the bullet, which hurt not only him but also people around him deeply. Even if Huck goes back to his hometown with them — or wherever in the racist society, Huck will see “rank and caste” in their relationship. Huck also knows that his black father, Jim, is going back to his beloved family to be his own children’s father; that Huck will not be abused, nor will he ever be loved by his
father. He used to yearn for something and told Jim: "Sometimes I wish we could hear of a country that’s out of kings" (218). Twain lets Huck run "ahead of the rest" (369) — to the uncivilized Territory, where people do not have to "remember what they are and make allowance" to "kings," (218) those who bring "rank and caste" in their relation. Huck goes to the Territory ahead of Tom and Jim. Twain, who has given a role to challenge a race line to Huck Finn in the 1880’s, lets us, readers, challenge the class-and race-lines for Huck, Jim, Tom, and us.

Conclusion

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been one of the most beloved and problematic classics. Readers of both races have seen themselves reflected in the text. This reading has neglected to understand Mark Twain’s satires and ironies in the text, in which Twain, too, reflected himself. Arguments have been continued about the so-called "evasion chapters" that follow the climax where Huck decides to go to hell for Jim. Tracing the course of Huck’s "we-relation" and focusing on the differences between the first and the last "we-relation" with Tom Sawyer help us to find the significance of the problematic ending.

Huck is Tom’s comrade before the adventures, and both of them have no aversion to slavery, as the author used to do. Huck makes first a "we-relation" with Tom Sawyer, and becomes a member of Tom Sawyer’s Gang. Absorbed in romantic literature, Tom shows the negative characteristics of Southern society, which Twain denounces, but the games do no harm yet. An ignorant practical-thinker, Huck, breaks his "we-relation" with Tom, finding no profit but lies in the games. Huck is not class-conscious when he is with Tom before the adventures. Huck runs away especially from the menace of Pap Finn. Pap, too, shares the negative characteristics of Southern society that Twain criticizes. He brings "rank and caste" into the father-son relationship as well as into race relations.

Huck establishes a "we-relation" with Jim, and their adventures start. Huck repeatedly reveals how the values of Southern society penetrated into him; however, Jim’s parental affections lead him to appreciate Jim’s values and to
nourish their "we-relation." Twain intentionally makes them pass the gateway to the free states, Cairo, and continue their adventures. Around Cairo, Huck agonizes over the notion that "nigger stealing" is a crime, but finally Huck and Jim come to find their "home" on the raft, the only place they can be themselves and be equal beyond the color line.

However, Huck and Jim's "we-relation" is intruded by the King and the Duke ("Pap's kind of people"); "rank and caste" are brought into their relationship. Huck is compelled to enter into a "we-relation" with the King and the Duke on the shore, where he painfully witnesses the chaotic society, the inhumanity of the King and the Duke who victimize family relations for the sake of money. On the other hand, Jim's humanity and fatherhood come to stand out. When Jim is sold by the frauds, and he sees the breakdown of the "we-relation," Huck, who does not know it is not him but slavery that is sinful, decides to be courageous and "go to hell" for Jim.

Being taken for Tom Sawyer, Huck disguises himself as his old comrade, Tom, and establishes a "we-relation" in order to free Jim. Tom, who can not know what Huck has learned from Jim, does not have serious thoughts on race nor does he have an aversion to slavery. He wants to make adventures out of Jim's captivity, and acts the same way as he did in Tom Sawyer's Gang. Huck obeys him, even though he is irritated at Tom when he thinks of Jim. To steal a "nigger" is a sin, which good people would never commit in the antebellum South, so that Huck becomes ironically aware of his ill breeding that allows him to sin.

"Rank and caste" emerge in their "we-relation": the respectable Tom, the ill-bred outcast, Huck, and the "nigger" Jim. Because of the distance between Huck and Tom, Huck's narrative becomes Tom's burlesque. The adventures are over when he finds that Jim has been already freed legally, that Pap Finn has died before the adventures, and that Jim, the orphan's black father, is now going back to his own family. Huck decides to run to the uncivilized Territory, where there is no "rank and caste" — wherever they go, as far as it is the racist society, he will see "rank and caste" in their relation.

Mark Twain was "the most desouthernized Southerner." He lets readers, too, develop themselves through their adventures with the two. Twain wrote the "evasion chapters" in the 1880's — when slavery was already abolished but real
equality was deferred. He makes readers experience the "hell" of the evasion chapters, in which Tom has not grown at all. By letting Huck run "ahead of the rest" to the "unsivilized" Territory, where people do not have to care about class, Twain lets Huck run into our imagination, with which "we" can erase the race-and class-lines in the Territory, and in our society, if we, readers, stand between the text and the mirror of our imagination.

Notes

1: I use the term, "we-relation," when Huck uses the term, "we," in order to trace Huck's sense of belonging. He establishes some "we-relations" in his narrative: Tom, Pap Finn, Jim, the Grangerford, the King and the Duke, for example.


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