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The Analysis of Father-Son Relationship in Mark Twain's Novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

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Abstract

This research paper attempts to point out the father-son relationship of Huck and Jim in the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Huck Finn, the chief protagonist and central figure of the novel *Huckleberry Finn* is a boy –hero of novel. Huck and Jim develops a very good and lasting relationship with great feelings and affections. It is a relation as an adopted father and son who gradually grow in their understanding of love, affection, affinity and respect for each other's a real human being. Huck and Jim negotiate an uncommon type of romantic friendship across barriers of race and generation. We can say that it is a close familial relationship between a white boy and a black slave.

Keywords: Bond of friendship, Mutual love, Kindness, Goodness.

Mark Twain is one of the most significant American novelist. Americans admire him for his hardheaded exposures of human venality but respond also to his unembarrassed sentiment, his compassion and simple humility. His reputation as a novelist is now established and he is estimated as novelist of the stature of Dickens and Dostoveski. He is not only regards' as a symbol of American Dream and of moral concern, but also accepted as an artist of the unliterary public. His is a narrative voice and he is an embodiment of the typical character. The New England writers considered him as a humorist. According to Bernard Shaw, "Mark Twain is in much the same position as myself; he has put matters in such a way as to make people who would otherwise him, believe he is joking".

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn published in 1884, is a significant masterpiece in the American novel tradition. In this novel Jim and Huck are different section of the society. Both are treated in a degrading way by their masters in their respective fields, yet these two persons different in age group and culture slots come together and are united in the bond of friendship and mutual love or trust. In this novel Jim represents different things to Huck that make him a father figure. Jim loves Huck and forgives him when he is less than kind to him and Huck's attitude towards him changes from him thinking that Jim is just property and an ignorant slave that is below him, to feeling that Jim is his good friend, and equal to him. Huck is a boy of fourteen years old, belongs to white community as other frontier man are but he is totally neglected by his drunkard father. There is a close familial relationship between a white boy and a black slave like Huck and Jim necessarily poses same problems. Huck is a motherless child, and there is no one else to look after

The nuns used to behave very differently towards the destitute children who were in boarding school. They asked to do every menial task from them. Their attitude was as if they were queens there. A few of them had a little bit human perspective, so they had difficult time. Overall view of the nuns at the dalit children was to make them demoralized. Now and then they were pointing at them by saying there would not be any drastic change in their lives and making them very negative. One of her sisters advised her to think minutely before entering the order and to become nun. But Bama wanted to be different kind of nun that is loveable and kind hearted towards all the children. She used to notice terrific contrast between the wish of God and the job of nuns. God always favours needy and poor people whereas these so called priests and nuns exactly behave opposite to Him.

Bama has another mental stress of caste conflict. In South there are Paryar and Chaaliyar castes. And Bama represents dalit Paraya community. The headmaster who belonged to Chaaliyar caste treats Parayar children indifferently and punishes those students for no reason. She perceives another inter-caste battle between Pallar and Parayar communities that is representative within the same oppressed class. She has got shaken by discerning it. G. n. Devylooks at it as-

“The subversive historiographic path of personalizing history.”⁵

Bama has been very serious regarding the uplift of the destitute people. She is of the strong opinion that the wish of God could be filled only after the buoy up of the neglected mass. In the name of God, upper castes Christians enjoy the benefits and luxurious life by holding high positions in the church. In fact, these people dupe poor low caste dalit Christians and take share of money to thrive themselves. Apart from this, Bama contemplates that dalit woman is twice marginalized - firstly, by the upper caste women who don't treat them equally as they too belong to the female category and by dalit male of their own community. She remembers when she was with her Paati and the lady from Naicker family came out with leftovers. She leaned out from same distance and poured the food into her vessel. Bama didn't like it and said that she should not do like it because it doesn't seem good. Paatti replied as -

“These people are the maharajas who feed us our rice. Without them, how will we survive? Haven't they been upper caste from generation to generation and haven't we been lower caste? Can we change this?”⁶(p. 17)

In throughout the core theme of Karukku, Bama has been very restless. She suffers mentally a lot because of the treatment given to her by the nuns in the school. She thinks a many of the nuns in the church possess plaster saint attitude towards her and the poor children. In fact they are complete opposite of the philosophy of Jesus who worked for the destitute persons only. In prayer they say that our God is forgiving one but reality is poles apart. The administrators of the convent don't take even breathe to praise Him as He took birth in the poor family, lived with poverty and even died as a poor. But as soon as any poverty ridden person entered the campus, they upon that person like rabid. Hence Bama couldn't tolerate their hypocrisy and left her job when she had nothing to survive afterwards. She was quite confident of her survival without any job. She decided her last job at the cost of her unbearable respect. Her inner voice used to tell her she had worked for the poverty stricken and penniless children.

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him except his father who always treats him with savage cruelty and remain absent for months together. Huck is thus compelled to live on his own cunning and loaf about with the other boys and sleeps in sugar hogsheads. Jim, on the other hand is a Negro-slave, has no right to live respectably and independently, always at the mercy of his masters and is treated no better than animals like other Negro slaves, he could be bought and sold in the open market. Both feel harassed, disgusted with their environment and wants to go out through some escape route.

Widow Douglas imposed much restrictions and limitations on Huck's and he becomes much frustrated and disappointed. He was a free like a bird and loved to wonder here and there in the free atmosphere of nature. But here did not feel free and liberated in such a atmosphere. Sunday school picnic was also disturbing to him. His father's treatment was also oppressive and hence he was fed up with this world and wished to go away somewhere and get the free air on Jackson Island. One day he reaches on the Jackson Island lonely in search of good fortune. He hates society because he finds it too much involved in rules, norms, restrictions and suppression of weaker section of the society. There he meets a man, Jim who was 45 years old, a slave Negro at Miss Watson's house. He does not want to stay with Widow Douglas and her civilised society. When he finds unbearable oppressive atmosphere at home, he decides to run away from society. Society in his eyes stands for corruption, rottenness and exploitation of the poor and the weak by rich. He had bitter experiences of the life. His father's attitude and merciless beating on one pretext or the other made him hostile towards society. He had seen many bad scene in the society and degradation of the Negroes that his conscience revolted and he got freedom only by breaking social ties or bonds.

Both Huck and Jim are comrade and faithful to each other. By the passage of time they came to know that they are dependent on each other. For the safety and welfare of each other, they started a comradic between the two at Jackson's Island. Huck played pranks upon him and there was a dead snake on his feet and Jim is bitten by snake, Huck tends him till he is recovered. Both sail together until they reach Cairo, the independent state where they start life afresh. Once Jim had a very much careful and conscious about Jim and hence he thought of his safety. Later on, while sailing in the ship they reached at such a place where they meet Pap, father of Huck but he is not allowed to see the face of a dead man. Huck is not permitted to see the face of his father. He is very depressed to see such a dead man. Huck played many tricks to save Jim anyhow. He followed many tactics to save him. Mostly Jim remained hide till Huck returned from the Grangfords farm. In this way their friendship became firm and strong. When Huck again thought of using pranks against Jim, he then apologised for it. Both were trying their best to make the friendship stronger and firm and helped to each other in difficult situation. They became close and comradic friends. As **D. G. Hoffiman** puts it, "one of the grand ironies"

There are many instances how Jim shows fatherly relation with Huck. Jim loves Huck very much and occasionally forgives him when he is less kind to him. But no way Jim tries to protect Huck. Jim protects Huck when they find the floating house. The dead man is found on the house. But Jim has an assurance that Huck never see that is his father's body:

"It's a dead man. Yes indeed; naked too. He's been shot in de back. I reck'n he's been dead two or three days. Come in, Huck, but don't look at his face- it's too ghastly". I didn't look. I love for Huck is also visible when Jim loses Huck in the fog on the river. When Jim realise that Huck is not lost, he says:

Goodness gracious, ids dat you, Huck? En you ain' dead- you
ain' drowned- you's back agin? Is's too good for true,
Lemme look at you chille, Lemme feel o' you. No, you ain'
dead! You's back ag'in, 'live en soun', Jis de same ole Huck-de goodness!

Huck realises he loves Jim more than he cares about society, and figures if loving Jim means he is going to hell, so be it. Jim is "the only genuine father figure Huck has, teaching him the ways of the world and sheltering him from danger...". Next incident makes it clear their father-son relationship. Huck, who never had a real father figure, is taken by having Jim stay on the island with him where he will have company and someone who looks after him. Though they have entirely different backgrounds, races, and different in ages, Jim assures to take his utmost care. Jim used to cook food for them, Huckleberry makes sure no one can see Jim as a runaway slave. Jim doesn't let Huck to see his father dead face as "it's too ghastly". This is an example of a caring gesture he does to ensure Huck doesn't see anything bad, like what a parent would do. Above all, Jim is more concerned about the good of Huck.


As **D. G. Hoffiman** puts it, "one of the grand ironies of this book is that while it seems to show Huck protecting Jim, Jim is equally concerned about the safety of Huck. Jim's folk wisdom saved Huck from the storm and just after the storm when the house of death floats by". It is Jim who goes aboard ship and sees the corpses and would not let Huck know it. At many places Huck tried Jim roughly and an impassioned speech of Jim gave him jolt. It is the greatest crisis which seems to shake his very being. The whole past reels before his eyes and he is pricked by a sense of duty to Miss Watson whose slave he was helping in his flight. Side by side, he recalls the great communion he and Jim had on the raft. There comes a climax.

Conclusion: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain is one of the most read novels in American Literature. Man "is the only animal that has the True Religion- several of them" as the great author Mark Twain believes. The novelist presents a father who believes that his son should be "tanned" for going to school even though he had his father to deal with. Huck and Jim's journey is widely regarded as a symbolic statement on the corruption of society and a condemnation of a "civilisation" which encourages greed and deception, destroys innocence and enslaves human beings. Mark Twain wishes the establishment of an ideal society based on equality, justice and brotherhood. It is its compelling heart searching quality that makes it so great a novel. **G. B. Shaw** who is well-known for his criticism of Shakespeare even, gave unstinted praise to Mark Twain. In his opinion, Twain was "by far the greatest American writer".

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