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Tamil Nadu, India**Abstract**

The demerits of civilization, hatred towards civilization and chivalrous adventures are the major elements of American Romanticism. These themes are found in abundant in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. It is a children's novel about a boy who runs away from home to escape from being civilized. His adventure ranges from finding the treasure hidden by the robbers to witness the murder in the graveyard and running to Jackson's island to live a carefree life with nature like a pirate. The second major character Huck, leads an uncivilized life, hates being pampered to be a "civilized" boy. The third character Injun Joe, who is falsely punished by civilization that changed the good course of his life.. In spite of being a realist, Mark Twain is very much influenced by the American Romantic Movement (1830 -1865) though he came fifty years later after the movement. This present research work focuses on the elements of the American Romanticism that are present in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). This paper also throws light on the theme of romanticism in the selected novel and emancipates Mark Twain as a post romanticist.

American Romantic Movement created a great tumult in the field of literature and American social structure. The salient features of European and American Romantic Movement

are a tendency towards nature, a life living close to nature, self realization and intentions to regard civilization as corrupt. The American romanticists defined it as,

a return to nature, exaltation of emotion and of the senses over the intellect and revolt against the 18<sup>th</sup> century nationalism...found expressions in historical novels, the tales of fantasy, romances of love and adventure...themes were drawn from simpler less civilized ways of living. (1578)

The American romantics like Thoreau concentrated on transcendentalism which came from the German thought that "...any philosophy based upon the doctrine that the principles of reality are to be discovered by a study of the process of thought, not from experience" (678).

Individualism is the second major American romantic thought that influenced the authors like Emerson. The central thought of Individualism is that "...a social theory encourages men act freely and singly; opposed to socialism" (336). To the French Romanticist Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 –1778), civilization shackled men who are born free by nature. In *The USA: A History*, it has been presented that American romantics were,

. . . primarily engaged in exploring the implications of the American doctrine of Individualism in the light of romantic conceptions of the human personality. They were therefore concerned with the emotional experience of the individual and with his life in nature rather than social interpersonal relationship. (277)

Mark Twain, though considered to be a realist, has been influenced by the American romantic movement. Most of his early masterpieces have the salient features of American romanticism like adventures, loathing civilized life, a life with nature etc., It is worthwhile to state what critics opine on the works of Mark Twain is that, "civilization as Mark Twain saw it, meant corruption, and the more elaborate it became the further it departed from the instinctive goodness of the natural being..." (507), the term saw it, meant his major work *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* narrates the story of two untamed boys and their adventures with nature. Mark twain showed a great interest in reviving the stories from middle ages and made a remarkable works like *The Prince and the Pauper*. It is one of the aspects of American romanticism. It can be considered as a work of American romanticism because the work is entirely focuses on the two kids freeing themselves from the clutches of civilization. "Becoming civilized" seems to them the bitter work than living a life with nature. Apart from the protagonists, there is one more character Mr. Injun Joe, a villain, who blames the society that made him a grave robber and a murderer. Corrupt civilization was one of the salient features of American and French romanticism.

Tom is a thirteen year old orphan brought up by his Aunt Polly, a kind loving woman but adamant enough to control and trains him to be a civilized boy. His rebellious attitude towards becoming civilized makes his aunt angry with him. He is more pulled by the adventurers like Robin Hood than a civilized man who seems to be "decent". He finds the class rooms are filled with just words. He says "...then in geography class and turned lakes into mountains, mountains into rivers into continents then chaos was again, and then in the spelling class got 'turned down' by a succession of mere baby words..." (63) . The above lines clearly portray the attitude of Tom.

Tom loves swimming and fishing but, his aunt forbids him from doing those things as she found it maligning her "bringing up" as a civilized boy, life seems horrible to him. When he is bidden by his aunt to whitewash the compound wall, in spite of his disliking the work, he does

the work whistling as if he found the real happiness in it. Seeing his happiness, his friends to do what he was doing. Tom denies handing over the brush but agreed to on condition that they pay for the whitewashing. Every boy who passed him offered something or the other to take part in the work. Tom feels “... it was not a hollow world at all. He had discovered a great laws of human action, without knowing it-namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain...”(25). It is a kind of transcendental experience that he has gained out of this experience.

His cousin Mary dresses him neatly and brushes his hair in a perfect position. She sets a straw hat on his head. The girl really tries to put him in rights that Tom hates more than anything in the world. In spite of being embellished with these attires, Tom “...now looked exceedingly improved and uncomfortable as he looked...whole clothes and cleanliness that galled him...” (36). when he is dressed up neatly to attend the Sunday prayer, he “... did not enjoy the prayer, he only endured it if he ever did that match-He was restive all through it....” (47). He is uncomfortable with everything that a civilized community wants him to do as he finds them tough and restrains his free will. Emerson said that children should be let free to be with nature so as to learn the life. Tom’s actions are more of like Emerson’s. He found the Mondays “...miserable ...because it began another week’s slow suffering in school...” (51).

To attract Becky, Tom’s sweet heart in the school, he is “...yelping, laughing, chasing, and jumping over the fence at risk of life...” (102) like an Indian. He could not even think of being a civilized boy even for a moment as he finds that being a civilized boy is being “nothing”. When Becky rejected his advances, he felt “...what if he went away ever so far away, into unknown countries beyond the seas and never come back anymore ...that he would join the Indians and buffalos and go on the war path in the mountain ranges and traceless great pair of the far west...” (72). His failing in romance is replaced by his love for primitive life of Indians and sea farthings. It is obvious that he is fond of adventures. While Tom enacts Robin Hood in the game, the end of the game is to bury the dead Robin Hood. While the burial starts, Tom’s friends say”...there was no outlaws anywhere and wondering what modern civilization could claim to have done to compensate for their loss... (76). it shows even Mark Twain himself did have love for Robin Hood. To Twain, the outlaws seem to be “free” people.

Becky’s absence to the class due to her illness makes Tom sad; he stops playing with his friends; he looks ill. After mistaking his “love-less condition” as sickness, Aunt Polly starts treating with all the home remedies and the pain killers. Tom couldn’t hurt her feelings by denying her care that is the medicine she offered. Tom, along with his friends Huck and Joe Harper, runs away from home to the Jackson’s Island after he was disillusioned by Becky’s rejection; Joe Harper joined him after being whipped by his mother for eating cream that he didn’t. The dense forest in Jackson Island was like a refuge to them. Tom, the Spanish pirate "the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main," Joe Harper "Terror of the Red Seas" and Huck Finn "the Red-Handed", have left their respective homes in the midnight with the stolen goods like bacon. When they reach the Island, they feel that they are born that time. The raft that brought them to the island seemed to be a wagon of happiness. They did cook the boiled bacon and fishes to quench their hunger and ate with the utmost joy. Twain says that “It seemed glorious sport to be feasting at that wild free way in the virgin forest of an unexplored and uninhibited land... They promised to each other that they are...far from the human hands of men and would never return to civilization...” (107).

On one occasion, when the current takes their raft, Twain says that “... this only gratified them, since its going was something burning the bridge between them and civilization...” (113).

Their life in the island is similar to the freedom that Henry David Thoreau wrote about his experience in Walden. In the Island, they

...chased each other around, shedding clothes as they went, until they were naked..blowing, spluttering, laughing and gasping...sprawl on the dry, hot sand and lie there...(124). The exalted Tom felt"...prouder, happier in their new acquirement than they would have been in the scalping and skinning of the six nations... (133).

Huck is one more important character in the novel. Mark twain introduces him as Huckleberry was cordially hated and dreaded by all the mothers of the town, because he was idle, lawless and vulgar and bad and because all their children admired him so and delighted in his forbidden society...(55).Tom is Huck's best friend as his tastes are similar to his. Tom tells Huck while hunting the treasure hidden by Injun Joe, that he would wed a beautiful girl. Hearing this, Huck feels sad and floats his feeling as "All right-that'll do, only if you get married I'll be more lonesome than ever..." (180).

Twain has given prominence to Huck as equal to the protagonist Tom. Till end of the novel, Huck is severely against civilization and does not want to be controlled in name of principles of a civilized community. Widow Douglas shelters him as a token of her gratitude for his saving her life from the murderers. She comes forward to adopt her as son. But Huck does not want to be put in that. After being enforced by the notable people like Judge Thatcher, Huck hatefully accepts and continues his life in her shelter. When Huck and Tom find the treasure hidden by Injun Joe, Huck feels more insecure about his freedom. He feels happy about being rich but, when Widow Douglas appreciates him more than ever, he feels unhappy. He says"... being rich ain't what it is cracked up to be. It is just worry and worry and sweat and sweat..." (252).

Widow Douglas dresses him up with the finest clothes in the village. She wants to make him "civilized" so, she sends him to school. Huck alleges his stay with her as "...had to eat with knife and fork, he had to use napkin, cup and plate; he had to learn the book; he had to go to church... the bars and shackles of civilization shut in him and bound him hand and foot..."(250). What life Huck abhorred has come to him unwontedly and troubled him. He never likes doing it further as he feels that he is not meant to follow these "hads" and burdens. He couldn't live that life even for two weeks. He runs away stealthily from Widow's shelter. It makes her disappointed. Huck dislikes to be regarded as a civilized boy, reaches to the second level and bursts out with anger while tom finds him in huck's former shelter, a lonely riverside wood shed, after hearing his missing from Widow's house. Huck screams at Tom:

Don't talk it Tom; I've tried it and it ain't work. Tom it ain't for me; I ain't used to do it...I cannot stand their ways. She makes me got up just as the same time every morning. She makes me wash, they comb to thunder; she won't let me sleep in the wood shed: I got to wear them blamed clothes that smothers me, tom: they don't seem to any air get through'em, somehow; and they're so rotten nice that I can't set down nor lay down nor roll around anywhere's, I hain't slid on a cellar door for well, it' pears to be years. (252).

Huck is contemptuous about the mechanical life of the civilized people who, he says about "the wider eats by bell; she goes to bed by bell; she gets up by a bell- everything is so awful reg'lar, a body can't stand it... (257). He sees the life of the civilized, goes with the

ideology that Thoreau had. Thoreau quoted that someday would become a tool of his tools. An idealistic individualistic thought he proposed out of this. Huck's life in the wood shed was much simpler and freer from all the whims and fancy of civilization. His stay reminds us of Thoreau's stay in a hut near Walden Pond. It is clear that Huck felt that the civilized way of living is filled with "regularities". It sickens him more than ever.

The third character in the novel Injun Joe, a cold-blooded murderer and thief, is sympathized for his former life which has been disintegrated by a civilized who punished him wrongly, was the reason for the wrong turn, Joe's life took. The civilization has victimized him to his cruelty. Telling the demerits and the defects in civilization are the considered to be one of the major elements of American romantic movements. According to J.J. Rousseau, man is born well by nature but, corrupted by society. Injun Joe speaks scornfully to Dr. Robinson who used him as a grave robber and was the reason for his present criminal life. He scolds him for the refusal of the wage for smuggling the corpse out of the grave. Robinson's father had Joe jailed in the past mistaking him a thief though Robinson knew that Joe came looking for food in the kitchen. Joe's jail life has turned him a notorious and nightmare of the village. Before Joe plunges a knife into Robinson's chest, he utters this out of contempt

you have done more than that...five years ago, you drove me away from your father's kitchen one night, when I came to ask for something to eat and you said that I war'nt there for any good; and when I swear I'd get even with you, if it took a hundred years, your father had me jailed for a vagrant. Did you think I'd forget? ... And now I've got you, you got to settle, you know! (104)

Hence it is understood that Twain, in fact, had a dislike towards civilization as he happened to see civilization has no sympathy for the poor, ill treats them and demoralizes them. Injun's character can be considered a mirror image of the victim of civilization. So it can be said that Twain has been influenced by American Romantic Movement, through the character analysis in the novel.

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