Adventures in Adolescence: Twentieth-Century Adaptations of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

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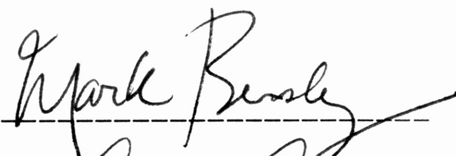
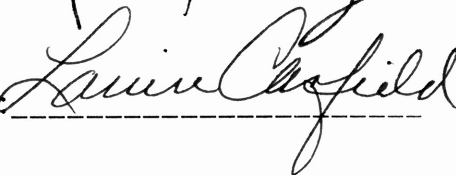
Fellows Advisor: 

Honors Director: 

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ABSTRACT

Adventures in Adolescence: Twentieth-Century
Adaptations of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Mark Twain has had considerable influence upon the authors that have followed him. Little criticism has been written concerning the specific influence of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* on novels of this century, although much has been written on his general influence on writers. It is the aim of this paper to take a few diverse examples of twentieth-century novels and compare them in general terms as well as examine them in light of mythological criticism, which is most appropriate to the novel. The novels for comparison include: Faulkner's *The Reivers: A Reminiscence*; Hemingway's short story collection, *The Nick Adams Stories*; J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*; *The Adventures of Augie March* by Saul Bellow; *The True Adventures of Huck Finn* by John Seelye; and *The Talisman* by Stephen King and Peter Straub.

INTRODUCTION

Ernest Hemingway once wrote that "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn.* " Many people would agree with this statement, but almost everyone would say that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is, at the very least, a classic piece of literature. Mark Twain did not always enjoy such a large group of admirers, for although *Adventures of Huck Finn* was quite popular, many accused it of being intolerably low-brow and compared it to the dime-novels of the day. As with any controversy aired in the press, the attempts of libraries to ban *Huckleberry Finn* did nothing but increase its waning sales. Most critics went so far as to say that it was as good as *Tom Sawyer*, but some did not, labelling it as Twain's psyche trying to flee from the dominating presence of his wife. It was not until several years later that *Huckleberry Finn* received any sort of "critical" acclaim.

At any rate, *Huck Finn* has risen to the ranks of classic through both popularity, and later, critical acceptance. The purpose of my study is to compare a series of twentieth-century novels to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.* Originally my intention was to do an in-depth examination of a few novels that had been previously identified. My research into the criticism found that there had actually been very little written on the specific influence of *Huck Finn* on other novels. As a result, the focus of my work has changed to that of a paper partially presenting new critical looks at novels and partially presenting some in-depth looks at those novels already related to *Huck Finn.* These novels also encompass a broad span of copyright dates, allowing a look at thematic evolution.

I feel that Twain's influence has extended far beyond that of the field of what is commonly referred to as "critical" literature into the worlds of contemporary, so-called "popular" literature such as science fiction, fantasy, and horror. Due to this feeling, my selections for comparison to *Huck Finn* are *very* diverse. This is also the reason why I have mentioned the initial misgivings toward Twain and *Huckleberry Finn* of both the critical world and the world in general. Popular fiction is literature; not always good literature, of course, but *Huck Finn* was popular fiction at one time and the critics have rarely written of it as unconditionally bad. So, I have included "popular" works to demonstrate that there are certain themes, styles, and motifs of *Huckleberry Finn* that are common to much American fiction.

The works I am considering in my overview are:

William Faulkner *The Reivers: A Reminiscence*, 1962

Ernest Hemingway *The Nick Adams Stories*, 1972

J. D. Salinger *The Catcher in the Rye*, 1951

Saul Bellow *The Adventures of Augie March*, 1953

John Seelye *The True Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 1970

Stephen King and Peter Straub *The Talisman*, 1984

The lack of research written specifically on the influence of *Huck Finn* in the literary world has led me to make my decision based mainly upon the books I have read and considered influenced and those that professors have suggested. Of the works selected for the overview, Hemingway, Seelye, and Faulkner were selected on the basis of my research into the influence of Twain. Others had been suggested by the research but were

discarded because they were adolescent or non-American fiction. *The Talisman* was selected on the basis of my reading. At the suggestion of my advisor I have included Salinger and Bellow. Some explanation is needed concerning the choice of *The Nick Adams Stories*. As a candidate for comparison with *Huckleberry Finn*, it is neither a novel nor is it episodic, in the sense of one complete journey. It is, instead, a collection of short stories written over the course of Hemingway's life. The stories, some of which are incomplete, are much like *Huck Finn* due to a recurring theme of confrontation with death and violence. Philip Young, an expert on Hemingway, points out that death and violence are a very large presence in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, even though many consider it to be a light, upbeat novel. Young says:

> *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has so much about it that is hilarious or idyllic that our attention is easily diverted from the spill of blood that seeps through its pages, giving them a large part of their meaning.... There are thirteen separate corpses. (224-226)

The major element that I used in making my decision was the theme of maturation. This element is present in all the works chosen. Another element also influencing my decision was that of episodic plotting. The combination of these two elements in some form and the addition of some of the other minor elements of *Huck Finn* served to confirm the decision to include a particular work. Of the minor elements, most significant are the presence of a travelling companion, such as Jim; a major background theme similar to that of the river; first person narrative; and similarities of style.

The theme of maturation is by far the most prominent one in each of

the novels. In the novels we see young people in various early stages of maturity growing to a mature world view. The world views are not always the same, but all of the protagonists are forced, just as Huck Finn himself was, to re-examine what they believe because of the experiences they go through in the work. All of the protagonists are subjected to something and, in some instances, many things which challenge their beliefs; either their beliefs about themselves and family, or some other feelings of great importance to them. The protagonists are forced to change in some way as a result of the trauma of these challenges. In *Huckleberry Finn*, Huck's ideas about his society are challenged when he is faced with the situation with Jim, the runaway slave. Huck feels strongly attached to Jim even though Jim is a slave. This builds slowly within Huck; at first he tries to disregard his feeling, to do what society teaches him is "right." Eventually Huck is unable to ignore his feelings because he realizes that Jim is a person and has feelings as well. So Huck says, "All right, then, I'll *go* to hell." Huck has come to realize a humanistic and mature point of view towards Jim.

Another main structural point of all these novels is that of episodic plotting. *Huckleberry Finn* utilizes the journey concept as its structure, allowing much action to be interrupted by lulls that are filled with thoughtful reflection. The idea of a journey or any sort of episodic plotting allows for both a balance between action and reflection. This both evens out the pace of the work and allows a balance in the content. By balance of content, I mean that episodes allow challenges to occur to the protagonist, where he is forced to deal immediately with the situation, yet it also allows the introspection that is needed in the maturation theme. The latter is also aided by the concept of first person narrative, since it is necessary for

us, as readers, to understand the process by which the protagonist matures. We have to understand his thoughts and actions and the motivations of his thoughts and actions as well.

The background motif of each of these books is also a strong indication of the tone and motivations to the psyche of the protagonist. Background motif is therefore very integral to the understanding of the changes in the themes through these works, as well as integral to the reasons behind the changes. In *Huck Finn* we have the strong image of the nurturing river to which Huck and Jim return again and again for the safety of silence and night. The archetypical river symbol looms large throughout the novel, suggesting both the peace and innocence of the womb and also a kind of natural American mysticism. These two elements lend much to the overall tone and message of *Huckleberry Finn* indicating that parallel elements in other works will also be of importance.

Because of the nature of *Huck Finn* the most appropriate style of criticism is that of mythological or archetypical criticism. Many critical examinations of *Huckleberry Finn* take this approach. Perhaps at this point, explanations of the concepts of archetypes and mythological criticism would be appropriate. Mythological criticism is the examination of a literary work for those elements that will elicit an almost universal response. These elements can be found in almost any literature, from oral history to the novel. As with the actual myths of different peoples, the trappings of the literature tend to take on characteristics of the particular culture, but ultimately when the critic digs into the underlying imagery, some universal constants become evident. Similar motifs or themes tend to take on similar meaning or elicit similar psychological responses. Themes and motifs are referred to as archetypes or symbols. Of course,

the meanings of the symbols can vary greatly, depending on the context. In *Huckleberry Finn*, we have several archetypes in addition to the river. As was mentioned earlier, the river can indicate the peace and innocence of the womb; Huck and Jim escape from their troubles to the river. But with a desire to return to the womb there is a kind of death wish with the added benefit of possible rebirth. This concept of death and rebirth is very appropriate to this type of archetypical story, for *Huckleberry Finn* is, ultimately, a tale of initiation. In mythological initiation, the hero, in this case Huck, is separated from his social group and goes through a series of ordeals to be transformed into social and spiritual adulthood (Guerin 162). Huck, of course, runs away and gets himself into all sorts of nasty trouble. He achieves maturity when he finally makes the decision to protect Jim. The unique twist Twain gives to this archetype is the fact that Huck's decision does not bring him back into his social group, as with archetypical initiation, but rather, it alienates him further. Huck becomes more alienated from society because his maturation is caused by a decision that is directly opposed to what his society says is "right."

Another archetype that is present in *Huckleberry Finn* is that of the wise old man who helps the hero in his initiation ordeals. Huck's wise old man is Jim. The wise man helps the hero by giving him knowledge that the hero himself does not have, so that the hero may meet and overcome the challenges that mature him. In Huck's case, Jim serves as the catalyst by making Huck realize what a truly good person acts like. No matter how badly Huck treats Jim, Jim does not get upset; he expresses his hurt feelings, but he does not get angry. Huck realizes that Jim has feelings and is not just a piece of property. Huck ultimately recognizes that Jim is human.

Each of the novels under consideration takes these three main archetypical images, or some off-shoot or parallel of the archetype, and develops it along similar lines to those within *Huck Finn*. This is the major consistency among them.

* * *

Early Twentieth-Century Writers

Two authors that made their reputations as classic writers in the early portion of the twentieth-century are William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway. Although both *The Reivers: A Reminiscence* and *The Nick Adams Stories* were published after World War II it is of greater accuracy to group them together in this period because the style and content of their writing reflects the earlier portion of the century more than that of the post-war period. Many of Hemingway's stories about Nick Adams were written in the early period, but they were not all collected together until after his death.

William Faulkner's *The Reivers: A Reminiscence* is stylistically the earliest of these novels that are being considered in light of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. *The Reivers* takes place in the very late nineteenth century. The protagonist, Lucius Priest, is a boy of eleven, and his family in Jefferson is the first to own an automobile. His adventures begin on the whim of one of the family's hired men, Boon. While all of the adults in the family are out of town for the funeral of Lucius's grandfather, Boon decides to take the automobile and go to Memphis. He brings Lucius along both as a sort of insurance, since few would believe that Boon owns a car and because Lucius succumbs to the temptation. If Lucius had not consented to go along, Boon would not have considered going. Boon and Lucius realize that if they are caught Boon's trouble will be less if Lucius is along, for everyone knows that Boon is completely unreliable, and that Lucius could have stopped him. Lucius thus realizes that his own trouble will be greater

if they are caught, because, ultimately, he will be held responsible. It is this feeling of responsibility that grates on Lucius during the entire time they are away from Jefferson. Lucius feels guilty for his part in the affair but goes along with it anyway. During their stay in Memphis, all sorts of trouble happens to Lucius and Boon.

Lucius and Huck are cut from practically the same cloth. Lucius is about the same age as Huck and is from a rural background, as well. The one main difference between Huck and Lucius is the fact that Lucius has a strong family background, though because of his father's business and his younger siblings, he is a little neglected and is expected to take a certain amount of responsibility. It is this bit of alienation and amount of responsibility that he is expected to take that gives Lucius his rebellious urges. He cannot do things a child is able to, so he does things that are a bit more troublesome. For example, his father has him make rounds to collect from the merchants on Saturdays, while Lucius wishes that he could be out playing baseball with his friends. Thus when he gets the opportunity to do something irresponsible, he succumbs to the temptation, even though he realizes that it will get him in trouble. It weighs on his conscience the entire trip, and ultimately, he wishes that he had not allowed it. Just as with Huck, Lucius's conscience is very active, and he is ultimately very honest about the important things in life. He is merely a mischievious boy.

On Lucius's journey, we come to realize his appreciation for innocence and beauty. In Memphis, Boon goes to see his girl, Everbe, a prostitute. Lucius, only eleven, does not really understand the situation, and, thus, he begins to idolize Everbe's beauty and charm. He becomes infatuated with her, and, later, when the truth is revealed to him by Everbe's cousin, a

rough boy, Lucius defends her honor even though he realizes the truth; she is a prostitute. He gets into a fight with the boy, and Everbe thanks Lucius, telling him that she has never had anyone defend her honor and promises not to make any more mistakes. Lucius's display of chivalry inspires her to change her way of life because she has never had anyone believe in her before. Lucius, in a strong display of his appreciation for the integrity of people regardless of the fact that they make mistakes, as well as his own integrity. Lucius is, as is Huck an idealistic person. Neither of the boys, however, succumbs to cynicism about the human race merely because people make mistakes. They both know that there are shining examples to counter the evil ones.

While on the trip, Lucius develops a relationship with Ned, one of the family's black servants. His relationship with Ned is very similar to Huck's relationship with Jim. Ned teaches Lucius a few things about the world of horseracing, as well as others. Before Lucius, Boon, and Ned are able to go back home, they have to win the car back, for Ned traded it for a horse that everyone believes will not run. Ned knows better, for he had a mule of similar temprement before, and he was able to make it run, by using a sardine. Ned therefore thinks that he will be able to get the car back as well as make some money in the process. This turn of events in Memphis leads to the major portion of the adventure. Once the group and the horse get to Parsham, the location of the horse race, they are put under house arrest because they do not have proof of ownership for the horse. Lucius is the only one of the group small enough to ride the horse, so he must learn the tricks of it from Ned. Ned is his archetypical teacher for his trial. Lucius must win the races for Ned and Boon to be able to return home. Lucius says:

> and by winning it, set Boon and Ned--me too of course, but then I was safe, immune; I was not only just a child, I was kin to them--free to go home again, not with honor perhaps, not even unscathed, but at least they could go back.... (213)

Even Lucius realizes that although he can return without the car, only he can providehis friends with the means to do so. So, unlike Huck, a main goal for Lucius is the return to his society. Huck, on the other hand, is too upset by the "sivilizing" influences and contradictory inputs he gets from society to go back.

In *The Reivers*, instead of the river, we have the road. This is the first archetypical evolution of these novels. The role of the road, however, is somewhat different from the role of the river. In *Huck Finn*, the river plays an important part in the escapism of the novel. Huck and Jim hop onto the raft, cut it loose, and glide off, silently into the river, taken by its current. The road in *The Reivers* is not a refuge for escape and protection. It *leads* to trouble; the road with the automobile, are the impetus for the trouble. So the road is less of an archetype and more of a device for the implementation of the archetype of the quest.

What of the difference between the archetypical implications of Lucius returning home and Huck's continued quest for an acceptable society? Huck decides to "light out for the Territory" because he "can't stand" the idea of being "sivilized." Basically Huck and Twain are twisting the archetype by insisting that the "return" in a initiation story does not necessarily mean to the hero's own society but to a society in which he does not feel his morals are compromised. For Lucius this means he can return home, for he does not feel compromised any longer. He felt that his

childhood was being compromised by the responsibilities that were forced upon him, but after his experiences, he realizes that he must now be more responsible: he must take his fate into his own hands. Lucius hoped that upon his return home his father would treat him like a child and whip him. But as it was about to happen, Lucius realized the inequality of the punishment with the crime:

> it was wrong, and Father and I both knew it. I mean, if after all the lying and decieving and disobeying and conniving I had done, all he could do about it was to whip me, then Father was not good enough for me. And if all that I had done was balanced by no more than that shaving stop, then both of us were debased. (301)

His grandfather has a worse punishment for him. He tells Lucius that *he* can not do anything about it. He tells Lucius he must live with his mistake. Lucius replies with:

> "Dont you see I cant?"
>
> "Yes you can," he said. "You will. A gentleman always does. A gentleman can live through anything. He faces anything. A gentleman accepts the responsibility of his actions and bears the burden of their consequences, even though he did not himself instigate them but only aquiesced to them, didn't say No though he knew he should." (302)

Lucius earns his maturity in a tough way and it fits him back into his society as an adult, rather than alienating him further from his society as Huck's maturity does.

* * *

The Nick Adams Stories is one of the few works in this group that has actually been compared to *Huckleberry Finn*. Philip Young is the major supporter of this thesis, comparing the two on the basis of the death and violence seen in both works. Young attributes this emphasis to a similarity of death and violence in the backgrounds of both writers (238). Hemingway's stems from the war, including a rather serious injury. Twain's, on the other hand, comes from his brushes with violence and death in his hometown of Hannibal, Missouri in the early 1800's. Both of these authors' traumatic life experiences have lead to the dark underpinnings of their works.

Young has argued that Nick Adams is the prototype for all of Hemingway's heroes, so that when Hemingway said, "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*," he really meant all his works came from *Huck Finn*. It is on the basis of his argument concerning the violence within *Huck Finn* that Young extrapolates the parallels between the prototype, Nick Adams, and Huck. But the parallels extend beyond just the violence says Young: "[I]n his writing career Hemingway has done very little if anything at all that is not sharply foreshadowed in the short space of Twain's novel" (231). Basically Young suggests that the assemblage of all the short stories concerning Nick Adams serve not only as a parallel with *Huckleberry Finn* but also as a prototype of the Hemingway hero and of the general character of Hemingway's works.

In both boys, Huck and Nick, we have caring, honest adolescents who flee from "sivilization," in each case civilization being a woman who tries to equate the reality of the present with that of the scripture, an impossibility

even in Huck's time. Both boys' fathers are somehow inadequate, Pap being even farther outside of society than Huck, a drunk, and physically abusive to Huck as well. Generally, Pap is merely indifferent to the fate of his son. Nonetheless, Huck has picked up Pap's interest in nature -- hunting, fishing, and anything happening out in the woods. In Huck, however, the interest in nature is a genuine love, not a mere interest in the exploitation of it, as with Pap. Nick's father also initiates him to nature, but instead of alienation brought on by physical beatings, Nick gains an alienation which seems to be an inherent condition of the males in Hemingway's works, due mostly to their solitary nature. Nick sees how solitary and introspective his father is and becomes that way, too. "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" shows us the relationship between Nick and his father. In this story, Nick's father is angry due to a confrontation with an Indian, and when his wife asks him to get Nick for her he allows Nick to go hunting with him instead, showing Nick his feelings towards his wife's attempts at authority.

Huck and Nick are also similar in other characteristics. Both are unsure of themselves but at the same time brave in spite of their fears and nervousness. They will save their skin with a quick lie when necessary, but when it comes to the important things, they are very honest. Both of them also recognize that there is something wrong with what society tells them is the "right" way to do things, because each comes to be an independent thinker and, as a result, makes his own decisions about the attitudes and morals of society. With Huck this culminates in his decision to protect Jim, "All right, then, I'll *go* to hell." Nick's disputes with society are much less clear-cut, but they exist nonetheless. Some of his disputes stem from his dealings with the Indians of his youth, other from his own experiences with white society. His brushes with the whites come mainly in the form

of disputes with the game wardens over his fishing for trout in the off-season. Nick sees nothing wrong with it, for he does not abuse the population of trout by over-fishing. He does not understand why the game wardens concentrate so much on him instead of the others who poach heavily.

For Nick, fishing is his escape. Whereas Huck goes out onto the river and escapes with its current, Nick wades into the middle of the river and becomes part of the current and then proceeds to lose himself in the adventure of fighting and catching the trout. In "The Last Good Country," Nick has trouble with the game wardens, and he uses fishing as his literal escape, running off to the inaccessible portions of the river to hide out and live off the land. Huck's travels down the river culminate in his decision to treat Jim as a human being, but at the end of *Huck Finn* he has not reconciled himself to "sivilization" in any form he has found, for he plans to "light out for the Territory." Nick travels while he is in his teens and eventually winds up in the war, and is wounded. The story "A Way You'll Never Be" shows that the war affects him seriously, especially psychologically, for he cannot sleep without a light on, and he has spells in which he repeats the conversations occurring at the time of his trauma and wound. Nick is upset that he has had this problem, for he feels that no soldier will trust him now. "'It's a hell of a nuisance once they've had you certified as nutty,' Nick said. 'No one ever has any confidence in you again'" (161).

We see Nick's "adventures" as they continue throughout his life, unlike Huck's. Young attributes this to Twain's inability to deal with his creation; Huck was too complicated and too much like Twain (230). "Hemingway eploited the condition and raised him to a complicated manhood" (Young

234). "Big Two-Hearted River" lets us see that Nick continues his fishing as a kind of therapy. When the world and its problems get to be too much for Nick, he goes to the river and figuratively drowns himself in the feeling of catching the trout and living off the land again. When his stay in the wild is done, he feels refreshed and better able to handle the high-pressure situation he has to return to:

> He [Nick] sat on the logs, smoking, drying in the sun, the sun warm on his back, the river shallow ahead, entering the woods, curving into the woods, shallows, light glittering, big water-smooth rocks, cedars along the bank and white birches, the logs warm in the sun, smooth to sit on, without bark, gray to the touch; slowly the feeling of disappointment left him. It went away slowly, the feeling of disappointment that came sharply after the thrill that made his shoulders ache. It was all right now. (197)

Ultimately for Nick, the river and fishing serve as a regeneration archetype instead of a maternal figure with death-wish undertones as it is for Huck. This regeneration archetype comes from fishing's association, archetypically, with the figure of the fisher-king or the Christ figure.

The main difference between Nick and his counterpart Huck is Nick's solitude. During his war years, he seems to have no close friends, and when he travels in his teen-age years along the train tracks, he does so alone. In "Indian Camp" where Nick sees his father the doctor deliver a woman's baby by Cesarean section with no anesthetic, as well as the almost severed head of her husband who had committed suicide in the bunk above her because of the screams. Death and violence such as this that Nick

experiences as a child seem to have brought him to a very negative attitude about humanity, in contrast to Huck. Nick's alienation is demonstrated throughout the stories, from his initial insistance that he go into hiding alone to escape the game wardens in "The Last Good Country," to escaping alone to the river and fishing in "Big Two-Hearted River." Huck's humanity seems to be spurred by the episodes in which people are threatened by or have violence happen to them. In the incident in which the Duke and the Dauphin are tarred and feathered, even though Huck is disgusted by the two, he is still repulsed by their fate, "Well, it just made me sick to see it; and I was sorry for them poor pitiful rascals.... Human beings *can* be awful cruel to one another" (182). And, even though Huck is sometimes disgusted with the failings of man, he does not lose his humor. *Huck Finn* is a very funny book at times, but the few jokes that occur throughout *The Nick Adams' Stories* seem to be only cruel and painful. In "Ten Indians" Nick, as a youngster, is teased about having an Indian for a girlfriend. Nick enjoys the teasing. When he arrives home that night, the cruel irony is revealed when his father tells Nick that he saw his girlfriend threshing about in the bushes with another boy. Huck and Nick are thus very similar in character and in their experiences, but the one main difference between them is Hemingway's reliance upon the pain in Nick's life to impress upon the reader the seriousness of Nick's situation of dealing with life.

* * *

Later Twentieth-Century Writers

The diversity of works that have been influenced by *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* becomes very apparent upon examination of the later twentieth-century works being considered. Within this group are novels of both the popular and critical vein, ranging from the frenetic soliloquy of Salinger's Holden Caulfield to the subtle horror of King's and Straub's multi-dimension world. The styles and attitudes apparent within these works are diverse as well and represent the varied attitudes of the authors toward their twentieth-century societies.

J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* is another of the works that has been extensively connected to *Huckleberry Finn.* Holden Caulfield, the protagonist of the novel, makes his journey in a period of days as opposed to Huck's weeks on the river. Holden also makes his journey in the concrete world of the big city rather than in the natural world of the river. Much of the similarity to *Huck Finn* in *Catcher in the Rye* is between Holden's and Huck's personalities. There is also a great deal of similarity between the social situations that they both face. The solution to their dilemma of morality, however, is resolved in a completely different manner.

Twain and Salinger have taken these two refugees from society and imbued them with languages that make the reader believe they could exist. Huck, with his slang of the river and the nineteenth-century mid-west, reveals to us an innocent and somewhat naive youth. It is through his innocent but telling comments on the nature of society and the actions of people that he demonstrates his underlying sensibility which eventually

displaces his socially instilled mores. Huck's language, though he says he can swear with the best, is usually absent of profanity. Huck says, "I had stopped cussing, because the widow didn't like it; but now I took to it again because pap hadn't no objections" (Twain 24). The cleaness of his language does not break the illusion of his reality, for we take it as his sign of respect and intimacy for the reader. He censors his language as one would censor it for a sensitive friend. Holden Caulfield also demonstrates his reality through the use the slang of the twentieth-century. His use of unusual coinages and ever-present profanity is a reminder to the reader of most any adolescent they know. Holden's outright refusal to censor his language for the reader is also an indication of his intimacy. In this case, however, it is an intimacy born of indifference toward what the reader ultimately thinks of Holden. (Wells 33) Though initially this indicates to the reader Holden is being completely open to the reader, not "phony" as he would say, it becomes obvious later in the novel that this is Holden's hidden plea to the reader for empathy. (Wells 33) It would seem that Holden's cry for attention is like that of many other adolescents of the twentieth-century. There are a few dissimilarities, though, in the character of their speech. Huck is a relaxed character that comments on the scenes that go on around him with a detached air of disinterest: he rarely gets excited and panicky about any situation. Holden, on the other hand, expresses his descpriptions of the situations in a "tense outpouring [which] is a convincing expression of his psychological unrest..."(Branch 145). Holden is obviously neurotic. Both these styles of speech are effective in demonstrating the undertones of their moral dilemmas. Huck's simplicity gives a classic, almost gothic air to the darkness that underlies his society, while Holden's almost frenetic speech exhibits a kind of

dissonance that illustrates the crazy juxtapositioning that occurs in twentieth-century morals (Branch 146).

Huck and Holden have similarities that go far beyond that of language, however. Huck and Holden both have an interest in intellectual things, and judiciously "study" or "analyze" things. The two will also quite willingly grant the abilities of anyone, even someone they find offensive in other regards. Holden respects Harris Macklin's ability as a whistler, even though he finds Harris a bore. Holden, just as Huck, demonstrates an almost unbelievable amount of humility and self-derision. Holden refers to himself as the "only really dumb one" in his family and calls himself a "sacreligious atheist". His free admission of his faults comes whenever he senses himself as even being slightly phony. (Branch 150) His critical observations about himself reveal his high standards of morality, just as Huck's does. Holden also saves his skin much in the manner of Huck, concocting a quick story to cover himself, or some other manuever. He is not proud of the fact, however, commenting that he "is a terrible liar," and sometimes does so for no reason at all. Both also demonstate an appreciation for the unsullied, both in nature and people, as well as a love for natural beauty. Unlike Huck, Holden reacts many times, in an unconventional way to people and situations. An example of this is when Holden makes up an incredible set of lies to keep the knowledge from a mother that her son is only known for his towel-snapping ability. Both boys' ultimate respect is for the sanctity of the individual, and hate anything that seeks to undermine it. They both realize that forcing opinions and attitudes on individuals is destructive both to the individual and positive communication between individuals.

Each of them have a moral foundation that goes beyond anything that

has been instilled by their societies. The depth of their morality also is what leads them both to their ultimate conflict. Each of them exhibits a humanity that is relatively non-existent in their societies. Huck, just as Holden is able to pick out the "phonies" of the world. Huck identifies the Widow Douglas, for example, stating that "because she done it herself" she approved of taking snuff. Holden's reactions to the phonies are far more extreme; derisive and abusive. And, he is also more sensitive to the things that are completely the opposite, registering them and cherishing them. The difference, though, in their moral fiber is a great one. Huck's actions are generally much more mature than Holden's, for as Branch says:

> The hope in Mark Twain's novel is that a ragamuffin pre-adolescent acts maturely for what is good in an open society. The underlying despair of Salinger's book is that a privileged adolescent wants to act immaturely for what he believes is good in a society thickened into vulgarity. (149)

What Huck wants is to find a place where the value of humanity is intrinsic; someplace where society's morals and his own do not conflict. If he cannot find it, he prefers damnation. Holden's dilemma is two-fold, for he cannot find such a place nor can he live outside of society. Holden absently toys with the idea of pretending to be a deaf-mute to relieve himself of dealing with society, but he ultimately knows that interaction is inevitable. It is because of inevitability that he clings so strongly to childhood and immaturity. Holden wants no part of adulthood, for although he recognizes the signs of adulthood in himself--his awakening interest in sex, for example--he sees no adult role-model that he esteems and respects to pattern himself after. His measurement of the world is one of rigorous,

uncompromising simplicity (Kaplan 78), so, for the most part, the only people he respects are children, for it is usually only children that express "[u]nselfish love and spontaneous joy " those two "...expressions of the uncontaminated spirit" that Holden prizes most highly (Branch 151). The epitome of Holden's wish to further innocence comes in his desire to be a "catcher in the rye": if he cannot remain a child, then he wishes to preserve the childhood of others by "catching" them before they "fall" off that "crazy" cliff.

Just as the ultimate moral dilemmas of these two novels are resolved differently in *Huck Finn* and *Catcher in the Rye*, their method of social commentary is somewhat different, too. Both Huck and Holden give a critical view of their societies even as they acknowledge their appreciation for what is honest and good. Huck, in his typical off-handed manner, makes casual observations about what goes on in his society. Huck's comment about the profanity he sees scrawled upon the house floating down the river is cool: "the ignorantest kind of words...." But probably most telling of the comments Huck makes about his society are those in which the "blindess of a civilization is bared with terrible casualness." (Branch 152) He replies to Aunt Sally's inquiring if anyone had been injured in the steamboat accident with, "No'm. Killed a nigger."

Some of Holden's observations about his world are along similar lines, for instance, his apology for having to like a girl before being able to get "sexy" with her. Many of Holden's comments, however, are much more openly bitter and critical toward his society, because of his mental instability after the loss of his brother and the other traumas in his life. His bitterness is emphasized in both his descriptions of his physical surroundings and people, reflecting his personal disgust and sickness with

things and his recognition that human maturity implies adult sexuality. He describes a chair as being "vomity" looking; it smells as if someone had "tossed his cookies" in the cab he enters; and the park is "lousy" with "dog crap, globs of spit, and cigar butts." Most everyone falls into the category of "phony," from students to movie actors, the virile handshakers, and the "Holy Joe" voiced ministers. These people are not natural, nor are the ones who demonstrate "casual bravura" (Kaplan 79). His reaction to the four-letter word on the wall of Pheobe's school epitomizes Holden's fear and disgust with adult sexuality. He sees this word as impossible to overcome, saying, "If you had a million years to do it in, you couldn't rub out even *half* the ' Fuck you' signs in the world." He wants to kill whoever did the writing. The word follows him everywhere, and he fears that even as he lies dead in his grave someone will scrawl it on his tombstone. (Branch 153) This is a far cry from Huck's reaction to the profanity on the floating house.

Holden Caulfield's bitterness reflects a concentration on the despair he feels towards his society and the nightmarish lack of hope that it presents for all people. Just as Holden solves his moral dilemma by seeking a fantasy that is impossible to reach, the true horror of his situation is not that it represents merely his loss but that the reader recognizes that the disgusting view that he presents of the twentieth-century urban experience is very valid. His loss is everyone's loss, for we all recognize the compromises that we have been forced to make with our own personal morality when we see them contrasted with Holden's high ideals. And we are further saddened by the knowledge that Holden is telling his story from some sort of sanitarium where he is making a recovery. It saddens us because we know that he too is finally to be compromised so as to fit in

better in society. We mourn what will be the ultimate loss of his high standards as he is changed to "normalacy" in what we suppose is some kind of mental institution. Branch sums it best:

> No wonder Holden wants to remain forever the catcher in the rye -- *his* free Territory -- oblivious to the trap that maturity finally springs. His recessive traits suggest that the logical, perhaps desirable, end for him and his civilization is the pure silence of death, the final release from imperfect life. ....because his [Salinger's] vision is lit by the sick lamps of civilization, *The Catcher in the Rye* is as appropriate to our age as *Huckleberry Finn* is to an earlier America. (155-156)

* * *

It is quite clear from the title, *The Adventures of Augie March*, that Saul Bellow intends to invoke the memory of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in his reader. It is also evident in his characterization of Augie March, the protagonist, for Augie is a twentieth-century Huck Finn, dealing with problems in modern-day morals to the point of Augie being overcome by a new sense of impotency in struggling with these societal mores. Unlike Huck, whose choices are clear, Augie March is struck with a myriad of choices that muddle both what society labels as "right" as well as his own sense of what is morally correct. Much of Augie's dilemma comes about from the locale of his journey: the city, a complex, ever-changing structure. Unlike Huck's relatively simple, uncomplicated life on the river

in the midst of nature where contact with humankind can be limited to that of necessity, Augie is confronted with a teeming mass of people that have to be dealt with on a day-to-day basis.

It is in this complex population that Augie begins his adventures. The first thing to be noted about Augie that makes his life similar to Huck's is the lack of a strong family unit. Admittedly, there is a strong presence of his "grandmother," and Augie's mother is still with the family, but Augie's father is gone. The influence of Grandma Lausch is something like Huck's own Widow Douglas and Miss Watson. She is very domineering, and although Augie is very hesitant to show it, he rebels strongly against her, much as Huck rebels against the "sivilizing" influence of his two caretakers. The lack of a strong, unified family contributes to what Hassan refers to as the "rootlessness peculiar to American life" (306). "It is as if America, by promising to each a proud and independent fate, could play father to all the world's orphans" (Hassan 306). Just as Huck takes initiative and "lights out" to escape the bonds of Pap and the Widow Douglas, Augie, in a less blantant fashion goes out into the world of the city to find his fate.

In Augie's case, however, things become very confused. Huck has a very clear picture of what society expects from him. He knows that according to civilization, he should not be helping with a runaway slave. Things are not quite so clear for Augie. His life is complicated because of the added variable of money. In the twentieth-century there is a great deal more concentration upon the material. Huck sees a little of this material emphasis in his nineteeth-century world because of the incidents with the Duke and the Dauphin, and their eventual con of Huck in which they sell Jim. Augie, however, faces the desire for material things in a more personal way, first because of his brother, Simon, who aspires to wealth,

and who is derisive of Augie. Simon criticizes Augie's lack of initiative in setting career goals and, in general, Augie's unwillingness to see the value of putting on masks for people. Augie, too, faces the desire for money and material wealth within himself. The entire episode in which he and Thea are in Mexico trying to hunt giant lizards with an eagle is prompted by the quest for money. Augie freely confesses this goal, although he could have honestly said that it was for love that he was in Mexico as well. Here again we have another parallel between Huck and Augie: honesty. Although both of them lie when it is necessary, both of them are honest about what is truly important.

Other parallels between Huck and Augie are their mutual respect for people of intelligence and their own insistence on figuring things out. Augie spends a great deal of his time reading, hoping to use the things he learns from books by applying them to his own life. Huck, mostly illiterate, does something similar, gleaning all the information he can from the people he knows. Much of Huck's knowledge has to do with surviving in the natural world, and here, too is a perallel with Augie. Augie has urban survival skills down to an art. Even when he does not have a job, he survives somehow, but he does not feel good when he has to take advantage of someone. He knows and understands the integral workings of the city environment and takes advantage of them.

One particular parallel between Augie and Huck is the presence of a mentor in both of their lives. Huck's constant source of advice is his travelling mate, Jim. From Jim Huck receives knowledge necessary for his maturity and the solution to the problems that he runs into. Augie seeks the advice of Einhorn throughout the novel. Sometimes Augie is not sure about wether to take all of Einhorn's advice, but he does examine the

things that Einhorn says, in the hope of gleaning something of worth. Einhorn is the man who gets Augie to thinking about the things of real value in life, so in this way his role is similar to Jim's who is the impetus for Huck's maturity.

Ultimately, the quest for maturity in Augie's life leads him to fully accept the value of love over all other things. At the end of *The Adventures of Augie March* Augie even accepts the love he feels for his brother, Simon, who has been one of the main vexations of Augie's life. Augie says to himself, "I love my brother very much. I never meet him again without the utmost love filling me up. He has it too, though we both seem to fight it" (533). He realizes that life, although rough, should not force a person "to lead a disappointed life" (536). People should continue on with a sense of humor.

Augie's journey is a much longer one than Huck's, and much less integrally linked to an archetypical symbol like that of the river. Much of Augie's story takes place in the city, but much of it does not, leaving us without a continuous presence in terms of archetype. The lack of continuous archetype is offset by the changing environment, for it helps to emphasize to us the ever-changing world and morals of the twentieth-century and the difficulties of coming to terms with them. The wide variation in setting allows us to note, as Augie does, the similarities that exist in all societies and all lives, those "axial lines" he refers to. They are a juxtapositioning of the recurring elements in one's life that we recognize and learn from, and their significance is emphasized not only in the similarities between the various societies that Augie is involved with, but also in the similarities between the people that he meets.

* * *

John Seelye's *The True Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* begins with an introduction by Huck in which he discusses the various opinions that the "crickits" have concerning Mark Twain's *version* of his, Huck's, story. Huck wishes to clear all these problems up by telling the true story. So, we get the unexpurgated version with a new twist on the original. This new twist is the complete deletion of the latter portion of the book in which Tom Sawyer appears. Instead, Seelye presents the death of Jim. Seelye wrote *The True Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as the answer to "all the critical and scholarly objections to Mark Twain's version" (Seelye qtd. in Wolff 106) Accordingly, the critical world responded both positively and negatively manner to his version. The question seemed to be: had Seelye overstepped the bounds of criticism? People landed on all sides of the question, with suchpositive opinions as Geoffrey Wolff: "Without reference to Twain's own version, it is almost impossible to see the seams where 1970 joins 1884....[W]hat he added is very, very good (106). And, of course, there were also negative responses such as that of Eugene Goodheart:

> Much of Seelye's version is direct appropriation of the book Seelye, in scholarly fashion, refuses to take unnecessary liberties....[I]t is more difficult to discover the value of revising a classic. For one thing, the act of revision creates the illusion of a creative act, whereas it is at best a critical act....In short, Seelye's performance is neither adequately critical nor creative. (661-662)

In so far as I see it, I would agree somewhat with both of these critic's opinions. Seelye has integrated his additions to the novel very well, and

the introduction by Huck concerning the "crickits" of Twain's version is quite funny, for above all, Seelye uses Huck's idiom just as Twain himself would. I would, however, take exception to those who have said that Seelye's Huck is much wilder than Twain's. Wolff says, "Seelye's Huck swears," -- a few expletives does not make a wild boy; "lusts," -- he likes kissing and pretty girls (he is an adolescent male, after all); and "smokes hemp"(106), which might be unusual for a white boy of his period, but is certainly not a bit atypical today. Wolff also says that "Twain did sweeten and scrub Huck so that he would sell, and for that the critics have never forgiven him"(106). Just who Wolff is referring to when he says "critics" here is a bit unclear to me, for in Twain's day *Huck Finn* was criticized for being too rough. By modern urban standards Twain's Huck is pretty sweet, but so is Seelye's. What Wolff fails to acknowledge is a different attitude among publishers of Twain's period. It is very unlikely that Seelye's version of Huck would have been publishable in 1884, although the death of Jim would not have caused a bit of controversy. The question remains concerning Seelye's purpose. Is this legitimate criticism? I would have to agree with Goodheart in this respect. It is not criticism, at least, not good criticism, for it does not support itself with explanations of the changes and their functions. It is necessary to understand and verify the reasoning behind the criticism before being able to acknowledge it as good or bad.

The real change is in the conclusion, where Seelye addresses those critics who have complained about the reappearance of Tom Sawyer, and the facetious way that Twain handled the new mature Huck. Seelye has Jim drown in his chains as he flees desperately from the whites to which the Duke and Dauphin had turned him over. Huck tries but fails to save Jim. Huck becomes bitter and lonely out on the raft alone:

> Being out there all alone at that time of night is the lonesomest a body can be. The stars seem miles and miles away, like the lights of houses in a valley when somebody stops on a hill to look back before going on down the road, leaving them all behind forever; and my soul sucked up whatever spark of brashness and gayness I had managed to strike up since that afternoon, and then all the miserableness come back, worse than ever before. But dark as it was, and lonesome as it was, I didn't have no wish for daylight to come. In fact, I didn't much care if the goddam sun never come up again. (339)

Here we have a naturalistic ending, in the sense that Huck, after all his wrangling with his conscience, is rewarded with the death of his one true friend. As Philip Young aptly puts it, in naturalism, "there is no particular connection between virtue and reward. What you get has very little to do with what you deserve" (156). Is this a just ending to the book? Well, in one sense it fits, for Huck and Jim have been escaping the fates throughout. Generally, by the skin of their teeth, they manage to slip away from whatever trouble they have gotten into. So it follows that probability catches up with them. But the truth of the matter is their troubles usually have very little to do with their role in the situations. They are generally innocent of any real wrongdoings, with minor exceptions. In the case of the Sheperdson and Grangerford feud, Huck gets caught up in the situation simply because he is associated with the family, and innocently retrieves a message in a Bible, not because he actively takes part in the hate between

the families. It is not the lack of believability of Seelye's ending that bothers the reader, but the unfairness of it.

It is not fair for a pair of innocents like Huck and Jim to end up this way -- to ruin the magical sense of eluding the fates that travels with them throughout the story. Critics have had a problem with Twain's ending because of the reappearance of Tom Sawyer and the way in which Twain refuses to deal with Huck's revelation of "All right, then, I'll *go* to hell"(chpt 31, 169). I think Eugene Goodheart discusses this effectively, saying that because the entire book is "governed by a strong magical sense of reality, ... create[ing] an atmosphere of plausibility for the ending.... Twain's magical sense of reality does not undermine his realistic depiction of Huck's moral equivocations and choices" (662). I think that Twain's ending is very plausible, but the real question is more one of why Twain refused to deal further with those "moral equivocations and choices" that Huck made. Philip Young has made the point that in the violent episodes of *Huck Finn*, we find many parallels with things that actually happened to Twain (224-25). Much of his childhood was filled with violence, and the episode of Boggs being shot down in the street is almost lifted from Twain's own life (Young 225-26). Young states: "Once Twain had planted in Huck the complications he suffered himself...it was easier to write comedy, and revert to the Huck that Tom Sawyer thought he knew." (230) In short, Twain saw too much of himself and his own realizations of the evil of his society, and he refused to deal with them.

Jim's death also brings some different considerations to the archetypical imagery in *The True Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In *Huck Finn*, we have noted the significance of the river as an image of safety, womb-like in its presence, bringing stillness and serenity to Huck and

Jim's trouble-filled excursions into the world of society. Although several times, such as the incident of Huck's finding the body of his Sheperdson friend in the river, the river is associated with death and violence, these are isolated incidents which have more to do with the influence of man on the river than suggesting dark underpinnings of the river. Yet there is still a kind of dying associated with returning to the womb, with, of course, a hope for rebirth. And it is these dark images of the archetype of the river that are exploited in Seelye's version by the death of Jim. After Jim's death, Huck describes the river with a newfound sense of dread:

> All around you can hear the river, sighing and gurgling and groaning like a hundred drownding men, and laying there in that awful dark, I could hear the river terrible clear, and it seemed to me like I was floating in a damn grave yard. (338-339)

It is naturalistic, and leads Huck to a lack of any sort of hope. In the original Huck still has his hope for himself and for some sort of society. He is ready to "light out for the Territory". In Seelye's he does not "much care if the goddam sun never come up again" (339). Jim's death also indicates a new role for him in the archetypical picture as well. Generally, in the myth of initiation where the hero is initiated into maturity (as opposed to the social group), we have the protagonist going through several ordeals to pass from immaturity to adulthood. Usually this encompasses the three phases of separation, transformation, and return. (Guerin, et al 162) In the case of the original *Huck Finn*, the first two stages of these stages are very clear-cut, while the last stage of return is somewhat less so, although it could be said that Huck's reunion with Tom Sawyer is a return to his original society. The problem with the concept of return in the original

Huck's case is that his maturity has nothing to do with his role in society. In fact, it is just the opposite; he deserts society to live his own life. But, because he is ready to "light out" at the end of *Huckleberry Finn*, it seems that he still hopes he can find a society that his maturity will fit into. The death of Jim provides a bitterness in Seelye's Huck that allows no hope. Huck has gone through an initiation process that has a vengeance instead of a reward. Huck cares not to see the sunrise, much less for a society into which his view might fit. Seelye's ending has served to completely alienate Huck from society. He can never go home.

Jim's death also serves to change the focus of Huck's life from one of hope to one of failure. Archetypically, the original role of Jim is that of the wise old man -- the person who helps the hero make the leaps of logic and knowledge that he himself cannot (Guerin 160-61). Jim is wise about the natural and mystical elements of the river world that he and Huck journey through, and he lends both knowledge and a sense of wonderment at nature as well as an intrinsic morality to Huck. He does not care about Huck's position in society: Jim helps because he wants to help. Jim also serves as the focal point of Huck's moral dilemma; will Huck recognize the value of Jim as a human being and friend, or will he abandon his maturity and personal morality for what society deems right? In the original he takes up maturity and personal morality, as he does in Seelye's version. With Seelye's ending, however, Huck's decision is thrown right back into his face: Jim drowns. Huck's educator and friend dies, leaving him with a stated moral purpose, but metaphorically with nothing to apply it to or for. Jim, as an example of a functioning moral person, represents that moral society that Huck longs to fit into. When Jim drowns, so does Huck's hope and desire to find that moral place.

* * *

Of the reviews of *The Talisman*, most missed the connection between it and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.* The most common comparisons are between *The Talisman*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Alice in Wonderland.* I found only one mention of *Huckleberry Finn* (Rev. of *The Talisman* 771) and one other interesting reference. "Jack [is] a sort of junior Candide...,"(Pollock13) which I think is very appropriate, since *Candide* and *Joseph Andrews* are definite forerunners to *Huckleberry Finn* in the sense that they concern the maturing of youths during a journey. I think that it is significant that few reviewers have noted the striking similarities betwee *Talisman* and *Huck Finn*, considering that King and Straub use quotes from Twain for both the prologue and epilogue. Perhaps it was my reading of *Huckleberry Finn* such a short time before *The Talisman* that lead me to see the similarities. I think that the most probable reasons, however, for the lack of comparison are the overwhelming reputations of King and Straub as *horror* writers and the fact that *Talisman* is a very dark and scary book. *Huckleberry Finn* is usually regarded as a fun-loving, up-beat, adolescent romp by most readers. Most scholars realize, however, that there is a significant underlying theme of confrontations with death in *Huck Finn* . It is Huck's confrontation with death that led Huck to decide that getting involved with "sivilization" is not a good idea. Time and time again, Huck and Jim flee to the safety of the raft and the river.

I also found reference to *Huckleberry Finn* in two other instances, both more in depth than mainstream reviews. Michael R. Collings, in *The Many Facets of Stephen King* sees *The Talisman* in a somewhat less horrific

light than most of the other critics. He also make the connection between *Huck Finn* and *The Talisman* :

> Even the name "Jack Sawyer" diverts the novel from horror....the surname connects *The Talisman* with Mark Twain. Thomas Woodbine ("Uncle Thomas") dies early, as if to insure more to the book than a rehashing of Twain. Still, occasional echoes lend *The Talisman* additional support: Jack's constantly having to tell the Story re-calls humorous parallels in *Huckleberry Finn* ; Speedy Parker recalls Jim; the unlikely duo of Jack Sawyer and Richard Sloat and their equally incredible adventures reads like something out of Tom Sawyer's imagination. (136)

I would agree with Collings on every point here, but I think the literary allusions go far beyond this. *The Talisman* differs mainly in one respect to *Huckleberry Finn*; it has a goal, because it is a quest. In many others it parallels and extrapolates from *Huck Finn,* as Douglas Winter points out.

> The great American novel of boyhood, Mark Twain's *The* [sic] *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn...*, ends with Huck pointed west, ready to "light out for the Territory" he had sought, but never found, in his travels with Nigger Jim down the Mississippi. Jack Sawyer, who will take that westward journey, is an amalgam of such fictional boyhood adventurers, at once steeped in their traditions and yet wholly modern. (66)

It also takes the overwhelming themes of death and evil and is able to end with a strong feeling of hope.

Jack Sawyer, the young protagonist, is hiding with his cancer-ridden mother, an aging B-movie queen. Jack and his mother are doing so because Jack's father has died, and his father's business partner is trying to finagle the family fortune away from the two. Their hide-out is a sea-side hotel in Arcadia on the Eastern seaboard. In his stay there, Jack meets Speedy Parker, an aging black man who takes care of the local amusement park. Speedy introduces Jack to the "Territories,"--the land of daydreams, that parallel world where all of us drift when our consciousness is just about to fade completely into sleep. In the case of these Territories, they are of a medieval nature and are inherently clean and good. Speedy also introduces Jack to his fate; Jack must go to the black hotel on the West coast, get the Talisman, and save both his mother and the future of the Territories. The queen of the Territories lies dying, and evil, powerful men will take the Territories over when she dies.

Jack is one of a unique few among people, for he is truly an individual; everyone else has an alter-ego, a "Twinner," in the Territories. His twin was killed as a baby at the same time his father's business partner, Morgan Sloat, tried to murder the baby Jack in this world. Jack's best friend, Sloat's son, Richard, is also of the unique few.

Jack's quest leads him across the country and into all sorts of scrapes. In this world he must deal with homosexual advances, a bar and bartender that would make most any slaver look good, and a home for boys reminiscent of a nightmare beyond Dickens. In the Territories, his adventures take him through a black, writhing forest; into an encounter with the whip-wielding twinner of the television minister that runs the

home; and through the "blasted lands," a bleak horribly mutated place, roughly corresponding in location with this world's New Mexico and Arizona. Also while in the Territories, Jack meets up with a big, shaggy wolf-like creature. He is, of course, aptly named "Wolf". Through the coincidence of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, Jack must bring Wolf back to this world, where Wolf becomes a werewolf in John Lennon glasses. He becomes Jack's travelling companion for a good while until he is killed when rescuing Jack from the boy's home. Jack continues West from the home in Indiana, hoping to convince his friend Richard, who is in an Illinois school, to travel with him.

Richard, however, sees things differently. He is known to Jack as "rational Richard," for he reads no fiction of any sort. Richard has an extreme interest in science, and to Jack it makes no sense that he does not read fiction, not even science fiction. Jack thus has a very difficult time convincing Richard of the reality of the situation, even when the school becomes a shambles; filled with the minions of Sloat and wavering between the Territories and this world. Jack finally just drags Richard with him, for he fears that Morgan Sloat will do anything to kill Jack, even if it means killing his own son. He had already killed both Jack's father and uncle. Richard, however, would rather believe he is hallucinating than accept the situation as real.

Once travelling through the blasted lands, the boys reach the black hotel which is surrounded by Sloat's men and bad wolves. Jack and Richard sneak in on the ocean side of the hotel since they have the element of suprise. Once inside Jack must confront the whirling of both worlds together and the evil forces that have trapped the Talisman. After he does this task, he then confronts Morgan Sloat, who, in his lust to see

the Talisman destroyed fires a bolt of lightning at it. The Talisman, however, reflects and intensifies all light; thus Sloat is destroyed.

From the very beginning, King and Straub set up *The Talisman* with ties to *Huckleberry Finn* :

> Well, when Tom and me got to the edge of the hilltop, we looked away down into the village and could see three or four lights twinkling, where there was sick folks, may be; and stars over us was sparkling ever so fine; and down by the village was the river, a whole mile broad, and awful still and grand.
>
> My new clothes was all greased up and clayey, and I was dog-tired.
>
> (*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* qtd in *prologue)*

Both of these quotes set up major tones throughout the novel and are indicative of what themes King and Straub may be using. The first quote gives us a picture of Huck Finn at his best; stunned awe at the beauty and wonder of natural things. And, it also includes that immensity across which *Huck Finn* is painted: the river. In the course of *The Talisman* these are two major elements that King and Straub concentrate on throughout the novel.

First, paralleling Huck's sense of amazement at the beauty of the world, is Jack's. This is reflected mostly through the disparity vetween the Territories and this earth. When Jack "flips" into the Territories for the first time, he is agape. It is beautiful. He can hear and see farther. Things smell cleaner and stronger. Food tastes better. Colors even seem to be

more vivid. There are things he has never sensed assaulting him in a pleasant way. And, there are things he has always sensed that have suddenly gone away. When Jack flips back into this world, the most obvious difference is the assault on his sense of smell by burnt hydrocarbons. Jack has an almost continuous reaction like this to the Territories. As he encounters more and more dangers, he begins to realize his own inner strength and beauty, and as he does so, so do others, both good and bad. Good people feel altruistic towards Jack for reasons that they can never quite decipher, grubby though he may be. Others of a less pleasant sort feel his strength as a threat and avoid it or try to break it. King and Straub are obviously suggesting a disparagement between the cleanliness of the Territories and the ugliness of this world that has been caused mainly by technological advancement. They have been quoted as saying this is their way of showing "Reagan's America" (Peter Straub qtd in Winter 68).

Secondly, the reference to the river in the quote from *Huckleberry Finn* seems to indicate that something similar is at work in *The Talisman*, since the river is such a major thematic element in Twain's work. King and Straub have opted for the twentieth-century mode of transportation, the nation's highways: the Road. The Road is Jack's river, though it functions quite differently from Huck's River. As was mentioned previously, the river is an archetypical symbol and naturalistic as well. It is mythological in that it presents a continuing water image, which in mythological criticism is associated with maternalism and safety. Water represents the amniotic fluid of the womb, the ultimate safety. Twain uses the river as a place of safety and reflection. Huck and Jin flee to the river to escape from the troubles they encounter whenever they venture into the man-dominated

world. The river represents tranquility and beauty to Huck and Jim. It is here that they feel the vitality and the beauty of the world. They feel at ease because they do not have to deal with the constraints and double standards of society.

The Talisman 's Road plays an entirely different role, which suggests some attitudes King and Straub both have toward modern society. Jack never has a place to completely escape in *The Talisman* from the dangers of his travels. He can, and does, have problems whereever he goes. On the road, hitchhiking, he is picked up by people interested in more than just "the Story." Off the road, he has all sorts of troublesome encounters, ranging from the hell of the bar to that of the boy's home. He is not safe anywhere because he is actively being pursued. He is safest when he walks, which is usually in the Territories since he is smaller. But even there, he has to deal with the evil, for the twinner of Morgan Sloat can sense when Jack is near. King and Straub seem to be suggesting that the modern world is a place in which one can never be completely safe. Moments of pure joy and beauty still can and do occur, such as when Jack sees the Territories' flying men. But King and Straub imply that believing that any world can be completely good and idyllic is merely naive, like a child's vision. Jack recalls thinking as a young child how nice Morgan Sloat was to him at times. Now he realizes that it was a front that Sloat wore while he waited to get what he really desired. King and Straub suggest as well that true good is merely giving of one's self without knowing the how, or sometimes, even the how of the situation. This is demonstrated mainly by Jack. He does not really know a thing about what he is supposed to do, or how he is to accomplish it when he sets out to find the Talisman. Speedy Parker sets him out with a bottle of awful tasting "magic juice" to get him

into the Territories and a guitar pick. Jack says, "But I don't know what to *do*!" and Speedy replies, "You know enough to get movin" (54). Jack does, hoping he can save his mother and the Queen of the Territories, his mother's Twinner.

Other incidents suggest this also. A man picks up a hitchhiking Jack and ends up buying him a steak dinner and giving him a warm coat. The man can not pinpoint why and does not even stay to watch Jack eat. In another incident, a guy in a pick-up truck notices Wolf busily cramming a hamburger into his mouth, walks into the restaraunt, buys Wolf another, and gives the pair a ride. "I reckoned you still looked a little hungry," (283) the man says, grinning, as he gives Wolf his sandwich.

The second quote from *Huckleberry Finn* also represents a constant theme that runs throughout *The Talisman*. Jack is always weary; weary of body, and weary of heart. At first he succumbs to his tiredness, almost giving up and going back to Arcadia Beach and his mother. But Jack does not give up, realizing that he is the only one who can save his mother and the Territories. So, despite his weariness, he goes on. As he progresses through his journey, he begins to realize his own strength of character and spirit. He first realizes this when he is forced to flip to the Territories without Speedy's magic juice. Once he realizes he *can* do this, his confidence in himself increases. This process culminates in his confrontation of all the evil forces at the Black Hotel. His magic objects fail him, and he is at a loss as to what to do. Speedy mentally tells him, "All the magic is in YOU, Jack! Don't you know that by now?"(576). And so Jack finally gets hold of himself and dispatches the last evil Guardian of the Talisman without aid of magic objects. Yet he also realizes that he must not succumb to feeling the Talisman is *his* because that would make him no

better than the evil that entrapped it in the first place. Jack defeats his enemy, both the external, tangible evil in the form of Morgan Sloat, and the small element of evil within himself, his possessive feeling toward the Talisman, by giving the Talisman up to Morgan. Jack simply drops the Talisman, saying "Go on and break it if you can,... I'm sorry for you" (619). "[I]n that moment Jack knew the staggering cleanliness of *giving up the thing which was required* " (619). The development of Jack's self-confidence and total altruism is the culmination of his maturity and self-realization. He recognizes that he is no longer a child, for he has taken on and completed a task that few adults would have had the fortitude to do. He sees himself as a complete person, no longer dependent upon others for survival. This does not preclude his going back to a normal, youthful life, but it will be with a renewed vision and significance.

Another major element in Jack's maturation process is his witnessing the death of a close friend, and the fear of the eminent death of others close to him. The first and most obvious of these painful situations is the realization that his mother is dying. For much of the first few chapters, Jack spends his time either trying to decide if she is dying or denying the fact that she is. It is not until Speedy asks, "But that ain't the only reason she come here, was it?" (41) that Jack fully admits it. "'No,' Jack said in a low voice. 'I think...she came here to die'" (41). This realization is important both because it signifies to Jack that his mother has given up and it also serves as an impetus to his acceptance of his fateful quest. He realizes that his mother will die unless he saves her. Only he can do it, and he knows it.

The other major confrontation with death that Jack experiences is Wolf's. Jack feels, initially, very much responsible for Wolf, because it is he

who gets Wolf mixed up into the evil situation. Jack, by mere coincidence, runs into Morgan Sloat at a rest stop in this world. Sloat has a key which allows him to tear a hole between the two worlds and fire lightning bolts. Jack does not know of this weapon, and in an effort to escape Sloat flips into the Territories, where he comes upon Wolf tending a herd of animals. Morgan soon begins his attack and Jack and Wolf are forced to flip back to this world to escape. Wolf immediately hates this place and its offending , horrible smells. Eventually, they wind up in the boy's home, and after much abuse from both the other boy's and Sunlight Gardener, the "warden," it soon dawns upon Jack that Gardener is one of Sloat's minions. Gardener also has an inkling that he knows Jack, for his Twinner met him. Ultimately, he decides to torture Jack and Wolf in an effort to find out who they really are. Gardener puts Jack in a straight-jacket and Wolf in a sweat-box. The stress of being in the tiny box causes Wolf to change into his werewolf form and he goes on a rampage, resulting in Wolf getting shot as he saves Jack's life. Gardener gets away, however, and Jack goes blindly on, noting mainly that he loved Wolf dearly, and that he feels a horrible guilt. Jack feels guilty not for Wolf's death, but for the number of times he considered abandoning Wolf, and how impatient he had been with Wolf. Jack slowly comes to the realization that Wolf loved him, too, and Jack continues on resolutely, more determined than ever to finish his journey which has now partially become a monument to the memory of Wolf.

Once Jack continues on his journey after the death of Wolf, things seem to change for him. He feels responsible for things, but not guilty about them, because the death of Wolf has made him realize his own strengths. Wolf had loved and believed in Jack throughout all the problems that Jack had drug him into due mere circumstance. Jack's realization that others

beside Speedy believe that he is capable in succeeding in his quest and that these people will even sacrifice themselves for him give him a confidence over the evil that he must confront. Wolf's death combined with the further fights Jack wins on the path to the Talisman give him his maturity, culminating with the ultimate sacrifice of *giving up* the Talisman. Jack becomes a true mature hero because he recognizes that there are tough choices to make, and has the courage to make them, just as Huck has the courage to say, "All right, then, I'll *go* to hell."

* * *

CONCLUSION

This paper in no way reflects an exhaustive list of the books influenced by *Huckleberry Finn.* There are many other books that would be worthy of an examination of this nature such as the large number of adolescent novels. One such novel of particular worth is *Podkayne of Mars*, a novel by Robert Heinlein which he wrote while on contract to do children's books. It is very close to growing out of the category of adolescent fiction and has a particular twist on the *Huck Finn* theme since it has a female protagonist. An interesting complication to *Podkayne* is an ambiguity concerning which character is supposed to be maturing in the novel, Podkayne or her brother Clark.

Another overview of worth might be a comparison of the psychological thematics that are apparent in these works and others, utilizing psychological criticism. *Huck Finn* was too early to be influenced by Sigmund Freud, but some of these novels are of the time period appropriate. Some of the works are much later, however, and so it would be interesting to examine them in light of later psychological theory, such as Skinner's behaviorism, and more recent theory, such as Carl Rogers' humanistic phenomenology. Although *Huckleberry Finn* was early to be influenced by Freud, nevertheless it could be examined in light of Freud's psychological theory, and later theories as well, thus providing a comparison for the other novels of this group. Each of these novels could be examined in light of the psychological theory which best suits the dominant tone and characterization in the novel.

Freudianism deals mainly with the influence of the unconscious, or id,

on an individual's actions, as well as that of the superego, or their values. The ego, of course, is the balance that results. However, elements from a person's past can interrupt this delicate balance and cause extremes of inhibition, where the value system restricts a person unnaturally, or the opposite, where a person's id takes over and makes a person act in a completely selfish manner (Nye 1-20). Skinner's behaviorism is different in that it states that a person's actions are determined entirely by the environment conditions prevailing on the individual, past or present. This applies to all actions, even thinking, for a person's thoughts are merely behavior: there are no inner drives in behaviorism. Creativity, imagination, and all other forms of creative energy are prompted by some environmental influence (Nye 47-91). Humanistic phenomenology is probably the least wide-spread of these theories. Carl Rogers developed this theory in response to his view that behaviorism was too clinical in its evaluation of people. According to humanistic phenomenology, the basic human motive is enhancement, or actualization. Actualization is each person's attempts to improve themselves. All actualization needs to work is favorable conditions, which, according to Rogers basically means love and acceptance (Nye 107-120). Thes psychological theories are important forms of criticism because they indicate the behavior patterns of the protagonists, the sort of ordeals the heroes go through, and the attitude of the author toward his particular period of our society. This criticism does not necessarily mean that the author *agrees* with the particular theory, but has instead been influenced by it in some way. Bellow and Salinger both, for example, present a rebellion against the theory of behaviorism.

In all the works considered in this overview, there is a strong relationship to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, ranging from the

characterization of the protagonists, to the use of similar archetypes, and even, as in the case of Seelye, direct utilization of Twain's original text. The protagonists have covered the possibilities from Seelye's "true" Huck with a somewhat more delinquent attitude than the original; to the silent, alienated figure of Hemingway's Nick; and further to the heroic questor of Jack Sawyer. Our archetypes have also been new and varied. In *The Adventures of Augie March*, we have the utilization of no consistent archetypes to emphasize the point of the inconsistency in the twentieth-century world that Augie faces. Nick Adams' feelings of attachment to the river, on the other hand, harken back to the original use of the river in *Huck Finn*, with the added extrapolation of fishing to emphasize the river's regenerative qualities that Nick derives. In *The Talisman*, we have the new, but similar, archetype of the road extrapolated from the original river. This time instead of a place of solitude and safety with dark underpinnings, as in Huck's world, the road serves to emphasize the dark qualities that every day of twentieth-century life entails. Ultimately, all these works exhibit the importance of maturity elemental to the the original, as well as showing a profound sense of respect for the process of maturation. These works show the continuity of the American experience of adolescence that was laid out best in the novel that spawned much other modern American literature, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

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