



The Struggle for Freedom as Illustrated in Mark Twain's *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* in Relation to Social Welfare

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the struggles experienced by the two main characters in the novel in getting their freedom and also to elaborate the important of freedom for the main characters as human rights. The research method used was a qualitative descriptive method with the sociology of literature approach. The primary data were collected from descriptions and utterances of the main characters and narrators in the novel. The supporting data were obtained from the library, internet, journals, and articles. The results of this research indicate that there is struggle of the main characters in obtaining their freedom as a human in this novel. Huckleberry Finn as the main character fought for his freedom from a drunk and abusive father, while Jim, as the second main character fought for his freedom from slavery. The two figures then met and made an adventure together to get their own freedom.

Keywords: Freedom, Struggle, Freedom, Racism, Slavery.

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1. Introduction

A literary work and human life are difficult to separate because literary work is generally created from expression of feeling, thought, experience, idea, and belief of someone. One of the interesting literary works is the novel, a prose product, a genre of literature that describes the human life and activities by using the main elements which are called characters and plots. As a form of literature, novel expresses any feeling, emotion thought and ideas. A good novel always presents a conflict of human life because it could provoke and exploit emotion and thought. Similar to poetry and play, prose, in this case the novel can expose the human life in the past, but it can also deal with life at the present, even with life in the future.

Based on the problem, the writers revealed the struggle for freedom experienced by the main characters that happened in this novel. The writer took Mark Twain's novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The novel is renowned for its warmth and humor, despite dealing with the serious issues such as racism and slavery.

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2. Literature Review

In this journal, the writers used the sociological approach to analyze Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

In this research, the writer used sociology of literature as an approach for this research. Sociology of literature study is an approach in literature by considering the social aspects. Sociology of literature is a research focused on human problems because literature often expresses the struggle of human in determining their future, imagination, feeling, and intuition (Endraswara, 2013). He claimed that sociology of literature is a research that focuses on human problems because literature often expresses the struggle of humanity in determining its future, based on imagination, feeling, and intuition. Another statement comes from Faruk (2015). He gives the notion that literary sociology is a scientific and objective study of human beings in society, studies of social institutions and processes. Furthermore, it is said that sociology tries to answer the question of how society is possible, how it works, and why it survives.

Meanwhile, Laurenson and Swingewood (1972:12) state that literature is a work of art, which expresses of human life and the problem on society, economics and politics with qualities of the relationship among them. Moreover, Laurenson and Swingewood (1972:12) state that "as with sociology, literature too is pre-eminently concerned with man's social world, his adaption to it, and his desire to change it". Literature focuses on relation the social world of men with their family, man, and woman, with politic, with the state and adaption to desire to change it.

3. Objectives of Study

Based on the problem of the study, the objectives of the study are formulated as follows: 1) to describe the struggles experienced by the two main characters in the novel in getting their freedom, and 2) to elaborate the important of freedom for the main characters as human rights.

The first goal can be achieved by breaking down a series of events struggling experienced by the two playing characters in the novel in getting their freedom, while the second goal is to elaborate some important struggling of freedom for the main characters. The important struggle of freedom is related to the human rights.

4. Research Method

4.1. Method of Collecting Data

Such data can be categorized as primary data and secondary data. The first was primary data. Primary data are the data that come from the object of analysis, in which the writers find them out of directly from the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* through reading it several times, and collected some important parts of the novel that the writer has formulated before. The second was secondary data. The secondary data is taken from various books, articles, exploring website which related to the novel and relevant to the subject.

4.2. Method of Analyzing Data

To collect the data the writer used the descriptive qualitative method. The purposes of descriptive qualitative method were to reveal the facts, situation, phenomenon, and the condition as what happened in the reality. To analyze the research, the writer used sociology approach which focused on the struggle for freedom as reflected in the novel in order to achieve the objective of this thesis. The research questions were related to the phenomenon that came from the relation between the novel and the social environment. Therefore, the writer used the data from the quotes in the novel to reveal and elaborate the social phenomenon which was reflected in the novel. The writer interprets all the data by connecting it with the social context and the other social issues such as biography and social life of the author are also being analyzed more deeply.

5. Finding and Discussion

5.1 Findings

In this part, the writer would like to present the data which have been found in the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. It will present about the struggle for freedom that reflected in the novel. This is followed by further explanation about how the main characters try to get their freedom.

5.1.1 The efforts of the main characters in struggling for freedom

In this novel there are several series of events that indicate the struggles carried out by the main characters in getting their freedom. The author would try to describe them one by one.

a. The Struggle of Huck Finn

Here are some data about Huck got violence from his father so he was trying to runaway.

Data 1: By and by he rolled out and jumped up on his feet looking wild and he see me and went for me. He chased me round and round the place with a clasp-knife, calling me the Angel of Death, and saying he would kill me, and then I couldn't come for him no more. I begged, and told him I was only Huck; but he laughed such a screechy laugh, and roared and cussed, and kept on chasing me up. Once when I turned short and dodged under his arm he made a grab and got me by the jacket between my shoulders, and I thought I was gone, but I slid out of the jacket quick as lighting and saved myself. (Twain, 2003: 29)

The quote above shows the behavior of Huck Finn's uncontrolled father when he was drunk. Even the data below shows the same behavior repeated when Huck Finn was a little slow in carrying out his father's orders.

Data 2: When he got along I was hard at it taking up a "trot" line. He abused me a little for being so slow; but I told him I fell in the river, and that was what made me so long. I knowed he would see I was wet, and then he would be asking questions. We got five catfish off the lines and went home. (Twain, 2003: 31).

The descriptions above show how Huck always got violence from his father. A 13 years old boy lived with an abusive-drunken father. And in the Chapter 7 of the novel, Huck tried to fool his father and get away. From the data below, it described the effort of Huck to run away.

Data 3: I say to myself, they'll follow the track of that sackful of rocks to the shore and then drag the river for me. And they'll follow that meal track to the lake and go browsing down the creek that leads out of it to find the robbers that killed me and took the things. They won't ever hunt the river for anything but my dead carcass. They'll soon get tired of that, and won't bother no more about me. All right; I can stop anywhere I want to. Jackson's Island is good enough for

me; I know that island pretty well, and nobody ever comes there. And then I can paddle over to town nights, and slink around and pick up things I want. Jackson's Island's the place. (Twain, 2003:34)

From the description above, it shows that Huck was going to Jackson's Island as his getaway place. It happened when his father was sleeping and did not realize that Huck was run away.

The data above showed that Huck was trying to get his freedom for his father who always locked him in the house and when his father came, nothing he could do but hit his son, which is Huck Finn. It made Huck decided to get away from his father.

The sentences illustrated that Huck Finn tried to cross the river with the aim of escaping from his drunken father and hoping to get a comfortable place to hide from his father's cruelty. Through the river, Huck Finn felt calm and peace.

b. The Struggle of Jim as the Runaway Slave

When Huck started his adventures to the Jackson's Island, he suddenly met a slave named Jim who also tried to run away from his master, Miss Watson.

Data 4: I caught a glimpse of fire away through the trees. I went for it, cautious and slow. By and by I was close enough to have a look, and there laid a man on the ground. It most give me the fantods. He had a blanket around his head, and his head was nearly in the fire. I set there behind a clump of bushes in about six foot of him, and kept my eyes on him steady. It was getting gray daylight now. Pretty soon he gapped and stretched himself and hove off the blanket, and it was Miss Watson's Jim! I bet I was glad to see him. I say: "Hello, Jim!" and skipped out. (Twain, 2003:41).

Right after Huck found Jim, Jim asked Huck why Huck was still alive while people told him that Huck was dead. Huck then said it was a trick in order to get away. Then Huck asked Jim back, why Jim was in Jackson's Island too. And Huck got shocked when Jim told him that he is getaway too from Miss Watson because she was trying to sell Jim in slave trading to Orleans.

From the conversations between them, Huck found that Jim also got displeased treatment from his master, Miss Watson.

Data 5: Well, you see, it 'uz dis way. Ole missus – dat's Miss Watson – she pecks on me all the time, en treats me pooty rough, but she awluz said she wouldn't sell me down to Orleans. But I noticed dey wuz a nigger trader roun' de place considerable lately en I begin to git oneasy. (Twain, 2003:43)

The other struggle he through can be seen in this quote below:

Data 6: I laid dah under de shavin's all day. I 'uz hungry, but I warn't afeard; bekase I knowed ole missus en de widder wuz goin' to start to de camp-meet'n' right after breakfas' en be gone all day, en dey knows I goes off wid de cattle 'bout daylight, so dey wouldn't spec to see me roun' de place, en so dey wouldn't miss me arter dark in de evenin' (Twain, 2003:44)

The quote above illustrated how Jim made his efforts so his escape was not realized by those around him even though he had to hold his hunger. This data below also shows the effort of Huck Finn when he and Jim did their adventures through Mississippi River.

Data 7: I never felt easy till the raft was two mile below there and out in the middle of the Mississippi. Then we hung up our signal lantern, and judged that we was free and safe once more. I hadn't had a bite to eat since yesterday, so Jim he got out some corn-dodgers and buttermilk, and pork and cabbage and greens – there ain't nothing in the world so good when it's cooked right – and whilst I eat my supper we talked and had a good time. I was powerful glad to get away from the feuds, and so was Jim to get away from the swamp. We said there

warn't no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't you feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft. (Twain, 2003:116)

From the quote above, it is clearly explained that Huck and Jim did everything to escape and how they were feeling safe when they were on the raft. There was nothing better than being on the raft and down the river.

5.1.2. The Important of Freedom for the main characters.

Huck and Jim have similarity in viewing the freedom. The similarity is both of them have a mission to escape from society that did not treat them like they wish to. Being together with society it made a bad experience for Huck. Besides that, the bad experience of Jim coming from the society also outcome to Jim's portrayal of freedom. As a slave, Jim did not treat as equally as the white people. Jim's unequal treatment from society caused his desire for escaping from slavery, as Huck's unpleasant experiences from society cause his hope for an unrestricted life. Another similarity is that both Huck and Jim wish to obtain freedom for their comfort and happiness.

The important of freedom was felt by the main characters, Huck Finn and Jim. Both of them felt that freedom is something worth to fight for no matter what they would face in the future. At first, Huck was feeling guilty because of his decision to help Jim. It could be seen in this quote below:

Data 8: What had poor Miss Watson done to you that you could see her nigger go off right under your eyes and never say one single word? What did that poor old woman do to you that you could treat her so mean? Why, she tried to learn you your book, she tried to learn you your manners, she tried to be good to you every way she knowed how. That's what she done. (Twain, 2003: 87)

From the quotation above, the writer could see there was a mix feeling of Huck Finn. He knew what he was doing at that time was something that could make Miss Watson disappointed on him, but he kept doing it, in order to set Jim free from slavery.

The other fact that Huck thought that freedom is something important to reach can be seen in his statement below:

Data 9: "All right, then, I'll go to hell" – and tore it up. It was awful thoughts and awful words, but they was said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about reforming. I shoved the whole thing out of my head, and said I would take up wickedness again, which was in my line, being brung up to it, and the other warn't. And for a starter I would go work and steal Jim out of slavery again, and if I could think up anything worse, I would do that, too, because as long as I was in, and in for good, I might as well go the hog. (Twain, 2003:214)

Huck's statement above shows his courageous in helping Jim out of slavery. Although he thought it would cost him his soul, he might go to hell, but Huck had the courage to follow his heart. The following data shows how happy Jim was when he thought that Cairo is already near to them. It is his happy expression when he thought that freedom state is near.

Data 10: Jim was fidgeting up and down past me. We neither of us could keep still. Every time he danced around and says, "Dah's Cairo!" (Twain, 2003: 87-88)

This quote also states his hope and wish of freedom. It shows how important the freedom for them.

Data 11: Jim talked out loud all the time while I was talking to myself. He was saying how the first thing he would do when he got to a free state he would go to saving up money and never spend a single cent, and when he got enough he would buy his wife, which was owned on a

farm close to where Miss Watson lived; and then they would both work to buy the two children, and if their master wouldn't sell them, they'd get an Ab'litionist to go and steal them. (Twain, 2003:88)

From all the data that the writer presents above, the writer can conclude that there are various efforts and struggles made by the characters, Huck and Jim to get out from the society that binds them so they could not get their freedom as human being. The effort and struggle to achieve this freedom is nothing but to find their happiness. Freedom is their happiness and they did various things to get that freedom.

5.2. Discussion

In this part, the writer would exposure the struggle for freedom which represented in the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The struggle for freedom of the main characters showed in the data that the writer elaborates before in the findings of this research. This discussion contains the data which relate to the theory of Laurensen and Swingewood by using the sociological approach.

The writer uses the theory of Laurensen and Swingewood based on the sociology of literature studies which deals on literary works as a mirror to the age and deals with the social situation of the author.

The main characters of the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck Finn himself and Jim, both of them believe that freedom is something important to fight for. Huck Finn was very confused about the rules of the society, that there are black slaves and white people as the masters. He ultimately treated Jim as an equal, he saw Jim as a friend and not as a black slave who was only there to fill all of the owner's orders.

The character of Huck Finn also displayed his human virtue when he decided to help Jim free from slavery, from Miss Watson, also from the prison when Jim got caught by the people who hunted Jim for a price. All of the effort of Huck and Jim along their adventures together showed how important the meaning of freedom for both of them.

5.2.1. The important of freedom for the main characters in the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

As the discussion of this analysis, the writer would try to analyze Jim's great desire to be free from slavery which can be seen from Jim's behavior and his dialogue with Huck. Jim only expressed his desire to be free to Huck, because after he ran away from Miss Watson he spent a lot of time with Huck. In this part, the writer would analyze the desire that can be known from his words and behavior. In this case the writer can find out from the story delivered by Huck, the narrator.

Not only is the innocence of Huck Finn's character raised in the story *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* but friendship based on freedom between Huck Finn and Jim, as the black slave is also revealed. Finn, who loves freedom, does not approve of slavery that occurs in his environment so that he violates general habits; by making friends with a slave and ignoring racial discrimination. For Huck Finn, Jim is a very clever slave. He can respond to every story that Finn gave accurately.

Huck Finn tried to find a hiding place that can make them both comfortable. Finn's actions to help Jim to escape illustrated that he disagrees with the treatment that is always given to Jim. As a black person, Jim always gets treatment that is not the same as a white person where black people would always be a slave to the white ones, who could be sold and traded at any time. But then, Jim was met Huck, a white young boy from majority

circle where even though Huck is a white man, Huck did not have the same thoughts and actions as other whites to treat blacks as slaves. Therefore, Huck Finn took Jim away so Jim could be free from slavery.

5.2.2 The important of freedom in relation to Social Welfare.

According to the explanation before in Chapter II about the concept of freedom, that freedom itself is the fundamental right as a human being, where this fundamental right must be fulfilled for every individual since he or she was born into the world. In this part, the writer would elaborate the important of freedom in its relation to the social welfare.

Social welfare means a situation where a person feels comfortable, peaceful, happy, and can fulfill their needs. According to Adi (2003: 41) social welfare as a condition that was formulated in Article 2 paragraph 1 of UU No. 6 of 1974 concerning the Basic Provisions of Social Welfare, namely: "Social welfare is a system of social and spiritual life and livelihood that is overwhelmed by a sense of safety, decency and tranquility in the inner, which allows every citizen to conduct an effort to fulfill the best physical, spiritual and social needs for themselves, family and society by upholding human rights and human obligations in accordance with the five principle of *Pancasila*.

Meanwhile, the history of social welfare in America illustrated the changes in helping activities and services that began in the United States to combat various social ills from the complex origins. While poverty and public assistance have a big role in this case, they are not the whole story. The history of social welfare reflects the lives of people living, being educated, enable to work and voting in the nation. The efforts of individuals, religious groups, non-profit organizations and governments recounted in this history have strengthened the fabric of American society and improved the quality of life for many who live within our borders.

The social welfare starts from when humans get their basic rights as a human being. The word "freedom" often sounds very cliché, but the meaning contained in the word "freedom" is sometimes difficult to understand by some people. Slavery that occurred in America in the 1800-1900 century was an extraordinary event concerning the welfare of the community in fulfilling the basic human needs of individual independence. Racism in that era was a big mistake that occurred throughout the history of humanity. Slaves are treated unfairly. Blacks felt inferior to white people, so there was a gap in society and it was very influential on the welfare of the society at that time.

The novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* opens the eyes of society that slavery and racism are things that are very contrary to humanity and the social welfare. This novel teaches people that slavery and racism must be fought and worth to fight for. The writer sees that this novel is not just an adventure novel for 13-year-old teenagers, but this novel is a reflection of the struggle of slaves and activists against racism in the 1800-1900 eras. As expressed in the theory of Laurensen and Swingwood based on the sociology of literature approach that literature is a reflection of society and also a reflection of the conditions in that era, the writer found that this novel has an important role in humanity, in terms of social welfare. Not only in the 1800-1900 era, but there can also be relations in the current era that have not completely abolished the violence in slavery.

6. CONCLUSION

In this research, the writer explored the struggle for freedom of the main characters in the novel. Slavery and racism are two things related to it. This research analyzed not only

the efforts in reaching the freedom from the main characters but also how the main characters of the novel see the freedom itself.

The novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was published in 1884, when the slavery was still something common to do in America, especially in South. Mark Twain in that era tried to illustrate the condition of his society through this novel. From the Huck Finn's point of view, a white young boy, the adventures became very interesting because he tried to help a black one named Jim to escape from slavery. Even though they had to face so many difficulties during their adventures, but the spirit was never gone for both of them.

This research revealed the efforts of the main characters in order to get their freedom from the society that did not treat them like they wished to. After revealed their struggles, the writer elaborated the meaning of freedom and how important the freedom is for both of the main characters, which are Huck Finn and Jim.

According to the analysis that the writer elaborated in chapter four, the writer concluded that this novel has many moral messages and lessons about life itself. The lessons are about how every human being views the other ones, and also about human relations despite all the differences between them.

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