

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the Research

Sherman (1938:76) claims that American rural-life fictions carry the American past on how they grew up. Like other kinds of fiction, American rural-life fiction maintains rural history, especially America's rural history. Kenney (1966: 39) stated that for modern American readers, a rural setting is not just about the things that could be seen, such as cows, grass, and barns, but it also has some specific values that are called spiritual values. Among American masterpieces of fiction set in a rural area is *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* shows that some Americans still believe in myths, use some particular local dialect, or look at the description of the place like bushes, villages, tanyards, woods, etc. Moreover, Stephen (2003) explained that St. Petersburg, the village where the story begins, is among the stories that have a "pastoral setting" in the nineteenth century (41).

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is set in the Mississippi Valley forty to fifty years before the work was published in 1884 in the United Kingdom and later in 1885 in the United States, eight years after *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was published. This novel has the same background as *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Both took place in St. Petersburg, Missouri; they also shared the same characters. However, they had different stories and points of view. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is one of the American Literature masterpieces. Even the legend T.S. Elliot declared that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was Twain's only masterpiece

(Tackach, 2004:216). This story was told in the first-person point of view. By reading the novel, the readers would know that the whole novel is like Huckleberry Finn's biography because of the pronoun "I" or the first-person perspective. The book lays the story of Huckleberry Finn's rural life, Jim the slave, and the other citizens. They lived in some villages along the Mississippi River.

Mark Twain was born in Missouri on 30 November 1835 as Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He moved to Hannibal, a small town near the Mississippi River when he was three. His life as a boy in Hannibal was necessary for the influence of his best works; one of them is *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. When he turned twelve, he wrote to *Hannibal Paper*. Later, when he was seventeen, he wrote humorous sketches published weekly in Boston. Robert Jackson (2002), in his article entitled *The Emergence of Mark Twain's Missouri: Regional Theory and "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,"* argued that Huckleberry Finn's journey in the story resembles Twain's steamboat tour in 1882 on many levels (Jackson, 2002:58).

Mississippi River, which runs along with the United States of America, is the longest in North America. This river contributes to the making of American literature. The Mississippi River witnesses some American literary works that set in the Mississippi River. For example, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Bear* (1942) by William Faulkner, and of course, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) by Mark Twain. Huckleberry Finn's journey sets on The Mississippi River on his way to Cairo, Illinois, up to the Ohio River headed

to Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania (Tackach, 2004:216). This tour was said by Jackson (2002) as the resemblance of Mark Twain's steamboat tour when he was young.

In 2002, DelmiSimamora found that the settings in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* helped Huckleberry Finn achieve his self-identity. She argued that Finn's identity develops in three places: first, in Douglass' home, where Huck was civilized and educated. Second, in the Grangefords' home, Huck started to think about life's reality and finally in the Phelp's farms, where Huck taught teamwork.

On the other hand, this thesis will examine how Mark Twain depicts rural life as the setting of place of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. An ideal rural or country life has a certain "innocence or virtue, peace, and simplicity" (Duncan, 1968:519). Therefore, it is not only the place that one talks about when discussing rural life. It can also be the social setting and many other aspects. Additionally, this research will also examine how Mark Twain depicts the novel's social background and time setting. Moreover, I would also focus on how Twain intertwined the kinds of rural scenes and how far the setting functions in delivering the story's theme.

I choose this topic because there is not enough research about rural life in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Moreover, Mark Twain's depiction of the Mississippi Valley as a rural area and how he depicts the rural life through the social setting is impressive. He reasonably portrays the places. He also describes society well, how they treat each other, how they deal with strangers, the

religiosity, and how they deal with myths that some people believe. Hopefully, this research is beneficial for readers to enrich their insight about rural life in the Mississippi Valley as depicted by Mark Twain in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Finally, I would like to bring up how Mark Twain depicts rural life as the setting (physical and spiritual settings) of Huckleberry Finn's Adventures and analyze it through the formalist approach. Based on this research background, I entitle this research to ***Rural Life in Adventures of Huck Finn by Mark Twain***.

## **1.2. Identification of the Problem**

Sherman (1938) argued that rural-life fiction's actual development in America might begin about 1910. She further explained that only three novels were published before the 1900s and considered the original rural-life study (Sherman, 1938:67). Unfortunately, Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was not among those three. At the same time, the novel is an American literary masterpiece set alongside the Mississippi River. The way Mark Twain described the setting in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is somehow precise. However, some settings in the novel might have the implied meanings or metaphorical. Therefore, I would study the book intrinsically to explore the setting by using a formalist approach. This study's focus is to see how Mark Twain employs rural life as the novel's setting. This thesis will reveal what kinds of rural settings are in the book. Finally, this research will investigate how far the settings deliver the theme of the story.

### 1.3. Review of Related Literature

Rural-life fictions take place in a rural area. One of the most prominent among them is *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The novel takes place in Mississippi Valley, which is a rural area. Some researchers have studied the connection between fiction and reality representation. For example, Ikrimah (2016) examined the author's sociological aspects in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* through the sociology of literature. Ikrimah found out that Mark Twain uses his social background in showing the situation of the novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. This research provides more ideas about the condition of the book, specifically the sociological aspects. Therefore, this research helped me in considering the social setting of the story.

On the other hand, another research shows that the places visited by Huckleberry Finn in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* influence his self-identity. Simamora (2002) examined the general description of the novel's setting, the scenes in the book, their influence on Huckleberry Finn in achieving his self-identity, and the possible messages we can learn concerning Huck's self-identity. First, she revealed the novel sets before the uprising of the Civil War on the Mississippi River and its bank and villages along the riverside. Secondly, some settings influenced Huckleberry's self-identity. This research informed me about Huckleberry Finn's journey. Most importantly, it provides information about the setting of place of the novel from its beginning to the end of the story.



Regarding rural-life fiction, Mardiani (2017) investigated the issue that happened to the rural society in the novel *Mantra PejinaKularby* Kuntowijoyo. There are three issues described in the said novel: cultural value, namely the Javanese rural value, political value, and love value between Abu and Lastri. The elaboration of both issues was stated quite successfully in the article. Anyhow, in this research, Mardiana did not tackle the problem of the setting of the novel. However, this research provides insights into the rural-life values that could be derived from this thesis. One of the values that I acquire from this research is a cultural value.

In 2017, Key, Marshall, and Pini examined the representations of rural lesbians' lives in three young adult novels; they are: *Beauty of the Broken* by Tawni Waters (2014), *Pretend You Love Me* by Anne Peters (2005), and *Forgive Me If You've Heard This One Before* by Karelia Stetz Waters (2014). It was found that *Beauty of the Broken* represents the most negative experience of being a rural lesbian youth of all three novels (Key, Marshall, &Pini, 2017:362). The rurality images of the lesbian were great violence, narrow-mindedness, and religious hatred in the story. This research gives me more insights into how rural citizens treat each other, especially someone who is "different" from them. In this thesis, that someone is Jim, the slave.

The formalist approach studies things within the text. Sulistyorini (2007) reviewed *Rebecca* by Daphne Du Maurier through the formalist approach. It aimed to reveal how the main character (Rebecca) solves the problem caused by her obsession with making her husband happy by studying the novel's tension.

Maurier figured out that Rebecca's obsession is the central tension in the book that then causes conflicts.

Fikry (2014) studied three short stories (*The Story of the Bad Little Boy*, *The Story of the Good Little Boy*, and *Edward Mills and George Benton: A Tale*) written from the book *Short Stories by Mark Twain* through new criticism theory and formalistic approach. The examination was about whether the said short stories reach their unity and to compare them. This study's preliminary results are all the three short stories reach their unity; the elements of fiction and the paradoxes support each other to build a fantastic realistic tale. Further, he argued that through comparative analysis, he revealed that the three short stories share something in common on the setting, point of view, and style (69). On the other hand, the differences are seen in the characters in the novel and the themes. This research helped me understand how to analyze work with the formalist approach, especially in the preliminary analysis.

After reading the six sources above, I destine to do another research on Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* through the formalist approach. The previous studies concentrate on how the social background of Mark Twain influences the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that he wrote and how the places visited by Huckleberry Finn develop his self-identity. The other researches that use the same approach, i.e., the formalist approach, discuss the tension in a novel and compare three short stories. Moreover, the studies also focus on the rural-life topic study about the values found in work and how rural society treats lesbian youths. As one could see, previous researchers have not demonstrated rural life,

especially by focusing on the pastoral life as the setting depicted by Mark Twain in the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Thus, this research will examine the *Rural Life in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain.

#### 1.4. Research Questions

This research will answer the following questions:

1. How does Mark Twain employ rural life as the setting of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*?
2. What kinds of rural settings does Twain use to depict rural life in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*?
3. To what extent do the settings function to deliver the theme of the story?

#### 1.5. Scope of the Research

This research will focus on the topic of rural life in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. I then limit this research to three discussions. Firstly, this research focuses on how Mark Twain applies rural life as the setting of the novel. This research will explore what kinds of rural settings are depicted in the book by Mark Twain. Finally, It will find out how far the settings function to deliver the theme of the story. This research will also reveal the more specific locations, such as the farms, the houses, and the Mississippi River, as presented by Twain.

Moreover, the setting of time used by Mark Twain would be revealed in this research. This research also contains the analysis of how Mark Twain portrays rural life through the said novel's social setting. I would study how the book's physical and spiritual setting would function to deliver the story's theme.



### 1.6. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are:

1. To reveal how Mark Twain employs rural life as the setting of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.
2. To figure out how Mark Twain uses the kinds of settings to depict rural life in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.
3. To investigate how far the settings function to deliver the theme of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

This research also aims to enrich the insight of the readers of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* about rural life in the United States of America in the nineteenth century, especially alongside the Mississippi River as presented in the novel.

Hopefully, this research will also be a helpful tool or a reference in analyzing the upcoming related studies. Moreover, it can also be a good source for people who are willing to read or have already read *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to understand the work better, especially the setting of place and the social setting depicted in the work.

