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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracoval samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

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ABSTRACT

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1. Introduction

Mark Twain was an American author, humorist, journalist, entrepreneur, publisher and lecturer. The town in which he was raised later provided the setting for his most famous novels. His family lived in the times when it was normal to own a slave, thus his family owned number of slaves. He spent a great deal of time among slaves, playing in their quarters and taking part in their spirituals. Twain was a celebrity already during his life, even before than he himself could realize it. He trained to be a printer and worked as a typesetter for the newspaper of his older brother Orion Clemens. Mark Twain was born as Samuel Clemens and created Mark Twain as his pen name. The origin of this pen name remains till present day unknown, as Samuel created many various stories describing how the pen name originated. Twain worked as a riverboat pilot on Mississippi river and then joined his brother Orion at mining. He was not very successful and so he turned to journalism. He is best known for his pieces – The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. His books provide insight into the past and the events of his personal life demonstrate his role as an eyewitness to history. Twain lived through a time when United States transformed from “a nation torn apart by international conflicts” (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016) to “one of international power” (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016). And during the history, Mark Twain always invented an opinion of his own about the changes happening in the country.

2. Biography of Mark Twain

2.1 The Early Years

Mark Twain as Samuel Clemens was born on 30 November 1835 in Monroe County, Missouri, Florida as the sixth of seven children. During his early childhood, the family moved to a small frontier town of Hannibal, Missouri which lies on the bank of the Mississippi River. Missouri was a slave state at that time and Twain’s father and uncle both owned slaves. Uncle’s farm was a place where Mark Twain spent many summers with the slaves and so got acquainted with their rituals and traditions. When his father was alive they did not face poverty. “Sam’s father owned one slave and his uncle owned several” (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016). It was common to own a slave at that time even for people less financially secured. Mark spent a much time in the slave quarters and he enjoyed listening to slave spirituals which remained to him for his whole life.

His father died when Twain was only 11 years old and that started financial difficulties for the family, making Mark at the same time responsible for the family. This tragedy forced Twain to leave school after completing the fifth grade. Due to the fact Twain did not finish studies, his only opened way leading to literature was journalism, and printing and typesetting was a way to journalism, therefore Twain started to work for a local newspaper. “His job was to arrange the type for each of the newspaper’s stories, allowing Sam to read news of the world while completing his work.” (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016). Mark Twain died on 21 April 1910 in Redding, Connecticut.

2.2 Young Adult Life

Later at his 18 years, Twain traveled to New York and Philadelphia to work on several different newspapers. There he found somewhat a success at writing articles. This could be somewhat considered what is nowadays called professional experience.

After 4 years, he returned home and embarked on a new career as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River. He loved his job very much, nevertheless, after the outbreak of civil war in 1861, all traffic along the river came to a halt as did Twain’s pilot career. “Inspired by the times, Sam joined a volunteer Confederate unit called the Marion Rangers, but he quit after just two weeks.” (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016). His pen name, Mark Twain, comes from these nautical years but its true origin is uncertain.

2.3 Pen name

As mentioned before, Mark Twain was only a pen name, real name being Samuel Langhorne Clemens. The origin of his pen name is unclear. A Texas book dealer and scholar, Kevin MacDonnell, incidentally found the name Mark Twain in a humor journal named *Vanity Fair*, which comes from before the time Samuel Clemens started using it. “He stole it from a humor journal so lame that he quickly invented a cooler story to pass off as true” (Schonfeld, 2013). Samuel himself proposed various possibilities of the origin of his pseudonym. It could have been writer’s trademark cry meaning “Mark two more drinks” or a nickname used by riverboat captain Isaiah Sellers. After the captain had died, Samuel claims he “laid violent hands upon it without asking permission of the proprietor's remains“ (Schonfeld, 2013). It has been, however, later revealed that Sellers never used “Twain” as his

pseudonym. More doubts were caused by Twain himself who “cheekily cast doubt on his own version“ (Schonfeld, 2013). According to MacDonnell, Mark Twain had already started using his name when he was asked to explain its origination, “he had already patented the Mark Twain... he wasn’t about to go backwards...” (Schonfeld, 2013). As the journal was “going out of style” at the time, he created a new version. “The journal wasn't funny, and Twain knew it“ (Schonfeld, 2013). Schonfeld adds that this could not happen in the time of internet. “Twain's decidedly uncool namesake almost certainly wouldn't evade detection.“ Schonfeld jokes that today, in the time of social network, people would also probably know his photos and information about early life thus Samuel could not lie about his past if his admirers were acquainted with it.

2.4 Family

Mark had to leave school after fifth grade and start working in a local newspaper. As printer’s apprentice, his job was to decide what the type each of the newspaper’s stories was and that allowed him to read them thus learn about the news from the world.

His first success at writing his own articles for newspapers was reached at the age of 18 when Mark traveled to New York City and Philadelphia and worked in various newspapers. He had joined the Confederate union as a volunteer which was caused by his riverboat pilot’s career. “With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, however, all traffic along the river came to a halt, as did Sam’s pilot career” (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016). He quitted the Marion Rangers, as the unit was called, and searched for a new career. His brother Orion invited him to Nevada where he had been appointed Secretary of the Nevada Territory. Samuel enthusiastically accepted the invitation as he was lured there by hope to become rich in Nevada’s silver rush, according to The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016. Due to this journey, Samuel encountered Native American tribes, unique characters and also disappointments which he has later written into his short stories and book, e.g. *Roughing it* as The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016 mentions. Predictably he failed to become rich and began writing for the Territorial Enterprise newspaper which is where he used his pen name “Mark Twain” for the first time. This stereotypic life led him to want a change thus Samuel traveled to San Francisco and continued writing for local newspapers.

“Sam’s first “big break” came with the publication of his short story, “Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog” in papers across the country” (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016),

which was in 1865. Samuel was later hired by Sacramento Union which tasked him to report on Sandwich Islands which are now according to Clement 2012 known as Hawaiian Islands; the name Sandwich Islands was given to them by Captain James Cook at the time of discovery in honor of the First Lord of the Admiralty John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich. His writings about Hawaiian Islands were very popular and it gained him a possibility to set for his first lecture tour. Later, Samuel was hired by Alta California and he was supposed to continue writing about his travels from the east. He arrived to New York City and “quickly signed up for a steamship tour of Europe and the Holy Land” (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016). Letters from this traveling were widely positively accepted and this audience approval made him rework them into his first book “The Innocents Abroad”. Also, according to The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016, Samuel met on this journey his forthcoming brother-in-law, Charles Langdon. Samuel fell in love with his sister Olivia because Langdon showed him a picture once. The two were married in 1870 (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016) and moved to Buffalo, New York and Samuel found a job here as a partner, editor and writer for Buffalo Express. During their stay in Buffalo, Twain’s first child was born and received a named Langdon Clemens. A year later, they moved to Hartford where Mark made a lot of friends and came to love the city. The information from this time is again included in his *Roughing It* as they lived in a house in Nook Farm, a home to many writers and publishers who inspired him (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016). Clemens’s’ first daughter was also born at that time, however, their son died from diphtheria.

Samuel Clemens started to criticize the society. He wrote *The Gilded Age* in cooperation with Charles Dudley Warner, “Hartford Courant publisher” as The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016 notices. “This novel attacked political corruption, big business and the American obsession with getting rich” (House & Museum, 2016). It describes the years after Civil War and it is the first time someone calls it “gilded age”. It seems it has proven as a valid source of information and characterization of their own time as the critics say, according to Shmoop Editorial Team, 2008. The book describes unfair opportunities of economic and political elite, who capitalized on expanding wealth, and working class, who had to work long hours in unacceptable conditions to nourish their families. Shmoop Editorial Team, 2008 also mentions that although Clemens and Warner covered this era almost precisely, many following authors rejected their opinions and insisted that the casualties were necessary or even crucial for the economic progress. The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016 points out that it is ironical that one year after publication of *The Gilded Age*, Clemenses’ house was

completed and it cost approximately \$40,000 which, they mention, was a huge sum of money at that time.

In the following years, Mark and his wife had two more daughters, Clara and Jean. Due to the fact that their only son had died, they had three daughters with whom they continued living in Hartford. It was this time during which Mark Twain wrote some of his most famous books, e.g. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Life on the Mississippi*, which commented on his Missouri memories, *The Prince and the Pauper* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* which explored class relations and criticized oppression in general and also perhaps his most famous work, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, where Twain attacked institution of slavery, treatment of the poor and racism towards African Americans (House & Museum, 2016). *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was one of the first books published by Mark's own subscription publishing firm called Charles L. Webster and Company named after his business agent and his niece's husband and it enjoyed a great success making Clemens a wealthy man. "But the firm never duplicated its early triumphs, and projects that seemed so promising... failed to realize their expected profits" (Heidig, 2010). The firm got in deep debt and declared its bankruptcy in 1894 which "left Clemens as just another book publisher who disappointed Mark Twain" (Heidig, 2010).

Clemens experienced a wealthy life while in Hartford nevertheless he made some bad investments which caused his bankruptcy at the end. He tried to redeem his debts by moving the family to Europe. End of his publishing company compelled Twain to set off on a worldwide lecture tour to obtain money. Their first daughter died by a misfortune on meningitis while visiting their house in Hartford causing Clemens never to return to their former home as they were unable to attend the place of her death. Therefore the Clemens travelled the world. "During those years, Sam witnessed the increasing exploitation of weaker governments by European powers" (House & Museum, 2016) and he wrote a book about it, *Following the Equator*. "Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't" (Twain, 2011).

Samuel Clemens restored his finances and returned to the United States in 1900. His experiences of the situation around the world led him to "redirect his Wrath toward American government" (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016) and he began to brand himself as anti-imperialist, therefore served as the vice president of the Anti-Imperialist League.

Lecture tours managed to pull Twain out of debt but his anti-government behavior “threatened his livelihood once again” (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016). His writings turned dark, he focused on downsides of human race. As he was labelled as a traitor by some, few of his works were not published either for personal fear of ruining his remaining reputation or because magazines would not accept them. His wife became ill and died eventually leaving Mark alone with his two daughters. He moved to Stormfield to finish his days, see his middle daughter Clara get married and the youngest die from epileptic seizure. Leaving his last and only child, Samuel Clemens died at age of 74 in 1910.

“Like any good journalist, Sam Clemens, a.k.a. Mark Twain, spent his life observing and reporting on his surroundings. In his writings he provided images of the romantic, the real, the strengths and weaknesses of a rapidly changing world” (The Mark Twain House & Museum, 2016).

Mark Twain has “written” his own autobiography. He really dictated it for the most part during the last years of his life. It is rather collection of humorous notes than common autobiography. In his biography there is for example included an excerpt of a letter from a French girl who wrote him and who he did not even know and whole letters follow. “The letter is from a French girl who lives at St. Dié, in Joan of Arc's region. I have never seen this French girl, but she wrote me about five years ago and since then we have exchanged friendly letters three or four times a year. She closes her letter with this paragraph” (Lainson, 2002b). Twain also includes his responses into the autobiography. It could almost seem as if he did not know what to write about and only wanted to fill space by these letters. At the end of the book, he speaks about the circumstances of last days of his wife Mrs. Clemens. “During two or three months Mrs. Clemens sat up like that, night and day, struggling for breath. When she was made drowsy by opiates and exhaustion she rested her head a little while on a support, just as Mrs. Fuller was doing, and got naps of two minutes' or three minutes' duration” (Lainson, 2002b). Twain compares the death of his wife to last days of Mrs. Fuller, the wife of Frank Fuller who helped Twain receive a lot of his fame. Fuller had organized and advertised a lecture which attended so many people “There wasn't room enough left for a child” (Lainson, 2002b). Twain was really grateful to Fuller as is obvious from his autobiography thus it makes sense that he was surprised to see him look much older than some years ago and agreed to visit his dying wife. He remembered the picture very well and so he could compare the same situation with his own wife later.

Floyd (2016) mentions some interesting facts about Mark Twain. As he suffered from arthritis in his right hand wherefore he tried to write with left hand. In later years, however, he was forced to dictate his works as the pain was severe. Floyd also alleges Twain does not have direct descendants today because his only granddaughter died without any offspring.

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