

**LITERATURE**DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-348-4-5>**THE TYPOLOGY OF TRICKSTER CHARACTERS  
IN MARK TWAIN'S EMOTIVE PROSE****ТИПОЛОГІЯ ПЕРСОНАЖІВ-ТРИКСТЕРІВ У ХУДОЖНІЙ ПРОЗІ  
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The character of a trickster, an archetypal figure introduced by Carl Gustav Jung [2], has become an object of numerous theoretical and applied studies. Literary criticism focuses on its origin, folklore background, dubious nature, similarity to a cultural hero, particular kinds of literary personages, interrelations with other psychological and cultural archetypes etc. In the researches of mythology, for instance, scholars make an emphasis on intellectual achievements of mankind revealed through trickster figures. Fairy-tales often make an active use of tricksters' cunning and stupidity (sometimes a pretended one) as opposed to the higher level of social civilization and intelligence.

Being frequently a figure of humorous pieces, tricksters are assigned both with serious and comic attributes. Their comic nature seems to be similar to those of carnival element observed in Roman Saturnalia and suchlike ceremonials and rituals. The double nature empowers tricksters with an ability to be as a medium between life and death, earth and heaven, male and female, high and low, etc., pacifying the existing social antinomies.

The literary evolution of a trickster points to his tendency to get more civilized due to the emergence of conscious and reasonable motives which regulate the character's behavior and intentions. Taking advantage of their ambiguity, tricksters often resort to a mask technique. The concept of pretense

thus turns to be one of the essential markers of a literary and folklore trickster characters.

Given the fact that American aesthetic identity and outlook were formed due to the frontier to a great extent, authentic settings, plots and character types outlined the scope of the US literature. The objects of humor and practical jokes were facts from real life of frontiersmen, the life that was marked by cruelty and ruthlessness accompanied by extreme unrestrained uproar that measured with common sense. The sense of humor in the environment of American dwellers outlined that comic world outlook of New Englanders which united the people who were not a nation yet [3, p. 31].

It is also true about Mark Twain's creativity, since he took inspiration from the robust and indomitable frontier atmosphere that produced a variety of story-telling forms, including humorous genres and comic characters. Quite often the characters of such stories revealed tricksters' traits bearing the resemblance with their archetypal prototype, on the one hand, and demonstrating their unique features on the other.

Having scrutinized the characters in Mark Twain's emotive prose, we can state that his tricksters tend to acquire the form of simpletons actualizing in such a way the motifs of masks and pretense. It enables us to single out the following types of trickster-simpleton characters in Twain's fiction: *trickster-swindlers*, *trickster-hoaxers*, and *trickster-dandies*.

An example of a *swindler* can be seen in Stevenson – the protagonist of “The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg”. Pretending to be an amateur detective, he reveals the corruptness and spiritual misery of a provincial American town in a satirical way. “Money addiction” of Hadleyburg dwellers (Americans) is traditionally masked by a rigorous puritan rhetoric that was the consequence of the US historical development. New England's culture triggered pragmatic intentions disguised by utmost religiosity. The trickster ruins an artificial image of the town foregrounding its vicious reality.

*Trickster-hoaxers* are in abundance in Mark Twain's short stories (“Cannibalism in the Cars”, “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County”, “The Petrified Man”, “The Siamese Twins”, “My Bloody Massacre”, “Curing a Cold”, “My Watch”, “Playing Courier”, “The Danger of Lying in Bed” etc.). For example, in “Cannibalism in the Cars,” through the entrusted narration the writer runs a burlesque story about the election of a rescuer that aims at saving the travel companions from starving to death. Deceiving a reader, a poker face masked jokester demonstrates a fake innocence in spinning horrifying details of the event. The emphasis in the story is made not on the plot line, rather on the narrative technique: the storyteller, pretending not to notice the absurdity of the situation per se, puts on an air of seriousness and baffles both the narratees and the readers.

Another example of a trickster-hoaxer is the teller of “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County.” Describing the manner Simon Wheeler inveigles the listener into the maze of his story, the I-narrator stresses “*a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed... that, so far from his imagining there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, and admires its two heroes as men of transcendent genius in finesse*” [4, p. 5–6].

In the mentioned pieces Twain’s trickster-simpletons pretend to be innocents as though unaware of their profaneness in the attitude towards conventions, classics’ authority, everything that may restrain the potential of a free and nonbiased mind, often termed as a horse-sense. It makes the narrative so involving that it transforms the usual order of things: tragedy becomes a source of humor, an innocent turns out to be more reasonable and sophisticated than a scholar, or fancy appears out to be more ‘real’ than the reality itself.

*Trickster-dandies* can be traced in Twain’s “Adventures of Tom Sawyer”, “A Mysterious Visit”, “Luck” and other pieces. The narrator in “A Mysterious Visit” as if judging by his own experience reveals a life philosophy that is rooted in the national individualistic culture and associated with the sense of personal achievement and the need for experimenting. He demonstrates an extensive way of self-realization striving for material prosperity.

Tom Sawyer also performs the role of a dandy in a well-known episode of painting the fence. The described ‘ritual’ can be interpreted in terms of B. Franklin’s doctrine of labor and trade. Franklin is known to consider that “all economic output is valued according to the amount of labor funneled into the production of that good” [6] and that “trade in general being nothing else but the exchange of labour for labour, the value of all things is, as I have said before, most justly measured by labour” [1]. Twain parodically alludes to the folk tale about a squirrel that made other animals crack his nuts convincing them that it will keep a dentist away.

Scoresby in “Luck” posed himself a fool-dandy. His life as well as professional activity was made up of “unlucky” occasions, accidents and blunders. Due to the fact that everybody “*took his idiotic blunders for inspirations of genius,*” Scoresby benefited from “*every fresh blunder*” which “*increased the luster of his reputation*” [5]. It evokes the folk wisdom that the best option for people is to be born lucky and happy. The profaneness of his deeds and behavior originates from the trickster archetype’s preconscious stage. Mark Twain modernizes and actualizes the comic side of such kind of characters who “fail” to act reasonably.

To summarize, we can state that Twain’s trickster characters reflect the poetics of frontier humor marked by democracy, disrespect and violation of conformity, optimism and the triumph of life. The mentioned above types of

tricksters suggest their progressive mission in the development of American literature and culture in general.

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