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**Race and Slavery between Nationalism and Regionalism in Herman  
Melville's *White Jacket* (1850) and Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*  
(1883)**

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## ***Dedication***

I would like to dedicate this work :

- *In The Memory of my aunt Hammama*
- *My dear parents.*
- *My brother Hocine and sisters; especially Hassina and her three sons, Houria and Sonia*
- *My Future family; especially my beloved Rafik, his parent, brother and sisters.*
- *All my friends: with whom I shared the best moments; especially Cylia, Nassima, Amina, Kahina, Yamina, Saida and Djamel with whom I share the work.*

***Cylia***

I would like to dedicate this work to:

- *My parents.*
- *My dear brothers and sisters and their children.*
- *My friends: Ghani, Bahmane, Hakim, Kahina, Yamina and Cylia with whom I share the work.*
- *My relatives.*

### III

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## IV

### **Abstract**

*This piece of research aims to study Race and slavery between Nationalism and Regionalism in the American society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in relation to Herman Melville's White Jacket (1850) and Mark Twain's Life on the Mississippi (1883). In fact, the two authors have linked the concept of Slavery to that of Race differently. While Melville provides a national vision about slavery in the United States, Twain focuses on slavery just on one Mississippi region and depicts the socio-economic status of that specific place in America. Our work and findings are based on the theory of "Racism" which is developed by Albert Memmi who views Racism as the awareness of the distinction between social groups on the basis of culture, religion, social status, and even physical appearance. For Memmi, Racism is manifested via physical and moral aggression exercised by the superior race over the inferior one. These aspects that Memmi discussed in his theory about race and slavery are apparent in the two novels. To achieve our work, we have supported our work by a historical background about Slavery and Black Race in the 19<sup>th</sup> century America. In our analysis, we have discussed how Race and Slavery are manifested in the novel of White Jacket by referring to the different races abroad the ship of war and the way they are treated. In the end, we have shown how Twain has linked racism to the black race and the manner the blacks are exploited on the steamboat and in the plantation fields of the American south west*



## Introduction

The main purpose of this present research paper is the study of Slavery and Race between Nationalism and Regionalism in the pre-Civil war period in the United States as portrayed in the novels: *White Jacket* (1850) by Herman Melville and *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) by Mark Twain. The two authors have shown in their novels how in this period of the nineteenth century, each aspect of the American life, including race and slavery can take national or regional dimension.

The first half of the nineteenth century (1800) is marked by the raise of national literature in the United States. Such writers as Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Ralf Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau published novels and poetry in which they tried to explore the national culture of America.<sup>1</sup> Melville in his *White Jacket*, celebrates the American nation by putting emphasis on the promotion of its culture, history, interests, economy, religion, and politics, trying thus to identify the American nation as one single block that is specific comparing to the rest of the world. Yet, in the second half of the same century another vague of writers arose to claim that the American nation can never be a unified block because of its cultural and economic diversity. Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* is a concrete example of this genre of writing, also referred to as regional literature, where he celebrates the economic system, cultural and religious life of one geographical area in the United States namely the South West. As such, *Life on the Mississippi* and *White Jacket* reflect in a way or another the issues of slavery and race and the existing attitudes about these two concepts as important proportions of the American history and past.<sup>2</sup> They present them as aspects of the American life during the pre-Civil war period.

The beginning of slavery in the United States is not specific to that period; it goes back to the seventeenth century (1600) when America was a British colony. The social and



economic circumstances in Europe led to the appearance of what is known as indentured servants in America. However, the practice of slavery differed from one region to another according to its necessity for economy.<sup>3</sup> By the end of the seventeenth century, the United States' authorities introduced laws making of the blacks a property sold on the auction blocks<sup>4</sup>, and as such, slavery became an indispensable element for the American economy. In the nineteenth century, the South of the United States was mainly agricultural. As such, its society (social organization) is different politically and economically from the North. The South, then, regards slavery as essential to its economy; whereas the North, more industrialized, considered slavery as an inhuman exploitation. As a result, the American Civil war began in 1861 and ended in 1865 after the ratification of the emancipation proclamation introduced by the American president Abraham Lincoln.<sup>5</sup>

We may say that slavery is the process of exploitation and manipulation practised by the whites over the blacks on the basis of the ideology of the superiority of the white race. In fact, Slavery as an institution is always linked to the black race. Yet, the vastness of the American soil and its inclusion of many races extend its practice to other races; especially, in the states where the Black race is not centered. Indeed, some social groups; such as the native Americans and others belonging to the white race without means of production are submitted to symbolic slavery via their exploitation by the superior race; the Anglo-Saxons.

Race and Slavery are always closely related to each other. Peter Kolchin defines racism as a function of slavery.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, we tend to analyze the afore mentioned novels to reveal the way slavery is exercised over the inferior race and other races such as the native Americans, the blacks and even the poor Whites. Melville's *White Jacket* is symbolic in the sense that it incarnates slavery and racial treatment of the inferior races satirically. While in Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*, slavery is explored directly through the racial segregation and manipulation of the blacks.

## Review of the literature

The content of the two novels and the significant elements they carry about slavery and black race were the points of interest for many writers. Following different approaches, those critics have attempted to locate their meanings from different perspectives. The historical approach is one of the perspectives under which the two novels are tackled in relation to slavery and race.

Starting with Melville's book *White Jacket*, Priscilla Allen Zirker is one of those who have examined the novel in relation to slavery and race in the United States in the period of the 1840s. In his article: "Evidence of Slavery Dilemma in *White Jacket*", Allen Zirker states that Melville in *White Jacket* has made his Man of War in an aspect of "national aggression" and "internal oppression of class conflict".<sup>7</sup> According to him, the ideology of the years of the 1840s have denied what is called Egalitarianism in the United States. Thus, he argues that Melville has been influenced by the contradiction in the democratic party toward Egalitarianism as a belief in equality.<sup>8</sup> However, Melville is not following a party's line. For Allen Zirker, the novel is a social document. He says: "by placing Melville's conflicting arguments in the historical context of 1849, we can illuminate the workings of slavery question on his man of war narrative".<sup>9</sup> We may say that the historical conditions of the 1849 have an impact on Melville who has tackled the question of slavery through the issue of flogging. In fact, the novel can be considered as a propaganda against harsh naval discipline.<sup>10</sup>

Bradley A Johnson is another critic who has studied *White Jacket* by relating Melville's focus on the flogging behavior to slavery. In his work "Mind in the Main Top, Body in the Bilge: Space and the Human Form in Melville's *White Jacket*", he has dealt with the characters description; specifically the lower officers. He asserts that the trace of the collective body that receives flogging represents the Navy's and the Nation's "stigma".

Furthermore, he relates the communal body suggested by Melville to slavery. In short, Bradley A Johnson resembles the battleship world portrayed by Melville to a communal body made of the common sailors headed by the main character “White Jacket”. That body which receives flogging represents, in Bradley’s thinking, the Navy’s and the Nation’s unacceptability of the inferior race.<sup>11</sup>

Like Melville’s *White Jacket, life on the Mississippi* is again a target to many critics among whom we can mention, Joseph. f. Goeke who has analyzed Twain’s humor on sensitive topics, such as race, as well as border politics and civil war in the United States. In doing so, Goeke refers to the characters to approach the novel. According to him, Twain’s position toward slavery is accomplished by his interference with his brother Orion who is portrayed as an abolitionist of Slavery.<sup>12</sup> The evidence is the campaigns that he holds along with Abraham Lincoln. Joseph. F. Goeke claims that when Twain discusses Orion’s “fundamental principles, he refers most emphatically to his brother’s views on slavery, and in doing so, he overstates Orion’s abolitionism”.<sup>13</sup> We may say that, Twain focuses much on Orion’s ideas about slavery through associating him with abolitionism, before and after the Civil War, when living in the borderland on the Mississippi.

Furthermore; the author asserts in the same article “Border life on the Mississippi: Civil War Border politics and Mark Twain’s Humor”, that Twain’s humor on sensitive topics such as race, can be considered as an attack according to his overuse of the word “nigger” though the antiracist messages the novel may convey.<sup>14</sup> In Goeke’s thinking, borderlands are areas for social and cultural exchange since they contain more than one race, tradition, and lifestyle. Mark Twain himself was from the border slave-state of Missouri. His experience there influences and forms his humor to be somehow subjective when concerning subjects as race.<sup>15</sup>

## Issue and Working hypothesis:

From our review of the literature, we notice that much of the criticism addressed to the two novels is tackled on an ideological and historical stance. Concerning Melville's *White Jacket*, the critics seem to have focused mainly on the incident of flogging in the American Navy as an indirect reference to Slavery. Besides, they limited their analysis of the novel to the year of the 1849. *Life on the Mississippi* also appears to be approached by the critics in terms of Twain's humor and his position toward Slavery. To our knowledge, no one of the critics have approached the novels according to their historical context to show the difference in the portrayal of race in relation to slavery in the period of the mid- nineteenth century.

Our intention then, is to study the historical context of the two books in relation to Melville's nationalist and Twain's regionalist perspectives as well as the way Slavery and Race are portrayed in both novels. Our aim is to show how Melville and Twain have related the concept of slavery to that of race; how, in their treatment of the subject of slavery in their works, have focused on the racial division of the American people into Whites (Anglo-Saxons) and blacks (Afro-Americans) and other races in between that cannot enslave, but can be enslaved (Indians, Latino). Yet, at the practical level, the two authors have given different perspectives about the exercise and the functioning of slavery in that vast land. While Melville gives a National and broad vision about slavery in the United States, Twain insists that slavery, like all other aspects of American life, can never function in the same way in all American parts. Indeed, Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* as well as his other novels has shown us how slavery has its specificity in his region (South-West). In short, the socio-economic circumstances conditioned slavery in this part of America.

## Methodological Outline

To reach the aimed purpose, we shall go through the following outline: in the section of method and materials we shall present Memmi's theory of racism to support our work with a theoretical basis. We will also provide summaries of the two novels *White Jacket* and *Life on the Mississippi* and the biographies of Herman Melville and Mark Twain. In the Results section, we shall present the results reached by our investigation of the subject of race and slavery in Melville's *White Jacket* and Twain's *Life On the Mississippi*. Finally, in the discussion section, we shall handle two parts: first, the discussion of race and slavery in Melville's *White Jacket*; second, the study of race and slavery in Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*.

## EndNotes

<sup>1</sup> Khatherin Vanspanckeren, “*the Romantic Period,1820-1860: fiction*”: *Outline of the American Literature*, ( US Department of State, (2005) ,6-3

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.3

<sup>3</sup>Peter Kolchin, “*Origins and consolidation*”: *American slavery*,( London: Pigenhouse, 1950).18-3.

<sup>4</sup>Harriet Tobman, “ *Childhood*” in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave girl Written by Herself*, ed. L. Maria Child, 1861, 2-1.

<sup>5</sup>- Peter Kolchin, “*Origins and Consolidation*”: *American slavery*, ( London: Pigenhouse, 1950).18-3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Priscilla Allen Zirker, *Evidence of Slavery Delima in White Jacket*, ( Johns Hopkins University Press : American Quarterly, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Autumn, 1966),477-492), accessed on 03-february-2016 12:20 UTC <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2710849>

<sup>8</sup>Ibid,478

<sup>9</sup>Ibid,479

<sup>10</sup>Ibid,481

<sup>11</sup>Toru Nishiura, *the Discription of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket or the World in a Man of War*,( Marchal Univercity,2005.): 3.

<sup>12</sup>Joseph. F. Goeke, *Border Life on the Mississippi: Civil war border Politics and Mark Twain’s Humor*,(Penn State University Press: Studies in American Humor, New Series 3, No. 25 (2012), 9-32 , <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42573641>

<sup>13</sup>Ibid,10

<sup>14</sup>Ibid,13

<sup>15</sup>Ibid,13





# Methods and Materials

## I. Methods

Since our work is based on the two concepts of race and slavery, we find it necessary to give a clear definition to the two concepts to provide our work with a theoretical basis. Thus, we will explain racism and slavery relying on Albert Memmi's theory of racism in his book *Racism* (2000), which we find appropriate to the context of our research.

Racism is a concept that denotes social conflicts. It can be seen as a "manifestation of class oppression"<sup>1</sup>. While the superior class is represented by the white people, the Black race, are put in a marginal social, political, and cultural inferior position. However, race in itself is complex and may have a variety of meanings because it is a social reality. To extend our explanation of race, we will rely on Memmi's description of racism.

Memmi has not only the intention to analyze racism, but an intervention in the politics of anti-racism.<sup>2</sup> He does not focus only on the sense of racism. He rather gives tools with which to combat it<sup>3</sup>. In his view, the roots of racism are in the interaction in which "one finds oneself in a contact with an individual or group that is different and poorly understood"<sup>4</sup>. Difference then, is the core of Memmi's conception of racism. In this sense, he says:

race is a generalizing definition and valuation of biological differences, whether Real or imaginary, to the advantage of the one defining and deploying them, and to the detriment of the one subjected to that act of definition, to the end of justifying (social or physical hostility and assault)<sup>5</sup>

For Memmi, racism is a social relation, a structure that consists of elements. These elements may be summarized in: the existing difference between social groups, either in terms of culture, religion, history or appearance. This dissimilarity can be real or imaginary. For instance, the Blacks and Whites are unlike in color, traditions, beliefs, language and so on.

Thus, the Whites see themselves as being different and then practise a kind of domination on the Blacks. Moreover, Memmi elucidates that those who are supposed to be distinctive are underestimated, whereas, those who impose this disparity are valued positively. Finally, the negative valuation of the distinguished group confirms and validates their legitimization and justification for aggression<sup>6</sup> which has different forms. Indeed, slavery is one of these forms among others.

Memmi also shows that racism has no real content; therefore, it can change at the will of the oppressor.<sup>7</sup> For him it is not the nature of difference that matters, but the negative difference that is perceived to exist. In addition, he argues that racism is not a personal matter. It is rather a social matter since to make a generalization requires the consideration of the group to which someone belongs.<sup>8</sup> Racism is, then, a social system that relies on the ability to define the “other”. The act of definition entails the exercise of power by one group over another.<sup>9</sup> This exemplifies the use of power by the whites who are supposed to be the superior race over the blacks and other races that represent the inferior race. This is an act of enslavement and exploitation of the black race and other races. The reason is the fact that they seem to be different in physical appearance and social status. Therefore, they are disregarded and estranged by the white superiors.

Memmi also draws his arguments about the difference from Darwin’s ideas on purity and human selection.<sup>10</sup> For him, purity is not the basis for making the distinction between social groups. He states that purity is not the case for humanity, because most races, whether superior or inferior, are intermixed for the necessities of survival. Memmi concludes that “pure races do not exist; only humans differ”<sup>11</sup>. Again, in Memmi’s thinking, it is not the biological difference that separates or forms social groups.<sup>12</sup> In one society, area or continent, we may find people with dissimilar biological characteristics from one another. He brings the case of Africa to enforce his argument. He states that in Africa there are white and black

people as well. He also claims that the different countries of the world are melting pots.<sup>13</sup> Every nation constitutes a variety of races. Thus, according to him, racism resides in the human blood. This breaks the way for classification because there are no two individuals that are firmly identical.<sup>14</sup>

## **II. Materials**

Since the works we are going to analyze are autobiographical in their nature, it is important to have a look to the biographies of the two authors. We will start first by Herman Melville, then, Mark Twain. Then, we will provide brief summaries of the two novels.

### **➤ Herman Melville:**

Herman Melville is an American poet and prose writer. He was born on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1819 in New York City. He received education in the New York Male school.<sup>15</sup> When he was twelve (12) years old, his father, Allan Melville, died. Thus, Herman Melville and his family experienced hard conditions. From 1830 to 1837, he attended the Albany Academy where he studied the classics. Meanwhile, he began his own experiences on sea which were to be reflected through his literary career. He worked as a “boy” (green hand) on a New York Ship Bound for Liverpool. In 1841, he sailed from Fair haven, Massachusetts on the Whaler *Acushnet*, which was its way to the Pacific Ocean. It is from these days that he drew the pictures of his novel *Moby-Dick*, published in 1851. Melville was known as a writer and an adventurer. Thus, most of his works are produced out of his journeys.<sup>16</sup> For instance, *White Jacket* came out of his experiences in the homebound voyage from the South Seas on the frigate *United States* in 1844. The novel can be seen as a reflection of the racial attitudes against the oppressed especially the blacks in the United States in that period. Thus, the treatment of the minor militants and their exploitation by the officers reflect slavery in America, where many races are considered as valuable properties. His first novel *Typee* also, published in 1846, was inspired by the moments he lived on the island of Typee and the

events he experienced with its people. Melville's other works are: *Omoo* (1847), *Mardi* and a *Voyage Thither* (1849), *Redburn* (1849), *Clarel* (1876) which is a poem and pilgrimage in the Holy land, and lastly the *Confidence Man* published in 1876.<sup>17</sup>

➤ **Mark Twain:**

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known by his pen name of Mark Twain, was born on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1835 in Florida, Missouri. He grew up in the Mississippi river frontier town of Hannibal. In 1847, Twain was to become an orphan after his father's death. As a result, he left school to work as a printer's apprentice for his older brother Orion. Starting from 1853, Twain was to travel a lot in the East and Mid-west as a journey man printer and contributor to the Newspaper in St Luis, Philadelphia. Then, in 1857, Clemens was to be attracted by a new experience. So, he began training to become a steamboat pilot. Eight months later, he got his pilot's license. This skill proved interesting for the author to be a source of inspiration for his literary career. The *Innocent Abroad* was the first of Clemens' major books that appeared in 1869. After that, he published *Roughing It* in 1872. Two years later, he produced *Old times on the Mississippi*. Twain has a special connection with the Mississippi River. So, in 1883 he published his novel *Life on the Mississippi* in which he depicts the reality of the slaves in the Southern plantation through his realistic writing. In 1886, he produced another novel entitled *Huckleberry Finn* which may be considered as a revolutionary novel against slavery in the United States. Finally, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *Pudd n' Head Wilson* were his last novels, published in 1889 and 1904. He died in 1910 in Redding.<sup>18</sup>

### **Summaries of the two novels:**

#### ➤ ***White Jacket* by Herman Melville:**

*White Jacket* is an autobiographical work drawn on Melville's experiences when he served in the United States Navy from August 1843 to October 1844. It is a vivid account of life aboard a ship of war. *White jacket* is narrated by White Jacket, a nickname to the main character. It is published in London in 1850. He starts his narration with a short description of the jacket, the ship's membership, his friends, and the difficulty of life aboard the ship life. In short, the story reveals the brutal practice of flogging and punishment for minor miss-deeds which are the exemplification of slavery. He continues his depiction of the events during the voyage from the South Seas by emphasizing the racial treatment between the workers, specifically, the superior over the inferior to show the cruelty of the officers toward the ordinary sailors on the ship. He denotes a sense of discrimination between the characters (ship's members) so that the boat represents a social group formed into different classes.

#### ➤ ***Life on the Mississippi* by Mark Twain:**

Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) is an autobiographical account of Twain's early days as a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi river before and after the civil war. The book begins with a brief history of the river and its explorers focusing on how it grows, then continued detailing with Twain's training as a steamboat pilot. Therefore, he focuses on his personal history with the river, growing up in Missouri and dreaming to be a steamboat pilot. Indeed, the steamboat remains for Twain a great place where he is training under an experienced pilot named Bixby. In the second half of the book, Twain shows his return to the river in 1882 in order to travel on a steamboat from St. Louis to New Orleans. During his voyage, he makes an observation of the river after twenty years of absence. In short, throughout the novel, Twain depicts the plantations of tobacco and cotton which are the main properties of the Mississippi region.

## **Historical Background about Slavery and the Black Race in the United States**

Race is a mode of classification of human beings which distinguishes between them on the basis on physical properties .Its existence in the United States goes back to the discovery of America by the English and the Spanish who create such cultural, economic and physical disorder as to produce the first racial formation in their history. Those people attempted to live and grow along each other through the management of the economic and political interaction between them.<sup>1</sup> Yet, this created conflict and racism between them. In addition to this, the United States developed into a melting pot as a result of the European immigrants who came there and lost their identity. This mixture formed different races who see themselves different from others <sup>2</sup>.Therefore, the blacks became the very apparent race among all the races because of their black skin.

As far as Slavery is concerned, it exists in the American continent from the period of the beginning of slave trade in the United States. It goes back to the 1600's, when the twenty blacks arrived at Jamestown in 1619 as indentured servants. At the beginning, they had the same status as the whites, and they were obliged to serve for a period of time to pay for their ship's passage to the New world <sup>3</sup>. But, later on, the whites regained their freedom while the blacks remained slaves for life. Indeed, the whites tried to keep the system of slavery which was the basis of their economy. Since the blacks were used in plantations to raise tobacco and cotton in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, trading in slaves became more profitable than exhorting crops. Then, an elaboration was established between North America, West Indies, and West Africa, was called the triangular trade.<sup>4</sup>

In the nineteenth century, America has known a division as far as its economic system is concerned. The Northern economy was based on industry while the Southern one was based

on agriculture. As industry was the main economy for the northerners, large cities were established for living and working. As for the South, agriculture was so profitable and important to them since it is essential to their economic development. In addition to this, slaves in the North were not needed in contrast to the Southerners who see them important, because their economy relied on the slave labor, which maintained the plantations and harvested the crops <sup>5</sup>. There are few numbers of slaves in the Northern colonies, for that, the abolition of slavery in these states was easier than the South since many free white men were needed in labor. These white workers did not want slaves as competitors for their jobs. But, in the Southern colonies, the circumstances were different. The number of the African Americans was larger and the role of slaves in the economy of these states was very important, because these states were more dependent on the agriculture than the Northern ones. Furthermore, many white southerners did not believe in the fact that white men could labor to produce cotton, rice and tobacco. All of these factors urged the southern states to retain slavery after the revolution of 1812. In 1850, the southerners used the fugitive slave law which said: if slaves ran away to the North or Canada, they would have to be returned to their owners, and slaves who broke this law should be punished <sup>6</sup>.

The Fugitive Slave Law was refused by the Northerners who made places for the fugitives who completed escaping routes and moved runaway slaves by night from one secret hiding place to another via a loose network of safe houses. This practice is known as the underground railroads <sup>7</sup>. The latter helped more than 100,000 to reach freedom. For instance, when Harriet Tubman escaped from slavery in 1849 and became one of the most effective and celebrated leaders of the Underground Railroad, the Southerners did not want this to happen. When the Northern whites helped the black slaves to escape slavery, their aim was to submit them to another form of slavery in their industrial factories, because they were in need of cheap labor to develop their industry. As a result the black Southerners were submitted to a

new symbolic slavery along with white mates and other people belonging to different races. This division between the free states and slave states led to the Civil war.<sup>8</sup>

Slaves in the South constituted one third of the Southern population. Most of them lived on large farms and small plantations. Slave owners wanted to make their slaves dependent on them . In fact, they were prohibited from learning, and their behavior and movement were restricted<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, slave marriage had no legal basis, and slave owners encouraged slaves to marry and raise large families<sup>10</sup>. Slaves also suffered from extreme physical violence. For instance, they were killed and punished by breaking their legs. They worked seven days a week and the owners did not pay them<sup>11</sup>. Before the civil war, slaves became a property to their owners. This treatment continued until the war began. In fact, slavery was the main reason behind the Civil War, because, the North did not need slaves, while the South needed them to work in their fields. The war gave an opportunity to the blacks to escape the harsh lives they lived before. So, the slaves were used in the war as a tool against the union by building fortresses and working in factories. But, after the war and along with the abolition of slavery, they began to gain their identity as free people.<sup>12</sup>

At the beginning of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln stressed his policy of preserving the union. In august 1862, he declared; ‘my paramount objective in this struggle is to save the union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery’<sup>13</sup>. However, when the war had taken pressure on abolition, he changed his policy from preserving the federal government into a policy which includes the emancipation of slaves. In fact, on September 22, 1862 Abraham Lincoln had already drafted what he called the Emancipation Proclamation in which he declared that all the slaves in the states which were still rebellious on January 1, 1863; “Shall be them, them forward, and forever free “<sup>14</sup>. And ,on the new year day of 1863,Lincoln signed the final emancipation proclamation , declaring that: “ all persons held as slaves in the rebel areas and hence forward shall be free”<sup>15</sup> So, by this Emancipation Proclamation, president



Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery in all the states where it existed, and changed the attitudes of Americans, who saw them as properties .The Civil War gave a final answer to two questions that had divided the U.S ever since it became an independent nation. It decided finally that the Union State was one nation whose parts could never be separated. And it put an end to slavery trough the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment which ended slavery.<sup>16</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Cynthia kaufman, “*the Idea of Race in*” *Theorizing and Fighting racism*, <https://solidarity-us.org/pdfs/cadreschool/fws>

<sup>2</sup>Douglas Hartman, *Reviews*, (*University of Minnesota*, 2013,) 569.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 569.

<sup>4</sup>Albert Memmi, *Racism*, trs. Steve Martinot (the university of Minnesota press:2000), 182

<sup>5</sup>Ibid,184

<sup>6</sup>Albert Memmi, “*the Double consciousness*”: *Racism*, intr by Steve Marinot, (the university of Minnesota press: 2000)

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, 07.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas Hartman, *Reviews*, (*University of Minnesota*, 2013,) 569

<sup>9</sup> Albert Memmi, *Racism*, trs. Steve Martinot (the university of Minnesota press:2000), 185

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, 185

<sup>11</sup>Albert Memmi, “*the Double consciousness*”: *Racism*, intr by Steve Marinot, (the university of Minnesota press ), 6.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid 7

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, 8

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, 9

<sup>15</sup> Unknown author, *Herman Melville,a Retrospective of his works on the fifteenth anniversary of Moby Dick*, (Wiliams collodge library, Massachusetts, 2001),01.

<sup>16</sup> ibid,01

<sup>17</sup>Herman Melville, *93 Poems*,(Poem Hunter.com. The world poetry Archive,2012),

<sup>18</sup> Charles Neider, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain*,(Washington,1987),20.

<sup>19</sup>Cythnia Kaufman, *Theorizing and Fighting Racism*,1-2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 2-4.

<sup>21</sup> Unknown Author, *Slavery in America: The Montgomery slave trade*, (pub by Equal Justice Initiative 2013), 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Bryn O Callaghan, *an Illustrated History of The USA*(London; Longman group,2004) , 44.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid,47.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid,47

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>27</sup> Unknown Author, *Slavery in America: The Montgomery slave trade*, (pub by Equal Justice Initiative 2013),3

<sup>28</sup> Ibid,3

<sup>29</sup> Ibid,7

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 8

<sup>31</sup> Hugh Brogan, *The penguin history of the united states in America*,(London penguin book,2001), 326.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Kochin ,*America Slavery*,(London ,1950), 207.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 207.

<sup>34</sup> Keith Olson, *An outline of U S History*,(New York: United States information agency,1990 ),148.

## Results

In this section of our research paper, we will report up our findings reached after the analytic study of the two novels *White Jacket* and *Life on the Mississippi*. We have studied the aspects of race and slavery in the two works in relation to the historical context of the nineteenth century United States.

Our research paper is about Race and Slavery between Nationalism and Regionalism in Melville's *White Jacket* and Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*. In the introduction section, we have raised an issue with the view of showing the way National and Regional literature has brought insights to the American history and past. We have also provided our dissertation with a short background to the issue of slavery and racism in the United States. The theory on which we have based our study is Albert Memmi's *Racism*. For Albert Memmi, racism is the awareness of the distinction between social groups on the basis of culture, religion, social status and even physical appearance. This difference is the core of Memmi's book. In fact, that dissimilarity creates racial prejudices between the individuals with different positions in the society and builds social classes. It leads to the exercise of power by one group over the other in different forms among which we can find of slavery. This interpretation suits the two aspects of the novels developed in the section that pursued.

The first part of the discussion section is devoted to the study of how race and slavery are manifested in the novel *White Jacket* by Herman Melville. We have explored the characters and the classes to which they are categorized, and how the inferior characters (the sailors) are treated by the superiors aboard the American battleship, also referred to as the *Neversink*. In the second part, we have illustrated the way race and slavery is reflected *Life on the Mississippi* by Mark Twain with an emphasis on the black race. Therefore, we have shown

the way the black Americans are exploited and alienated by the white superiors on the steamboat.

After having discussed the two aspects mentioned in the issue, we come to deduce that Melville in *White Jacket* has dealt with the issue of race and slavery from a national perspective. According to him, racism and slavery are not only exercised over the black race, instead, the different races that exist in the United States may be submitted to manipulation and estrangement, since the individual is defined according to his social status. He has used flogging which is a punishment inflicted upon the sailors so as to represent the injustice and tyranny of the people with high ranks on the battleship over the people of the lower ranks. Slavery then is referred to in an indirect way. In *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain has demonstrated that slavery and race are different from one region to another. He has specified the Mississippi region in which slavery and race are revealed in a direct way. For him, racism and slavery are exercised by the whites over the blacks. The fact that the blacks seem to be different, they are supposed to be inferior. Throughout the novel we have seen that the blacks are excluded and exploited by the superior whites aboard the steamboat.

## **Discussion:**

This section is conducted to discuss two main parts: the first part is devoted to the study of Race and Slavery under Nationalism in Herman Melville's *White Jacket*. The second one focuses on Race and Slavery under Regionalism in Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*. Thus, we will analyze the two novels by showing the way slavery and race are manifested in relation to the period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century according to the two perspectives and tendencies of each of the writers. On the one hand, in *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain has emphasized slavery as being a system of labor under the system of plantations and the agricultural economy in the Southern part of United States. It is exercised over the black race in a direct way. On the other hand, in *White Jacket*, Melville has dealt with the issue of slavery and race at a wider level, giving the two concepts a national dimension by extending them to all the races in a symbolic way.

### **Chapter one: Race and slavery under Nationalism in Herman Melville's *White Jacket*.**

#### **➤ Race under Nationalism in Melville's *White Jacket***

*White Jacket* is an autobiographical work told by the narrator White Jacket from the beginning to the end. In it, the author recounts his life through the main character White Jacket who serves as a seaman in the battleship referred to as the Neversink. He describes the American navy and how the members of the battleship lived<sup>1</sup>. In short the novel can be considered as a version of the racial treatment and the cruelty that the upper class people in the United States exercise over the lower class.

Through the technique of symbolism which is overused in Melville's works<sup>2</sup>, the writer has shown the different components of the society aboard the battleship. In Melville's view, the ship is made of many distinct races that can be categorized into Anglo-Saxons, Afro-Americans, and Native Americans. Those races are again divided into classes

represented by the captains and the sailors.<sup>3</sup> In fact, they form a kind of hierarchy in a community that gathers people with different cultures, beliefs, and positions. Indeed, each specific race is defined according to its social rank aboard the ship. According to the American writer Sharon Talley, Melville portrays through *White Jacket* a fully organized and structured society. Although the ship is on sea, Melville tries to give a special sight at the boat and its crew so as to characterize the American society<sup>4</sup>. Thus, we may say that the Neversink represents the United States as a nation<sup>5</sup>.

At the beginning, Melville alludes that the ship resembles a civilized nation,<sup>6</sup> but he continues to say that all what makes it civilized is not functioning. This is an indirect way of criticism. He wants to say that the civilized nations are not really civilized as they seem. This is apparent in his description of the Neversink. For instance, in chapter three entitled: “A Glance at the Principal Divisions into which a Man of War’s Crew is Divided” the writer suggests a nation especially when he says

then, there are the waisters...Inveterate “sons of *farmers*” with the hay–seed yet in their hair, they are consigned to the congenial superintendence of the chicken–coops, pig–pens, and potato–lockers. These are generally placed amidships, on the gun–deck of a frigate, between the fore and main hatches; and comprise so extensive an area, that it much resembles the market– place of a small town. (06)<sup>7</sup>

Here, the author compares the scene he depicts about the sailors working in the middle of the ship to a market place of a town.

There is another example, where Melville resembles the ship to a nation when he says in chapter eighteen:

In truth, a man–of–war is a city afloat, with long avenues set out with guns instead of trees, and numerous shady lanes, courts, and by–ways. The quarter–deck is a grand square, park, or parade ground, with a great Pittsfield elm, in the shape of the main–mast, at one end, and fronted at the other by the palace of the Commodore’s cabin.<sup>8</sup>

For him, the battleship is a civilized nation, since it represents a social environment made of well educated and working individuals occupying variable jobs. This is evident in the novel while Melville refers to the word “courts” which signifies that there is law.

However, the battleship is not only a symbol of a “civilized” nation, but also a place of savageness and injustice. It seems that in the novel, Melville refers to two different social classes that are made of individuals who belong to distinct races. One group is the aggressor, the other is the aggressed. This is due to the malfunctioning of its institutions. His use of the word republic is very symbolic too.<sup>9</sup> He says: “From the dock-yards of a republic, absolute monarchies are launched”<sup>10</sup>. Here, Melville wants to say that the battleship world is far from being a republic. It is rather a form of a monarchy. It is a world where the upper class is represented by the officers aboard the ship. The officers who belong to the white race, have the absolute power over the others. The sailors, who belong to different races, stand for the lower class in which they are exploited and marginalized. In Memmi’s thinking, the fact of the existence of a difference between individuals results in their separation and division into dissimilar groups. One is the superior, the other is the inferior. In fact, this is widely apparent in the novel according to the writer’s description.<sup>11</sup>

To shed light on both sides of that society, we have also to put emphasis on the gap between the sailors with their inferior status and the captains who claim to be the high authority on the ship.<sup>12</sup> The localization and belonging of the captains on the ship and their social and political life suggest that they are the higher authority comparing to the ordinary sailors. At the very beginning of the novel, Melville refers to the captain by saying: “on the poop, the captain was looking windward; and in his grand, inaccessible cabin.”<sup>13</sup>. This quotation is significant. It refers to the large difference between the officers and common sailors in terms of their social position. The fact that Melville says: “his grand, in accessible cabin” suggests that the officers belong to the high class. In other words, those people claim



to be the superior race. They are the authority on the ship because of their position which distances them from the ordinary sea men. In addition, the fact that the writer mentions “the palace of the commodore”<sup>14</sup> reflects the way the high class, characterized by the officers in the *Neversink*, are associated with comfort and prosperity comparing to ordinary people in the American society. This shows in a way the gap between the captains and the sailors in terms of race, duties and social status aboard the ship.

Concerning the political life of the captains, we may say that they are made powerful by law. Indeed, the writer condemns the captain who searches to “crown himself with the glory of the shambles”<sup>15</sup>. The word crown is symbolic in the sense that the *Neversink*, as a symbol of the American nation, is compared to a monarchy.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the word “crown” is used by Melville to express the supremacy of the upper class. They have the right to order, penalize and make laws with which they can justify their hostility against the lower class. They have the power of the king over his people. The evidence in the text is in chapter thirty five entitled “Flogging not Lawful”, Melville says: “By this article the Captain is made a legislator, as well as a judge and an executive”.<sup>17</sup> Besides, the use of power by the officers against the sailors with no strong and credible reasons is shown in the novel when the author says in the same chapter: “the captain of American sloop of war, from undoubted motives of personal pique, kept a sea man confined in the brig for upward of a month”<sup>18</sup>. This ensures the absolute authority of the captains. The quotation reflects also the use of power by the captains due to their belonging to the superior race.

Another element that situates the captains in the upper position is the fact that they are not subject to terrorization and sentence as the ordinary sea men.<sup>19</sup> For instance in the same chapter, the writer says: “But we have seen that the laws involving flogging in the Navy do *not* render to every man his due, since in some cases they indirectly exclude the officers from any punishment whatever, and in all cases protect them from the scourge, which is inflicted

upon the sailor”<sup>20</sup>. This quotation denotes that the captains and officers are protected by the law. In other words, through the quotation, Melville refers to the abuse of authority by those with higher position. They have strength over the men who are in the lower rank.

In addition to the power that is exercised on the sailors by the officers, those sailors are othered between each other. Since the novel is an account of the events in the period during which it is produced, it seems that Melville himself is submitted to the same kind of estrangement and exploitation by the officers on board the ship, specifically, his experience as a sailor on the frigate *United States*. In the novel, *White Jacket* whose voice as a narrator can be seen as the one of Melville, is among the characters that belong to the lower class on the ship.<sup>21</sup>

*White jacket* is an ordinary sea man, an isolated person who seeks to depict the states of the battleship throughout his observation and description of other races in the American frigate, the *Neversink*.<sup>22</sup> This is indicated at the very beginning of the novel. For instance, in chapter nineteen, Melville resembles *White Jacket* to a “wanderer”. The word “wanderer” stands for an estranged individual. Thus, *White Jacket* can be regarded as an othered person distanced from the other sailors and namely from the officers aboard the ship. This fact goes with Memmi’s reference to otherness. The sailors who fit in the inferior races are poorly understood, so, they are marginalized by the superior race on the ship.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the whiteness of his jacket separates him from the rest of the crew. He is the only sailor who wears a jacket with such a color and dimensions.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, he always receives complaints about the jacket by the members of the battleship. This is manifested in the novel, when the author says: “But, bless me, my friend, what sort of a summer jacket is this, in which to weather Cape Horn?”<sup>25</sup>. He adds: “For, presto! The shirt was a coat! a strange-looking coat, to be sure;...”<sup>26</sup> *White Jacket* is regarded as different from the others; he looks bizarre, so, he may be seen as barbarian. He does not feel the sense of belonging.

Furthermore, White Jacket's shipboard position causes him plight. Although he is a top main sailor, his jacket that symbolizes "a uniform" puts him in the same rank as common sailors and gets the similar punishment and privation. Although he is a white person but he is characterized in the lower class.<sup>27</sup> This indicates that racism is broad in White Jacket. It includes all the races with lower positions.

Racism is not only exercised by the captains over the sailors. It exists even between the sailors themselves. This is shown in the novel in chapter sixty-four entitled: "Man of War Trophies" when "a Native American Sioux warrior" was showing the back of his blanket which is drawn in a mass of human hands. He, then, says as follows:

Poor savage! Thought I; and is this the cause of your lofty gait? Do You straighten yourself to think that you have committed a Murder, when the chance-Falling stone has often done the same? Is it A proud thing to topple down six feet perpendicular of It Manhood, though that lofty living tower needed perhaps thirty good Growing summer to bring it to maturity? Poor savage! And you Account it so glorious. do you, to mutilate and destroy what god Himself was more than a quarter of a century building?.<sup>28</sup>

In Melville's words, White Jacket blames the savage acts of the Native Americans and considers what Sioux has done as barbarian. He looks down to them as uncivilized races. Thus, it appears that White Jacket himself looks down to other races in the battleship. The evidence is his use of the word savage. Another example where the author shows White Jacket's racist attitude toward the other races is in chapter twenty eight when the narrator White Jacket depicts a Polynesian small servant named Wooloo as follows:

In our man-of-war, this semi-savage, wandering about the gun-deck in his barbaric robe, seemed a being from some other sphere. His tastes were our abominations: ours his. Our creed he rejected: his we. We thought him aloon: he fancied us fools. Had the case been reversed; had we been Polynesians and he an American, our mutual opinion of each other would still have remained the same. A fact proving that neither was wrong, but both right.<sup>29</sup>

Through this quotation, Melville claims that there is a racial judgment on the part of the sailors; specifically, White Jacket. The servant wooloo is perceived as being savage. In effect,

this suggests that the narrator seems to be racist. White Jacket considers Woolloo as savage because he is white. Thus, he feels himself different in terms of his belonging, color and physical appearance.

As a conclusion, we can say that Melville has brought the wickedness of the upper class people represented by the captains and inequality aboard the ship. Therefore, the sailors are classified in the position of the slaves according to Melville's portrait of the flogging incidents on the ship.

➤ **Slavery under Nationalism in Melville's *White Jacket*:**

Slavery can be seen as a system of labor that is based on involuntary servitude. It is, in most of the time carried out with the submission of people to physical violence and exploitation. In *White Jacket*, Melville has dealt with the issue of slavery through flogging which is a punishment introduced as a law by the American constitution to manage the naval corporations. Through that law, referred to as the "Material law"<sup>30</sup>, the people in higher position on the battleship imprison the sailors and deprive them from their humanity for humble reasons. In other words, those sailors are transformed from seamen to slaves.<sup>31</sup> We may say that the sailors experience restricted liberty and sentence aboard the ship as well as in war.

Limited liberty can be considered as one aspect that the sailors face on the ship. Firstly, in chapter seventy two the narrator describes the sailors as prisoners whose liberty is limited on the ship. For instance, White Jacket himself is portrayed as being a detained person because of his jacket which resembles a "uniform". The evidence in the novel is shown when Melville says in chapter ninety two entitled "The Last of the Jacket":

Already has White-Jacket chronicled the mishaps and inconveniences, troubles and tribulations of all sorts brought upon him by that unfortunate but indispensable garment of his. But now it befalls him to record how this jacket, for the second and last time, came near proving his shroud.<sup>32</sup>

Here the author denotes the fact that White Jacket is not liberated from the tights of the men in power on the ship. Therefore, the battleship seems to be a prison and all the sailors are imprisoned there.

In addition, the sailors experience limited religious liberty that is the liberty of worship.<sup>33</sup> For example, in chapter thirty eight entitled "the Chaplain and Chapel in a Man of War", a sailor asks the captain: "May I be allowed, sir, not to attend service on the half deck?... you will be allowed, sir! Said the captain, haughtily to obey the laws of the ship. If

you absent yourself from prayers on Sunday morning, you know the penalty”.<sup>34</sup> We may say that the sailors have no liberty even for their devotion to God. They are supposed to be punished at any time. So they are forced to obey the captain’s order and get the permission to attend the prayers.

Moreover, Shavings who is a sailor at the fore hold in the Neversink tells White Jacket a story which is very significant. He was once imprisoned in New York and when he was released he wished to return to prison. The reason is the fact that life outside is the same as that of prison.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the story is symbolic. It suggests that the sailors are no more than prisoners on the ship. In other words, the story can be applicable to the battleship, especially when Melville says: “To this, in substance, the *holder* added, that he narrated this anecdote because he thought it applicable to a man-of-war, which he scandalously asserted to be a sort of State Prison afloat”.<sup>36</sup> The Neversink resembles the prison according to Melville’s words.

The sailors face also hard social conditions aboard the ship. In fact, they are oppressed by their superiors. For instance, in chapter twenty-one entitled “One Reason why Men of War –Men are, generally Short Lived” White Jacket presents the situation of the sailors as follows: “the sailors are on and off duty four hours”, through every twenty four hours and “they have but three hours sleep”<sup>37</sup>. He says: “I have listed to be imprisoned in a cell, with its walls papered from floor to ceiling with printed copies, in italics, of the articles of war”.<sup>38</sup>

Limited liberty aboard the Neversink is mainly presented via the law of flogging, which is an indirect form of slavery. This system flogging is used to be inflicted upon the sailors. It is practiced according to the naval laws introduced by the American government as the “Material Laws”<sup>39</sup>. This is apparent in the novel when Melville says in chapter thirty five entitled “Flogging not Lawful”:

All crimes committed by persons belonging to the Navy, which are not specified in the foregoing articles, shall be punished according to the laws and

customs in such cases at sea. This is the article that, above all others, puts the scourge into the hands of the Captain, calls him to no account for its exercise, and furnishes him with an ample warrant for inflictions of cruelty upon the common sailor, hardly credible to landsmen.<sup>40</sup>

This quotation illustrates the fact that the captains can apply flogging according to the articles of war. As White Jacket spends his time on the battleship as an ordinary seaman, his position allows him to see the evil of the ship from his isolated point of view. Therefore, he often attacks the savageness of the civilized people through demonstrating the way the sailors are treated in the navy.

In addition to this, Melville draws the image of the four sailors who are flogged to death. They are named John, Peter, Mark, and Antone.<sup>41</sup> The scene is shown in chapter thirty three entitled “Flogging” as follows:

Among the many who were exceedingly diverted with the scene between the Down Easter and the Lieutenant, none laughed more heartily than John, Peter, Mark, and An-tone\_four sailors of the starboard-watch. The same evening these four found themselves prisoners in the "brig," with a sentry standing over them. They were charged with violating a well-known law of the ship having been engaged in one of those tangled, general fight sometimes occurring among sailors. They had nothing to anticipate but a flogging, at the captain's pleasure.<sup>42</sup>

Here the writer demonstrates the way the four sailors are chastised and beaten with violence by their superiors. Here Melville suggests the aggression of the superior race presented by the captains on the ship. So, he refers to the society that is brutally inhumane. According to Memmi, the use of power by the superior race over the inferior one is justified by the negative valuation of the inferior. So, in the novel, the captains who pretend to be the higher race can practice flogging on the sailors.<sup>43</sup>

The enslavement of the sailors as slaves is also shown through the aspect of war. Throughout the novel, White Jacket refers to Tawney, an African American, who is forced to fight along with other sailors in the war between America and England<sup>44</sup>. For instance, in chapter seventy four entitled “the Main Top at Night”, Tawney and other sailors depict the way they are treated by the captain in the war. Melvill says:

They conjured him to release them from their guns, and allows them to remain neutral during the conflict, but when the ship of any nation is running into action, it is no time for argument, small time for justice, and not much time for humanity. Snatching a pistol from the belt of a boarder standing by, the captain leveled it at the head of the three sailors, and command them instantly to their quarters, under the penalty of being shot on the spot.<sup>45</sup>

Unlike the officers who are associated with authority, Twaney and other sailors are treated terribly in the war. In fact, those sailors receive hostility and pressure by the captains while fighting in the war for a national cause. In Memmi's thinking, the one who is subjected to the act of definition that he refers to in his book, is subject to hostility and assault by those who define and deploy him. So, we can say the fact that the sailors with different races are defined as being inferior; they are exposed to violence and exploitation by the captains on the ship.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to the manipulation of the sailors by the captains, they are enslaved by the other sailors on the battleship. The evidence is shown when the author refers to Quoin, a quarter-gunner, who is in charge of the arms aboard the ship.<sup>47</sup> In chapter twelve entitled "The Good or Bad Temper of Men—of—war's men, in a great Degree, attributable to their Particular", White Jacket describes the way the sailors are used by the quarter gunners as instruments of war. He says as follows:

They were continually grumbling and growling about the batteries; running in and out among the guns; driving the sailors away from them; and cursing and swearing as if all their consciences had been powder-singed, and made callous, by their calling. Indeed they were a most unpleasant set of men; especially Priming, the nasal-voiced gunner's mate, with the hare-lip.<sup>48</sup>

Here, we may say that Quoin and other quarters-gunners are oppressive characters. They regard the sailors as no more than industrial machines. They expose them to aggression and mistreatment.

To conclude, we may say that White Jacket introduces different races that exist aboard the battleship. In fact, he states how the upper white class behaves towards other races. In



addition to Race, slavery also appears in the novel as a system of punishment and restricted laws which are made legally by the institution. This transforms the sailors from seaman to slaves.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Sharon Talley, “*Early Narratives of Adventure, Romance, and Rites of Passage: From Typee to White-Jacket*”: *A student companion to Herman Melville*, ( London, Greenwood Press, 2007), 36.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 36

<sup>3</sup> Toru Nishiura, “The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s *White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 03.

<sup>4</sup> Sharon Talley, “*Early Narratives of Adventure, Romance, and Rites of Passage: From Typee to White-Jacket*”: *A student companion to Herman Melville*, ( London, Greenwood Press, 2007), 45.

<sup>5</sup> Toru Nishiura, “The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s *White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 19.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 20

<sup>7</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001, 06, <http://www.blackmask.com> .

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>9</sup> Toru Nishiura, “The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s *White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 20.

<sup>10</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001, 297, <http://www.blackmask.com>

- <sup>11</sup> Albert Memmi, *Racism*, trs. Steve Martinot (the university of Minnesota press:2000),185.
- <sup>12</sup> Toru Nishiura, “The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s *White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 32.
- <sup>13</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001, 04, <http://www.blackmask.com> .
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid,
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, 166.
- <sup>16</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 30.
- <sup>17</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed in 2001,77. <http://www.blackmask.com> .
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, 77.
- <sup>19</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 31.
- <sup>20</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005),
- <sup>21</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 02.
- <sup>22</sup> Sharon Talley, “Early Narratives of Adventure, Romance, and Rites of Passage:From *Typee* to *White-Jacket*”: A student companion to Herman Melville, ( London, Greenwood Press, 2007), 42.

<sup>23</sup> Albert Memmi, *Racism*, trs. Steve Martinot (the university of Minnesota press:2000), 185

<sup>24</sup> Sharon Talley, “*Early Narratives of Adventure, Romance, and Rites of Passage: From Typee to White-Jacket*”: A student companion to Herman Melville, ( London, Greenwood Press, 2007), 43

<sup>25</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001,01. <http://www.blackmask.com> .

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 01.

<sup>27</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 23.

<sup>28</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001,141. <http://www.blackmask.com>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid,64.

<sup>30</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005),31

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 31

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 206

<sup>33</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001,207. <http://www.blackmask.com>

<sup>34</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 32.

<sup>35</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001, 35. <http://www.blackmask.com>

<sup>36</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 23-22.

<sup>37</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001, 93-92. <http://www.blackmask.com>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 82

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 293,

<sup>40</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 28.

<sup>41</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001, 77. <http://www.blackmask.com>

<sup>42</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005), 29.

<sup>43</sup> Herman Albert Memmi, *Racism*, trs. Steve Martinot (the university of Minnesota press: 2000), 185

<sup>44</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005)

<sup>45</sup> “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001, 72. <http://www.blackmask.com>

<sup>46</sup> Albert Memmi, *Racism*, trs. Steve Martinot (the university of Minnesota press:2000), 185

<sup>47</sup> Toru Nishiura, “*The Description of the Characters in Herman Melville’s White Jacket, or the World in a Man of War*”, (Huntington, Marshal University, 2005, 52

<sup>48</sup> Herman Melville, “*White Jacket, or a World in a Man of War*”, *Blackmask online*, accessed on 2001, 164. <http://www.blackmask.com>

## **Chapter two: Race and Slavery under Regionalism in Twain's *life on the Mississippi***

### **➤ Race under Regionalism in Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*:**

*Life on the Mississippi* is one of Twain's major novels which embody his regional writing. It can be seen as a description of the Mississippi river and life on it. In fact, the novel is drawn on his own experiences while working as a steamboat pilot in the Mississippi region which is an old territory that belong to the United States after the independence from the British Empire<sup>1</sup>. The rich soil of the region gives the way to agricultural activity which functions thanks to the existence of slaves in the building plantations<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, Twain says in chapter forty of *Life on the Mississippi* "Castle and Culture" : "we were certainly in the South at last; for better the sugar region begins, and plantations- vast green levels, with sugar-mill and negro quarters clustered together in the middle distance- were in view"<sup>3</sup>. In this quotation, Twain indicates the fact that the South is an agricultural estate cultivated on the basis of man power represented by the imported slaves from Africa. However, those black Africans are submitted to oppression and miserable conditions.

*Life on the Mississippi* can be seen as a large picture of the Mississippi river and the lands that surround it. The region's vast territories make of agriculture an essential element in its economy. Agriculture was based on slavery which is the manipulation of others by means of the ideology of the superiority of the white race. We may say that racism against black Africans has been born along with the beginning of slavery in the United States.<sup>5</sup> The first half of the nineteenth century is marked by protests and work breaks hold by the slaves. However, only a few white people supported the effort and opposed involuntary servitude. Instead, most of the owners responded with cruelty and punishment; especially in the Mississippi basin, where slavery is seen as a part of the agricultural development of the State

<sup>6</sup>.

Unlike Melville's *White Jacket* in which racism and servitude are reflected via the exploitation of the sailors of different races on the battleship, *Life on the Mississippi* reflects the exploitation of the black race as properties by the "authoritative" whites<sup>7</sup> and their exclusion from the society. In other word, racism in *White Jacket* is present among all the races found on the ship in terms of social life and social position. In *life on the Mississippi*, racism exists mainly between the whites and the blacks aboard the steamboat.

Because of the association of the blacks with "mental inferiority", they are always alienated and disregarded by the whites in the work places and other social milieus.<sup>8</sup> And since the "steam boat represented a commercial world where passengers, hemp, sugar, tobacco and cotton all flowed down the Mississippi"<sup>9</sup>, the black Africans are present not only on the crop fields but also aboard the ships. There, they are still featured with inferiority; therefore, they are distanced from the others. This is shown in the novel through the racialised construction of class into the superior whites and inferior blacks aboard the ship. For instance, the racial division of labor throws the blacks out of the highly skilled piloting positions<sup>10</sup>. It seems that in *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain does not show any black worker trying to interfere with the members of the pilot house. He rather refers to the experienced pilots as Mr. Bixby, Mr. Brown, and many other names of the officers and steersmen during his days of apprentice. The black workers in their society are mainly consigned to the ranks of the deckhands and cabin-crew servants like cooks, porters and chambermaids. This is significant in the novel, when Twain says in chapter fourteen entitled "Rank and Dignity of Piloting":

Sometimes the beacon lights stood in water three feet deep. In the edge of dense forests which extended for miles without farm, wood-yard, clearing, or break of any kind; which meant that the keeper of the light must come in a skiff a great distance to discharge his trust, and often in a desperate weather. Yet I was told that the work is faithfully performed, in all weathers, and not always by men, sometimes by women, if the man is sick or absent.<sup>11</sup>



This quotation reflects the social class to which the black Americans belong. Because of their origins, they are deprived of having appointed to a higher work position. Twain adds in chapter thirty entitled “Sketches by the Way”:

I will remark, in passing that Mississippi steamboat men were important in landmen eyes. (and in their own, too, in a degree according to the dignity of the boat they were on. Negro firemen, deck hands, and barbers belonging to those boats were distinguished personages in their grade of life, and they were well aware of the fact too.<sup>12</sup>

Here, Twain illustrates the work that the black laborers are in charge with along with their families. They are obliged to perform their duties at the price of their lives and families aboard the ship or onshore. They are always exposed to boiler explosions and bad weather conditions while working. Therefore, we can say that for most black river boat laborers, life on the job is dangerous. The difference that exists between the whites and the blacks in terms of social position, rights and duties on board the ship is clearly identified by Albert Memmi in his book *Racism*. For him, the difference forms social groups. So, it seems that the whites and blacks are divided into social groups in which those who impose the difference are in the superior race represented by the whites, while those who are differentiated belong to the lower race represented by the blacks.<sup>13</sup>

Despite their inferiority on board the ship comparing to the white race, the black Americans see themselves somehow different in comparison to other black men who work on the grasslands. Those black seamen are once slaves working for the land owners in the plantations. Thus, when they get the chance to be employed by the wealthy owners aboard the ships they come to discover a new but not really different social life. The fact that Twain says: “I will remark, in passing that Mississippi steamboat men were important in landmen’s eyes”<sup>14</sup> denotes how the blacks see the steamboat men. Thus, those who work on the boat

consider themselves superior comparing to those who work on plantations because they are different in terms of social position.

In addition, the style of clothing, and the standard arrangement of sleeping and eating differentiate the white workers from the black ones. The fact that Twain says in chapter twenty nine: “ragged nigger clothes”<sup>15</sup> suggests that there is no uniformity for all the workers. The African Americans are given special fit outs for identification. Moreover, segregation in eating is also demonstrated. Those blacks have no access to the eating rooms meant for the pilots and the captain.<sup>16</sup>

The manipulation of the blacks through the dimension of power attributed to the whites is omnipresent in the novel. The author deals with authoritative characters like the pilot Mr. Bixby who plays the role of the superior and manager on the boat. The reason is to demonstrate in a way the “false aristocracy” held by the white Americans<sup>17</sup>. This is evident through Twain’s words in chapter eighteen ‘I Take a Few Extra Lessons’ when he says:

The figure that comes before me oftenest, out of the shadows of that vanished time, is that of Brown, of the steamer ‘Pennsylvania’ the man referred to in a former chapter, whose memory was so good and tiresome. He was a middle aged, long, slim, bony, smooth-shaven, horse faced, ignorant, stingy... mote-magnifying tyrant .<sup>18</sup>

Here the pilot is referred to as a tyrant. In the quotation, the word tyrant suggests an oppressive person who maintains autocracy over the others. Furthermore, the author also attempts to protest against the authority that Mr. Bixby plays on him <sup>19</sup>. For instance, when the narrator says in chapter eight “perplexing lessons”: “My boy, you’ve got to know the shape of the river perfectly”<sup>20</sup>, he indicates how he is submitted to the rules and orders of Mr. Bixby in order to get his license as a steamboat pilot. According to him, the experienced pilot plays the role of the dictator. We can say that the author suggests a society made of

authoritative people who claim to be the superior class that take hold of higher ranks and influence the lower class.<sup>21</sup> This is also shown by Memmi when he claims that the act of defining an individual or a group involves the use of power. The difference between the whites and the blacks gives the way to the classification of the whites in the superior status so that they can control the blacks.<sup>22</sup>

To sum up, we may say that *life on the Mississippi* is a version of Twain's experiences in the Mississippi river and its vast lands. Through his novel, the writer does not bring only the manners, speech, and lifestyle of the people who exist in a specific geographical part in the United States, but also the racial stance of the white settlers and their antagonism against the slaves who are considered as a crucial element that characterize the Mississippi region.

### ➤ **Slavery under Regionalism in *Life on the Mississippi*:**

Slavery exists in the American continent for a long period of time. It is always associated with the South. As it is aforementioned, the Southern vast fertile lands are exploited on the basis of slavery. As such, the Mississippi region as a southern estate is always linked to slavery.

For Twain, the Mississippi river may refer to two suggestions; first, it is associated with nature where everyone can enjoy himself with the landscape. Second, it is part of civilization since it is a place where there is commerce and business. Moreover, due to the fertile soil of the region, slaves are needed at that place to work in the plantations that are important for agricultural and economic success.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the importation of farming products is required. Therefore, Steam boating is a direct result of the economic expansion of the Mississippi river. In this sense, The American writer Thomas Buchanan points out that steam boating is also an encouragement to slavery. Indeed, steamboats industries are developed in the south in a short period of time. As a result, The amount of slaves in the south is increased since they remain essential to agricultural activity. In fact, slaves are the only people in the south who produce goods through their daily work in the plantations. With the development of commerce, those slaves are brought by their owners to serve on steamboats.<sup>24</sup>

However, it seems that the steam boat world is not as civilized as it looks. In fact, the slaves are always subject to manipulation and hostility by the whites. They are considered as property. This is apparent in the novel according to Twain's depiction of the exploitation of the slaves aboard the ship and in the plantations.

The manipulation and the restriction of the black Africans on the ship are manifested in the novel. For instance, in chapter thirty entitled "SKETCHES BY THE WAY" Twain says:

We were getting down now into the migrating negro region. These poor people could never travel when they were slaves; so they make up for the privation now. They stay on a plantation till the desire to travel seizes them; then they pack up, hail a steamboat, and clear out. Not for any particular place;

no, nearly any place will answer; they only want to be moving. The amount of money on hand will answer the rest of the conundrum for them. If it will take them fifty miles, very well; let it be fifty. If not, a shorter flight will do.<sup>25</sup>

Here we may say that slaves are always seen by their owners as a property. The quotation also suggests that they are oppressed and have no liberty. According to Memmi, the inferior race is always oppressed and aggressed by the superior one. One form of this kind of aggression is slavery as it is shown in the novel.<sup>26</sup>

Mark Twain tells also in his novel about the system of the purchase and sale of the black Africans all along the Mississippi river. He claims that the slaves are transported along the river and sold to other slaveholders. For instance, in chapter 29 “a Few Specimen Bricks”, Twain shows how the slaves are sold to another quarter by saying:

But the stealing of horses in one state, and selling them in another, was but a small portion of their business; the most lucrative was the enticing slaves to run away from their masters that they might sell them in another quarter. This was arranged as follows: they would tell a negro that if he would run away from his master and allow them to sell him, he should receive a portion of the money paid for him, and that upon his return to them a second time they would send him to a free state, where he would be safe. The poor wretches complied with this request, hoping to obtain money and freedom; they would be sold to another master, and run away again to their employers; sometimes they would be sold in this manner three or four times, until they had realized three or four thousand dollars by them; but as, after this, there was fear of detection, the usual custom was to get rid of the only witness that could be produced against them, which was the negro himself, by murdering him and throwing his body into the Mississippi.<sup>27</sup>

Here, he demonstrates how the slaves become as articles of commerce, since they are exchanged between the slaveholders as products. The blacks are subject to physical and moral aggression by the whites. The quotation shows the way they are misled and given false promises by the sellers; and how they are put in trivial situations. Once they become needless, they are murdered. This ensures the fact that those African Americans are no more than valuable properties. Twain adds in chapter twenty eight entitled “Uncle Mumford Unloads”:

“And then the negro becomes a property in trust, when, they sold the negro, it only became a

breach of trust”<sup>28</sup>. This shows that the blacks are used to make wealth and improve the white’s social position.

The slaves also experience chastisement and otherness by the white superiors. They receive hard treatment on the ship. Sometimes, they even use to be thrown into the river. This is apparent in Twain’s words when he says:

The gang was composed of two classes: the heads or the council, as they were called, who planned and converted, but seldom acted; they amounted to about four hundred. The other class were the active agents, and were termed strikers, and amounted to about six hundred and fifty. These were the tools in the hands of the others; they ran all the risk, and received but a small portion of the money; they were in the power of the leaders of the gang, who would sacrifice them at any time by hanging them over to justice, or sinking their bodies in the Mississippi.<sup>29</sup>

This quotation shows the fact the blacks have no importance. It seems that they are not considered as human beings. For Memmi, otherness is the result of the negative definition attributed to the blacks. Since they are supposed to be different and inferior, they are used as tools in the hands of their superiors. Therefore, the blacks on the ship seem to be treated as no more than animals.<sup>30</sup>

Politically, the slaves are denied the right to vote and subjected to the laws of lynching. as an example, the writer says in chapter thirty four “Tough Yarns” :

He told many remarkable things about those lawless insects. Among others, said he had seen them try to vote. Noticing that this statement seemed to be a good deal of a strain on us, he modified it a little said he might have mistaken, as to that particular, but knew he had seen them around the polls ‘canvassing’.<sup>31</sup>

Here the author illustrates the fact that the blacks are not only deprived of their liberty, but also of their political rights in comparison to other races. Twain says in chapter twenty nine “A few Specimen Bricks”: It may be inquired, how it was that Murel escaped Lynch Law under such circumstances?”<sup>32</sup>. The word “Lynch” is significant; It may be one of the hard laws inflicted upon the blacks. In fact, Murel is a black character. He is supposed to receive such a punishment while breaking laws and work. This is widely indicated in Memmi’s book

*Racism* while he refers to the use of power. According to him, slavery which is one form of hostility is always related to physical domination that entails the exercise of power by the whites over the blacks. For instance, lynching is a significant example of violence against the blacks.<sup>33</sup>

To conclude, we may say that Mark Twain expresses the issue of slavery in the novel through the depiction of the manipulation and enslavement of the blacks in the plantation fields and on the boat. It seems through the analysis of the novel that the steamboating world as being, related the Mississippi region, is a world where the society is brutally inhumane. The novel shows the way the blacks are deprived of their

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Ruth. B. Hawes, “*Slavery in Mississippi*”, The Sewanee Review, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Apr. 1913), 223, accessed on April 17, 2016 10:36 UTC, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27532618>.
- <sup>2</sup> *ibid*, 224.
- <sup>3</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, (Walton street: Oxford University Press, 1883), 270.
- <sup>4</sup> John. E. Bassett, “*Life on the Mississippi: Being Shifty in a New Country*”, University of Nebraska Press, Western American Literature, Vol. 21, No. 1 (SPRING 1986), 40, accessed on May 15 2016 12:46 UTC <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43023914>
- <sup>5</sup> Ruth. B. Hawes, “*Slavery in Mississippi*”, The Sewanee Review, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Apr. 1913), 224-225, accessed: 17-04-2016 10:36 UTC, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27532618>.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 225.
- <sup>7</sup> John. E. Bassett, “*Life on the Mississippi: Being Shifty in a New Country*”, University of Nebraska Press, Western American Literature, Vol. 21, No. 1 (SPRING 1986), 41, Accessed on May 15 2016 12:46 UTC, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43023914>
- <sup>8</sup> Ruth. B. Hawes, “*Slavery in Mississippi*”, The Sewanee Review, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Apr. 1913), 226, accessed: 17-04-2016 10:36 UTC, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27532618>.
- <sup>9</sup> Luther . J. Adams, “*Review*”, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, The Journal of African American History, Vol. 91, No. 2 (Spring, 2006), pp. 214, Accessed: 03-02-2016 12:18 UTC, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20064073>
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 215.
- <sup>11</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, (Walton street: Oxford University Press, 1883), 99.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 207.
- <sup>13</sup> Albert Memmi, “*the Double consciousness*”: *Racism*, intr by Steve Marinot, (the university of Minnesota press: 2000)



<sup>14</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, (Walton street: Oxford University Press, 1883), 219.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, 207

<sup>16</sup> Luther . J. Adams, “Review”, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, The Journal of African American History, Vol. 91, No. 2 (Spring, 2006), pp. 215, Accessed on 03-February 2016 12:18 UTC, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20064073>

<sup>16</sup> John. E. Bassett, “*Life on the Mississippi: Being Shifty in a New Country*”, University of Nebraska Press, Western American Literature, Vol. 21, No. 1 (SPRING 1986), 40, Accessed on 16-may2016 12:46 UTC <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43023914>

<sup>17</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, (Walton street: Oxford University Press, 1883), 135.

<sup>18</sup> John. E. Bassett, “*Life on the Mississippi: Being Shifty in a New Country*”, University of Nebraska Press, Western American Literature, Vol. 21, No. 1 (SPRING 1986), 42, accessed on 16 May 2016 12:46 UTC <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43023914>

<sup>19</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, (Walton street: Oxford University Press, 1883), 53

<sup>20</sup> Luther . J. Adams, “Review”, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, The Journal of African American History, Vol. 91, No. 2 (Spring, 2006), pp. 216, Accessed on 03-February 2016 12:18 UTC, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20064073>

<sup>22</sup> Albert Memmi, *Racism*, trs. Steve Martinot (the university of Minnesota press:2000), 185

<sup>23</sup> Michael Vanhauwaert, *The importance of the Mississippi River within the Anglo Saxon narratives in America literature: crossing or following the river*, (Chent University, 2008.2009), 19

<sup>24</sup> Thomas C. Buchanan , *Black life on the Mississippi*, ( Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004) 6-17.

<sup>25</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, (Walton street: Oxford University Press, 1883), 99

<sup>26</sup> Albert Memmi, *Racism*, trs. Steve Martinot (the university of Minnesota press:2000), 185

<sup>27</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, (Walton street: Oxford University Press, 1883), 95.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 200.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 201.

<sup>30</sup> Albert Memmi, *Racism*, trs. Steve Martinot (the university of Minnesota press:2000), 185

<sup>31</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, (Walton street: Oxford University Press, 1883), 241

<sup>32</sup> Ibid ,200.

<sup>33</sup> Albert Memmi, “*the Double consciousness*”: *Racism*, intr by Steve Marinot, (the university of Minnesota press: 2000)

## Conclusion

After having analyzed the two novels, we have reached the conclusion that both Herman Melville and Mark Twain have treated the concept of Race and Slavery differently.

From our analysis of some characters in Herman Melville's *White Jacket*, we have proved that the ship is made of two distinct classes. The captains belong to the upper class which represents the superior race. In opposition, the sailors belong to lower class which stands for the inferior race aboard the ship. Thus, there is a large distinction between the captains and the sailors on the ship in terms of their race, social status and duties. We have also noticed that Melville has given a national and broad dimension to slavery, which is manifested in the ship through the flogging incidents. Thus, racism and slavery can be exercised over different races and in different forms. At the end, we have found that racism and otherness do not only exist between the captain and the sailors, but also between the sailors themselves in terms of their belonging.

In *life on the Mississippi*, race and slavery are linked to the black race. They are expressed in a direct way via the manipulation of blacks on the ship. The black race is estranged from the rest of the crew on the battleship. So, it is alienated and enslaved from the white superiors. Finally, we have deduced that Twain has given a regional dimension to slavery, because he specifies his demonstration of slavery on the Mississippi region. Therefore, race and slavery are revealed through the estrangement and the exploitation of the blacks on the steamboat.

While dealing with the tow concepts of race and slavery in Herman Melville's *White Jacket* and Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*, we met different issues worth of studying. Indeed, the two works can be approached through different perspectives. Since our research is limited to the study of race and slavery, we invite the readers who are interested in the study of these works to bring new sights to the novels by dealing with other issues such as the male aspects of the novels and the loss of identity.

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