

## A COMPARISON OF THE PRE-SOCIALIST AND SOCIALIST RECEPTION OF MARK TWAIN IN SLOVENIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The present article analyses the reception of Mark Twain and his works in serial publications on the territory that now constitutes the Republic of Slovenia over a period of circa one hundred years, i.e. it compares Twain's status in the pre-socialist era (until 1945) and the socialist era (1945–1991). The article addresses the extent to which the reception was affected by ideology and the contemporary political situation, as well as by the relations between the United States and the country of which the Slovenian territory formed part during a particular period of time.*

**Keywords:** Mark Twain, reception, ideology, literary translation, American literature

## UN CONFRONTO TRA LA RICEZIONE PRE-SOCIALISTA E SOCIALISTA DI MARK TWAIN IN SLOVENIA

### SINTESI

*Il presente articolo si propone di analizzare la ricezione di Mark Twain e delle sue pubblicazioni seriali nel territorio che rappresenta oggi la Repubblica di Slovenia, in un periodo di circa cent'anni, ovvero di porre a confronto lo statuto di Twain nel periodo presocialista (fino al 1945) e socialista (1945–1991). L'articolo esamina in quale misura la ricezione dell'autore è stata influenzata dall'ideologia, dalla situazione politica contemporanea e dalle relazioni tra gli Stati Uniti e il paese di cui faceva parte il territorio sloveno durante un periodo specifico.*

**Parole chiave:** Mark Twain, ricezione, ideologia, traduzione letterale, letteratura americana

## INTRODUCTION

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known by his *nom de plume* Mark Twain, is most famous across the world for writing *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), a classic of juvenile literature, and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), one of the most famous 19<sup>th</sup>-century *bildungsromans* and a contender for the title of the 'Great American Novel'.<sup>1</sup> These are the works for which he is principally known in Slovenia, where he has in recent decades been perceived primarily as an author for younger audiences; as Meta Grosman (2004, 144) notes, this even holds true for the latter novel.<sup>2</sup> The present paper will attempt to establish whether and to what extent this was also true of Twain's status in the past, i.e. over the period of around one hundred years preceding Slovenia's modern period: from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Twain's name sporadically began to appear in Slovenian publications, to 1991, when Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia. During this period, most of the territory that today constitutes the Republic of Slovenia formed part of different political entities: until the end of World War I, it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, during the inter-war period, it formed part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia,<sup>3</sup> where after the end of World War II, the monarchy was abolished, and a socialist regime was established in the country.

As representatives of reception aesthetics have asserted, readers actively shape the 'historical life' of literary works: upon publication of a certain text, they compare it to other works, and subsequently new generations of readers often re-interpret it (Jauss, 1970, 7–9; cf. Jauss, [1982] 1998, 16). In recent decades, Slovenian literary scholars have published numerous studies about the historical reception of American authors in Slovenia (e.g., Blake, 2003; Intihar Klančar, 2008; Kern, 2010; Potočnik Topler, 2017; Čerče, 2013; 2018; Zupan, 2015; 2020) and about various ideological issues related to the works of American authors (e.g., Šalamon, 2007; Burcar, 2018; Čerče, 2019; Virant, 2019). Since an analysis of Twain's reception in serial publications by Slovenian émigrés to the United States showed substantial differences dependent on the ideological orientation of a particular publica-

tion and the contemporary socio-political situation in the country (see Trupej, 2019a), one can presuppose that the same would also be true for Twain's reception in the Slovenian ethnic territory.

In the present article, Twain's work and its reception in the source culture will thus be outlined first in order to have a frame of reference, and then his Slovenian reception will be discussed. The analysis encompassed nearly 2,000 issues of serial publications in which the name 'Mark Twain' appears at least once. The article will thus establish how several generations of Slovenian readers, living in countries with different political systems, perceived Twain, and it will shed light upon the 'historical life' of some prominent works of his among Slovenians.<sup>4</sup>

## MARK TWAIN IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mark Twain first gained national attention in 1865 with the sketch "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog," which was later published in the collection *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches* (1867) (Railton, 2004, 3), but he truly became a household name with the travelogue about his trip to Europe and the Middle East entitled *Innocents Abroad* (1869), in which he showed irreverence towards European culture and satirized American behaviour abroad (Lamb, 2005, 469; cf. Rasmussen, 2007, 575). The book was a great commercial success: it sold 67,000 copies in its first year in print (Robinson, 1995, 27) and remained Twain's best-selling travelogue throughout his lifetime (Railton, 2004, 5). Encouraged by its success, Twain next wrote a prequel entitled *Roughing It* (1872), in which he described his experiences as a reporter and miner in the American West, where he spent a large part of the 1860s. Robert Paul Lamb summed it up in the following words:

*Roughing It thus commences as a flight from order, turns into a flight from freedom, becomes a quest for a social order in which meaningful freedom can flourish, and concludes with the narrator's realization of the futility of this search and his consequent alienation.* (Lamb, 2005, 470)

1 Peter Messent (2007, 12) states that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is "perhaps the most celebrated and best-known novel in American literary history". However, David E. E. Sloane (2001, 63) asserts that outside of the United States, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is better known than its more critically acclaimed sequel (cf. Rasmussen, 2007, 198).

2 This assertion is further substantiated by the fact that much of the contemporary Slovenian academic writing on *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was published in *Otrok in knjiga*—a journal devoted to children's and juvenile literature (see Trupej, 2019b, 336–338).

3 From 1918 to 1929, the country was officially called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

4 The reception was analysed by consulting the bibliography of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences (ZRC SAZU) and the Digital Library of Slovenia. Some of the articles about *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* were previously discussed in a paper about the Slovenian reception of select literary works containing racist discourse (Trupej, 2015, 218–221) and in a paper on the Slovenian reception of both novels (Trupej, 2019b); both papers are written in Slovenian.

This book was almost as successful as *Innocents Abroad* had been (Robinson, 1995, 27), but many decades later it received scrutiny because of its portrayal of Native Americans, as well as for not taking issue with the expansion of the United States westwards and the effects this had on the native population of the lands (Railton, 2004, 28; Lamb, 2005, 470, 472). On the other hand, *Roughing It* is notable because it condemned racism against Chinese immigrants (Railton, 2004, 27; Lamb, 2005, 471).

*The Gilded Age* (1873), Twain's first novel, was co-written with Charles Dudley Warner. It satirizes American society and so perfectly captures the *zeitgeist* of the post-Civil War decades in the United States that the era was later named after the title of the novel (Rasmussen, 2007, 144).

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), which is today perhaps best-known for its whitewashing scene, reflected "a nostalgic desire for a simpler and earlier way of life increasingly distant from the urban and technological developments of Gilded Age America" (Messent, 2007, 13; cf. Railton, 2004, 39–40). The first novel that Twain wrote by himself would go on to sell more copies than any other of his novels throughout his lifetime (Messent, 2007, 12) and has remained his best-selling book until the present (Rasmussen, 2007, 477). However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century it sometimes attracted criticism because it barely acknowledges the existence of slavery in the South and portrays the Native American antagonist named 'Injun Joe' in a stereotypical way (Sloane, 2001, 75, 78; Railton, 2004, 37, 41–43; Lamb, 2005, 478; Messent, 2007, 13).

Twain was extremely prolific in the first half of the 1880s, first publishing the travelogue *A Tramp Abroad* (1880) about his trip through southern and central Europe,<sup>5</sup> and following it up with *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881)—primarily intended for younger readers. He then published *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), which is a memoir—previously serialised as "Old Times on the Mississippi" (1875) in *Atlantic Monthly*—of his experiences as a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi river in the years leading up to the Civil War, as well as a travelogue recounting his return to the river in 1882. In this book, Twain criticizes several aspects of both the

antebellum and postbellum North and South (see Lamb, 2005, 473–476).<sup>6</sup>

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, whose socially outcast titular character proves himself a *mensch* amidst a slave-owning society by rejecting its racist views and helping an escaped slave to freedom, has always been a controversial book. Upon its initial publication in the United States in 1885, critics focused on the title character's juvenile 'delinquency' (Messent, 2007, 12) and the book's profanity (Sloane, 2001, 19; Rasmussen, 2007, 202), etc. Especially since the 1980s, the main topic of discussion regarding the novel has been race—some critics object to the frequent use of the racial slur 'nigger' and claim that the novel perpetuates certain stereotypes about black people (Sloane, 2001, 112, 116, 120–121; Rasmussen, 2007, 202–203).<sup>7</sup> For decades, the concluding chapters of the novel—in which the black protagonist becomes a pawn in Tom Sawyer's childish games—have also been heavily scrutinised (Sloane, 2001, 121–122; Lamb, 2005, 483–484; Rasmussen, 2007, 200).<sup>8</sup>

*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), a novel about a 'Yankee of the Yankees' who finds himself back in time at the court of King Arthur and tries to transform society according to his own vision, is a work of many contradictions (see Sloane, 2001, 123; Lamb, 2005, 487). It might have been interpreted by many of Twain's contemporaries as criticising Europe's medieval past (Railton, 2004, 76) and as an affirmation of American values; it was generally well-received by American critics (see Railton, 2004, 82). However, it can also be read as a dystopian condemnation of imperialism and technological progress (Lamb, 2005, 485–486; see also Messent, 2007, 16; Rasmussen, 2007, 59); modern readers are thus more likely to perceive it as a critique of the American *modus operandi* when coming in contact with other peoples (Railton, 2004, 84) and as Twain "*holding up a fun-house mirror to his own late-19<sup>th</sup> century America*" (Railton, 2004, 86).<sup>9</sup>

*Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), arguably Twain's last major novel, relates the life story of two men who had been switched as babies—one white and the other with 'one drop' of black blood. The novel was described by William E. Modellmog (2005,

5 Robinson (1995, 41) claims that this is the least interesting of all of Twain's travelogues (see also Sloane, 2001, 46).

6 Before publishing *Life on the Mississippi*, both Twain and the book's editor James Osgood deleted some passages that could have offended certain readers (Railton, 2004, 26; Rasmussen, 2007, 307).

7 Twain grew up in a slave-holding society and had no aversion to it, but later changed his views and advocated for racial justice (Lamb, 2005, 468; see also Sloane, 2001, 10; Rasmussen, 2007, 883, 886–887). Lamb (2005, 489) even claims that "*of all the white authors in this period, he was the one most fully immersed in and appreciative of African American culture and the one most at home in the company of African Americans.*"

8 Some commentators interpret the ending as a metaphor for the situation African Americans were facing in the post-Reconstruction era; they had been emancipated, but were in many respects still at the mercy of their former masters (Lamb, 2005, 483–484).

9 Peter Messent (2007, 7) speaks of a "*darkening imaginative vision on the author's part*".

403) as a “cynical masterpiece of racial passing [...] [which] mocks prevalent legal definitions of race based on the percentage of white or black ‘blood’ in an individual’s background” (see also Sloane, 2001, 157–158; Lamb, 2005, 488). It was published during a period of racial tension and was met with mixed reviews, which is also true of the novel’s modern reception (see Sloane, 2001, 146).<sup>10</sup>

Although Twain would go on to write several more full-length works, including *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, which he proclaimed to be his best work (Rasmussen, 2007, 179, 268), and the travelogue *Following the Equator* (1897), which is notable because in it Twain expressed anti-imperialist views (Robinson, 1995, 43; Railton, 2004, 28; Rasmussen, 2007, 141),<sup>11</sup> the shorter published works from his late period are more noteworthy. These were characterised by increasing pessimism and a lack of faith in humankind (Lamb, 2005, 485; cf. Robinson, 1995, 50; Rasmussen, 2007, 841).<sup>12</sup> For instance, he published anti-imperialist writings like “To the Person Sitting in Darkness” (1901) and “King Leopold’s Soliloquy” (1905) (see Lamb, 2005, 485; Rasmussen, 2007, 117, 552, 290–291), addressed religion in “Extracts from Adam’s Diary” (1904), “Eve’s Diary” (1906) and “Captain Stormfield’s Visit to Heaven” (1909) (see Sloane, 2001, 169–171) and expressed pessimistic views about the human condition in “The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg” (1899), “A Dog’s Tale” (1903) (see Sloane, 2001, 165–168) and the anonymously published *What is Man?* (1906); in the latter, he articulated his ideas on determinism (Railton, 2004, 113; Rasmussen, 2007, 841).<sup>13</sup>

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Twain was widely perceived as one of the greatest American realist writers alongside Henry James and William Dean Howells<sup>14</sup> (Sloane, 2001, 27; Krieg, 2006, 407). Twain gained further national admiration because

at the behest of his wife he paid off all the debts he had accrued through poor business decisions (Fisher Fishkin, 1995, 57–58; see also Rasmussen, 2007, 585–586). His reputation at home was also enhanced by his recognition abroad: he was an international celebrity (Railton, 2004, 97), who was received by several heads of state, including those of Austria-Hungary, the United Kingdom and Germany (Rasmussen, 2007, 583, 677, 942), as well as a highly respected man of letters—he was even awarded an honorary doctorate from Oxford University in 1907.<sup>15</sup> Twain’s status as an icon was reportedly reflected in the reactions to his death:

*When Samuel Langhorne Clemens died in 1910, newspapers carried the news around the world in boldface headlines. The people of the world had lost one of their greatest friends, the newspapers mourned, a friend who had used his authorial voice to battle imperialism, repression, inhumanity, and greed wherever he found it. [...] [H]e was an icon of humanity at large, demanding justice and a reasonable degree of freedom from want for all people, especially for the downtrodden people of color who were crushed under the heel of Imperialism and racial prejudice at home. (Sloane, 2001, 1)*

Many of the ‘Great Dark Manuscripts’ from the last two decades of Twain’s life—when exposing the depraved state of humanity became the *telos* of his writing—were only published after his death (Sloane, 2001, 11, 20, 27; see also Railton, 2004, 98; Messent, 2007, 9). Arguably, the most noteworthy among these is the unfinished novel published under the title *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger* (1916), in which Twain expressed his views on the futility of humankind’s existence (Lamb, 2005, 492; see also Sloane, 2001, 171–173).

10 In the previous decade, much of the post-Civil War legislation granting rights to African Americans had been invalidated, lynchings of African Americans were frequent in the 1890s, and two years after *Pudd’nhead Wilson* was published, racial segregation was upheld by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (Sloane, 2001, 158–159; see also Modellmog, 2005, 403–404)—African Americans were thus ‘separate but equal’, but in reality they were second class citizens.

11 While his later socially critical writings are better known, Twain addressed various social issues in a satirical manner ever since he was a newspaper writer in the 1860s; this earned him the sobriquet ‘Moralist of the Main’ (Sloane, 2001, 16; Rasmussen, 2007, 841). He would also continue to occasionally express his critical opinions in his travel writings (Robinson, 1995, 28).

12 The last two decades of Twain’s life were marred by the deaths of many of his close relatives, including his wife and two of his daughters—this was reflected in his writing (Sloane, 2001, 10–11; Lamb, 2005, 485).

13 Sloane (2001, 8) remarked that “*Twain’s quarrel with God was based on his distaste for a world in which death seemed a blessed relief from worse pain inflicted by chance or human depravity, and where man seemed a self-centered machine*” (cf. Rasmussen, 2007, 122).

14 Howells, whose sobriquet was ‘The Dean of American Letters’, made the following *ex cathedra* statement about Twain after his death (qtd. in Rasmussen, 2007, 735): “*Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes—I knew them all and all the rest of our sages, poets, seers, critics, humorists; they were like one another and like other literary men; but Clemens was sole, incomparable, the Lincoln of our literature.*”

15 Rudyard Kipling, who received both a *doctor honoris causa* from Oxford University alongside Twain and the Nobel Prize in Literature that very same year (Rasmussen, 2007, 732), had referred to Twain as “*the great and godlike Clemens*” in 1903 (qtd. in Rasmussen, 2007, 757). When Twain arrived in England to be honoured by Oxford University, George Bernard Shaw (qtd. in Twain, [1907] 2006, 612), another future Nobel Prize in Literature laureate, proclaimed him “*by far the greatest American writer*”.



In the decades following Twain's death, several literary scholars expressed the opinion that Twain would have published more daring works had he not been as influenced by his mother (Rasmussen, 2007, 608, 638–639) and especially had he not acquiesced to his wife's taste (see Fisher Fishkin, 1995, 53; Sloane, 2001, 7)<sup>16</sup>. Nevertheless, he remained very popular in the United States, and after World War II his canonization surged, with his status of an American institution largely being based on *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Budd, 1995, 19–24). Perhaps part of what makes him so enduringly interesting is that his life and work are full of contradictions:

*He was a foremost advocate of America, progress, and the nineteenth century, but also their most bitter and effective critic. He was both idealist and cynic, dreamer and pragmatist, believer and skeptic. He hated power and its abuses, but was fascinated by powerful men, and his works are filled with such characters, toward whom he shows a maddening ambivalence.* (Lamb, 2005, 469)

Despite this complexity, Rasmussen (2007, 179) remarked that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* generates as much commentary as all of Twain's other works together. The frequent (mis)interpretations of this novel led Robert Paul Lamb and G. R. Thompson (2005, 10) to proclaim Twain as "arguably America's best known and least understood major author".

#### OVERVIEW OF THE SLOVENIAN TRANSLATIONS OF TWAIN'S WORKS

During Twain's lifetime, translations of his works into Slovenian were limited to sketches and short stories appearing in newspapers. The first of his books to be translated was *The Prince and the Pauper*, which was published by Iv. Pr. Lampret in 1910 under the title *Kraljevič in berač*; new editions of this translation by Ferdo Kleinmayer were published after the end of World War I, i.e. in 1919 and 1921. The same year as the latter edition appeared, Ivan Mulaček's translation of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, entitled *Mali klatež Tom Sawyer*, was

published by Omladina. However, this novel would remain the last of Twain's full-length works to be translated until the end of World War II.<sup>17</sup>

In 1947, Mladinska knjiga published Milena Mohorič's re-translation of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, this time titled *Pustolovščine Toma Sawyera*. The following year, the same publishing house put out Pavel Holeček's translation of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, entitled *Pustolovščine Huckleberryja Finna*. In 1952, Slovenski knjižni zavod published Avgust Petrišič's translation of the short story "The Million Pound Bank Note" under the title *Bankovec za milijon funtov*. Next year, Pavel Holeček's re-translation of *The Prince and the Pauper*, entitled *Kraljevič in berač*, was published by Mladinska knjiga, which in 1957 also put out Holeček's translation of *Tom Sawyer, Detective*, titled *Tom Sawyer, detektiv*. In 1960, Mladinska knjiga published yet another re-translation of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, which was titled *Prigode Toma Sawyerja*; it was translated by Janez Gradišnik, and new editions of it were published in 1965, 1972, 1977, 1979 and 1984. The same publishing house put out Primož Kozak's translation of *Life on the Mississippi* in 1961 under the title *Življenje na Misisipiju*. The following year, Mladinska knjiga published Janez Gradišnik's re-translation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, this time titled *Prigode Huckleberryja Finna*; a new edition of it appeared in 1974. The year after it put out the latter edition, Mladinska knjiga published Jenki iz Connecticuta na dvoru kralja Arturja, Ferdinand Miklavc's translation of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. In 1977, the same publishing house put out a collection of some of Twain's shorter humorous writings; the book was titled *Humoreske* and translated by Branko Gradišnik. The same translator also re-translated *The Prince and the Pauper*, which was published under the title *Princ in beraček* in 1982 by Mladinska knjiga. This was the last translation of a full-length book of Twain's to be published during Slovenia's socialist period.

The fact that in the pre-socialist period only two translations of Twain's full-length works were published, while as many as eleven new translations (five of them re-translations) appeared during the socialist period—two in the first five years after World

16 Even before he married, i.e. as early as when preparing his travel letters for publication in the travel book *Innocents Abroad*, Twain altered a number of passages that could have potentially offended 'respectable society' (Railton, 2004, 14–15).

17 The lack of translations does not necessarily signify that during the time that the Slovenian territory was part of Austria-Hungary and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Slovenians did not read Twain. During the former period, several of his works were already available in German and can still be found in Slovenian libraries; furthermore, according to reports, some representatives of the Slovenian intelligentsia, for instance renowned prose writers Ivan Cankar (Löffler and Slodnjak, 1976, 520) and Ivan Tavčar (Lavrič, 1987, 423) read Twain's works. During the Yugoslav period, some of Twain's works were available in Serbo-Croatian, which was the *lingua franca* both during the time that Yugoslavia was a monarchy and during its socialist era.

War II, three in the 1950s, also three in the 1960, two in the 1970s, and one in the 1980s—indicates that the author's status differed significantly between the two periods.

#### TWAIN'S RECEPTION ON THE SLOVENIAN TERRITORY DURING THE PRE-SOCIALIST PERIOD

The first recorded mention of Mark Twain's name in Slovenian print dates back to 1880, when an anecdote about him was published in the liberal newspaper *Slovenski narod*.<sup>18</sup> During Twain's lifetime, this newspaper reported about Twain several more times, for instance about the amount of money he was supposedly earning each year,<sup>19</sup> his visit to the parliament in Vienna,<sup>20</sup> his presence at a press event in Budapest,<sup>21</sup> etc. During the same period, Twain was featured even more often in the conservative newspaper *Slovenec*; a search in the Digital Library of Slovenia reveals that by his death, Twain's name had appeared in *Slovenski narod* 16 times, while the number was as high as 50 in *Slovenec*—in many issues, translations of Twain's sketches or anecdotes about his life were published. For instance, when a translation of the sketch "The Capitoline Venus" was published, it was accompanied by a footnote with a short biography, in which Twain was referred to as the greatest American humorist.<sup>22</sup>

Several publications also honoured Twain's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. An article published in the Catholic literary magazine *Dom in svet* claims that he never—not even in the face of bankruptcy—lost his sense of humour, which supposedly helped him to make it to old age (N. N., 1905, 764). The literary magazine *Slovan* notes that Twain is one of the writers known across the world (c. r., 1905, 188), while in *Slovenski narod* he is named the greatest humorist in the world.<sup>23</sup>

Many articles about Twain appeared in the year of his death. In *Slovenski narod*, he is referred to as the greatest American humorist,<sup>24</sup> and he is lauded in similar terms in Štajerc and *Popotnik*.<sup>25</sup> In an

obituary published in *Straža*, Twain is named the most popular modern American writer, whose works have been translated into all 'cultured' languages; the article ends as follows: "The essence of Mark Twain's art is humour, which is expressed in comical storytelling and in funny, burlesque storylines with numerous contrasts. A common thread in his work is stinging sarcasm, with which he excoriates the bad habits of everyday life."<sup>26</sup> An article first published in *Narodni dnevnik* and later also in *Rdeči prapor* and *Gorenjec* includes a quotation from President William Howard Taft, who stated that Twain never wrote a line that children should not be allowed to see. The anonymous author of the article gives the following assessment of Twain's work: "His books are inexhaustible sources of laughter; they contain the haughtiest nonsense, the most unbelievable exaggeration and matchless pleasantries."<sup>27</sup> In *Učiteljski tovariš*, writer and pedagogue Ferdo Kleinmayr, writing under the pseudonym F. Plemič, names Twain as the most noted of all American authors and the only humorist whose death resonated across the world and whose works have been translated into many 'cultured' languages. He also heaps the highest praise upon *The Prince and the Pauper* and calls for this novel to be translated into Slovenian.<sup>28</sup> When the publication of the Slovenian translation of *The Prince and the Pauper* is announced in *Gorenjec*, it is erroneously stated that Twain was an English humorist whose humour has reached almost every nation.<sup>29</sup> An anonymous review of this translation published in both *Soča* and *Jutro* praises the way the story is written, and describes Twain as a man of the people.<sup>30</sup> In an article about Twain's legacy published later that year in the latter progressive newspaper, he is referred to as a humorist of world renown.<sup>31</sup>

In the years following his death, noteworthy articles discussing Twain were published only sporadically. In *Dom in svet*, he is named as the only notable American author besides James Fenimore Cooper who 'needs' to be translated into Slovenian (Gra-

18 *Slovenski narod*, 22. 9. 1880: Zoper slovensko revolver-žurnalistiko Brencelj-Aleševčevo, 1. If the name of the author of a certain article is not mentioned, the text is anonymous.

19 *Slovenski narod*, 2. 1. 1890: Nesreča Marka Twaina, 3.

20 *Slovenski narod*, 8. 11. 1897: Mark Twain v parlamentu, 3.

21 *Slovenski narod*, 29. 3. 1899: Proslava svobode tiska, 1–2.

22 *Slovenec*, 2. 7. 1898: Kako je prišla Venera na Kapitol, 2.

23 *Slovenski narod*, 9. 12. 1905: Mark Twain, 6.

24 *Slovenski narod*, 23. 4. 1910: Pisatelj Mark Twain, 5.

25 Štajerc, 1. 5. 1910: Mark Twain, 5; *Popotnik*, 1910, 31, 5: Pisatelj Mark Twain, 160.

26 *Straža*, 25. 4. 1910: Mark Twain umrl, 2. Quotes originally in Slovenian were translated into English by the author of the present article.

27 *Narodni dnevnik*, 26. 4. 1910: Humorist Mark Twain, 4; *Rdeči prapor*, 4. 5. 1910: Humorist Mark Twain, 4; *Gorenjec*, 14. 5. 1910: Humorist Mark Twain, 9. Taft's exact words are as follows: "He never wrote a line that a father could not read to a daughter." (Retrieved from: [http://twain.lib.virginia.edu/sc\\_as\\_mt/obitap.html](http://twain.lib.virginia.edu/sc_as_mt/obitap.html) (last access: 14. 2. 2019)).

28 *Učiteljski tovariš*, 29. 4. 1910: Mark Twain, 2.

29 *Gorenjec*, 4. 6. 1910: Kraljevič in berač, 3.

30 *Soča*, 16. 7. 1910: Kraljevič in berač, 5; *Jutro*, 19. 7. 1910: Kraljevič in berač, 2.

31 *Jutro*, 7. 11. 1910: Zapuščina Marka Twaina, 2.

dovin, 1913, 118). In *Mentor*, it is stated that Twain's writing was despised by critics as literature of the low kind, but that the public was enraptured with it. His works are called refreshing, his satire is praised and the level of fantasy in his works is compared to that of Edgar Allan Poe.<sup>32</sup> In an announcement of the publication of a new edition of the translation of *The Prince and the Pauper*, it is stated in *Slovenec* that the book is written in an educational and entertaining way, and that young people will benefit from reading it.<sup>33</sup> In *Ljubljanski zvon*, writer Fran Albrecht (1913, 52) compares the quality of Branislav Nušič's feuilletons and sketches to those of Twain.<sup>34</sup>

In 1920, virtually the same review of the newly translated *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is published in *Slovenski narod*, *Jutra*, *Slovenec* and *Naprej*. The anonymous reviewer refers to Twain as an unsurpassable storyteller, erroneously states that this publication marks the first Slovenian translation of one of his books, and praises its plot, characterisation and humour.<sup>35</sup> In a further article, the latter newspaper states that the novel would be entertaining to young people and would remind adult readers of their happy younger days.<sup>36</sup> Pedagogue and writer Josip Brinar (1921, 120) publishes a positive review of the novel in *Pedagoški zbornik*, and particularly praises the way the relationship between the protagonist and his love interest is portrayed. In a footnote accompanying the translation of the short story "The Million Pound Bank Note" in *Slovenski gospodar*, Twain is referred to as not merely the best American humorist, but the best humorist ever to have written in English.<sup>37</sup> However, reserved opinions about Twain's humour are also expressed occasionally; for instance, in *Slovenski narod*, an author with the initials 'M. Z.' states that Twain's type of humour left him/her cold,<sup>38</sup> while in a later article in the same newspaper his humour is characterised as typically American.<sup>39</sup>

To commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Twain's death, *Mariborski večernik »Jutra«* published a few anecdotes about him and claimed that he found plenty of humour in everything.<sup>40</sup> In an in-depth review of Upton Sinclair's monograph *Mammonart*, published

in the literary magazine *Modra ptica*, writer and literary critic Filip Kalan (1933b, 176–177) notes that Sinclair criticised Twain for not expressing his true opinions about contemporary American society in his works, instead settling for the role of a harmless 'clown', which enabled him to remain successful throughout his long a career as a writer. In a review of Sinclair Lewis's novel *Arrowsmith*, published in the same magazine, Kalan himself expresses a critical sentiment about Twain:

*However, Mark Twain was first and foremost perceived as a romantic, extravagant Yankee, who played the role of some kind of consul of American literature in "cultured" countries. Nowadays, his clown-like humour is merely evidence of Twain the desperate pessimist, and it inspires us with more pity towards the clown than with laughter at a joke—and if he had not created the brilliant urchins Tom and Huck, we would no longer be interested in the roaring of this literary lion.* (Kalan, 1933a, 216)

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Twain's birth did not pass unnoticed in Slovenian serial publications. In *Slovenski narod*, it is noted that no writer has ever been as revered in America as Twain; his popularity is even compared to that of the presidents George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Woodrow Wilson.<sup>41</sup> *Družinski tednik* publishes a few anecdotes about Twain and states that his humorous writings smite society's hypocritical morals and that there is much unflattering truth behind some of his famous statements. The article concludes with the following assessment:

*Twain did not reach the heights of artistic creation because he was missing something which his compatriot Edgar Allan Poe had too much of: a sense of tragic contrast. But that is not to say that Twain's satire of humankind will remain any less true; furthermore, his satire has the virtue of never offending the vanity of those at whom it is directed.*<sup>42</sup>

32 *Mentor*, 1913, 6, 3: Mark Twain, 58.

33 *Slovenec*, 15. 7. 1913: Twain, Kraljevič in berač, 6.

34 At the beginning of the next decade, *Gledališki list* also compares Nušič's writing to that of Twain, claiming that the latter "has realistic ideas, but when he develops and paraphrases them, he often goes astray into the fantastical and incredible, and loses his foothold and his starting-point" (M. P., 1921, 18).

35 *Slovenski narod*, 24. 12. 1920: Mark Twain: Mali klatež Tom Sawyer, 3; *Jutra*, 24. 12. 1920: Mark Twain: Mali klatež Tom Sawyer, 5; *Slovenec*, 25. 12. 1920: Mark Twain: Mali klatež Tom Sawyer, 4; *Naprej*, 27. 12. 1920: Mark Twain: Mali klatež Tom Sawyer, 2.

36 *Naprej*, 28. 12. 1920: Mark Twain: Mali klatež Tom Sawyer, 3.

37 *Slovenski gospodar*, 27. 4. 1922: Bankovec za milijon funtov zlata, 1–2.

38 *Slovenski narod*, 4. 4. 1924: Cezar in Kleopatra, 2.

39 *Slovenski narod*, 15. 11. 1925: Mark Twain, 3.

40 *Mariborski večernik »Jutra«*, 17. 4. 1930: Ob dvajsetletnici smrti Marka Twaina, 3.

41 *Slovenski narod*, 22. 1. 1935: 100 letnica rojstva Marka Twaina, 4.

42 *Družinski tednik*, 21. 2. 1935: Mark Twain in ameriški humor, 5.

In another issue of the same weekly, a few additional anecdotes about Twain are published, and he is lauded as the greatest American humorist,<sup>43</sup> while in yet another issue of *Družinski tednik* published in the same year, the events that led to Samuel Langhorne Clemens adopting the penname Mark Twain are related.<sup>44</sup> An article in *Življenje in svet* states that both Benito Mussolini and Franklin Delano Roosevelt were admirers of Twain. The author with the initials 'A. D.' states the following: "Mark Twain jested in a cold, American way, on account of his compatriots. He did not hesitate at all to ridicule their peculiarities and faults, which can of course also be found in other nations."<sup>45</sup> The magazine *Radio Ljubljana* refers to Twain as one of the greatest humorists in world literature, praises the humour of his characters Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and laments the lack of Slovenian translations of Twain's works, while many lower quality works were allegedly being translated.<sup>46</sup> In the bi-weekly newspaper for youth *Mlada pota*, it is mentioned that Twain opposed war and colonialism,<sup>47</sup> while in *Slovenski dom* he is referred to as the father of American humour and satire.<sup>48</sup>

In the late 1930s, Slovenians had a chance to see two films based on Twain's works. In an announcement that a film based on *The Prince and the Pauper* would be released, an anonymous writer in *Radio Ljubljana* states that Twain is the greatest American humorist, and that for a long time no director attempted to film one of his novels, on account of his humour being too refined and unapproachable. Furthermore, hope that a film version of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* would also be made is expressed in the article.<sup>49</sup> When announcing that *The Prince and the Pauper* would be shown in a local cinema, *Gorenjec* praises the story and lauds Twain as the 'greatest writer'.<sup>50</sup> *Slovenec* claims that the Norman Taurog directed film *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is one of the most beautiful examples of cinematic art, and that both the film and the book

are of great value,<sup>51</sup> while a further review in the same newspaper states that not for a long time has a film displayed "so many deep and noble sentiments, so much beauty and heartfelt goodness".<sup>52</sup> Similarly positive assessments of this film are also expressed several times in *Jutro*<sup>53</sup> and *Slovenski narod*,<sup>54</sup> while in *Radio Ljubljana* merely the storyline is given.<sup>55</sup> In yet another rave review of the film in *Mariborski večernik »Jutra«*, the novel on which the film was based is referred to as 'immortal'.<sup>56</sup>

A further notable mention of Twain in the late 1930s can be found in an article on the history of censorship published in *Vzajemna svoboda*, where *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* are referred to as 'immortal', and it is mentioned that while they are no longer banned from many libraries in the United States, the books had recently been banned in Brazil, because the dictatorial government there found communist tendencies in both of them.<sup>57</sup> After World War II broke out, and especially after Yugoslavia was occupied in 1941, Twain was featured in Slovenian serial publications far less often: a search in the Digital Library of Slovenia reveals that from 1941 to 1945, Twain's name appeared in less than one hundred issues of Slovenian serial publications, while in the five years preceding that period the number was higher than four hundred.

#### TWAIN'S RECEPTION ON THE SLOVENIAN TERRITORY DURING THE SOCIALIST PERIOD

In the first years after a socialist regime was established in Yugoslavia in 1945, Twain's reception in Slovenia was somewhat influenced by his reception in the Soviet Union. For instance, journalist Dušan Željeznov, credited as 'nv' in *Slovenski poročevalec*, designates Twain as one of the authors Soviet children should be encouraged to read, since his works would inspire them to strive for a better life.<sup>58</sup> The

43 *Družinski tednik*, 4. 7. 1935: Mark Twain in kralj, 3.

44 *Družinski tednik*, 28. 11. 1935: Dvojno rojstvo Marka Twaina, 1.

45 *Življenje in svet*, 30. 11. 1935: Mark Twain, 240–241.

46 *Radio Ljubljana*, 8. 12. 1935: Stoletnico Marka Twaina, 7.

47 *Mlada pota*, 18. 1. 1936: Mark Twain proti vojni in nasilju, 7.

48 *Slovenski dom*, 30. 4. 1936: Čudna pota dovtipov, 4.

49 *Radio Ljubljana*, 11. 4. 1937: Mark Twain v filmu, 138.

50 *Gorenjec*, 14. 1. 1939: Šmartin pri Kranju, 4.

51 *Slovenec*, 16. 3. 1939: Mark Twain in njegov znameniti roman »Pustolovščine Toma Sawyerja«, 7.

52 *Slovenec*, 18. 3. 1939: Pustolovščine Toma Sawyerja v kinu Unionu, 7.

53 *Jutro*, 20. 2. 1939: Twainova dela v filmu, 8; *Jutro*, 15. 3. 1939: Pustolovščine Toma Sawyerja v filmu, 3; *Jutro*, 18. 3. 1939: Pustolovščine Toma Sawyerja v kinu Unionu, 4.

54 *Slovenski narod*, 15. 3. 1939: Pustolovščine Toma Sawyerja v filmu, 4; *Slovenski narod*, 18. 3. 1939: Pustolovščine Toma Sawyerja v kinu Unionu, 4.

55 *Radio Ljubljana*, 19. 3. 1939: Iz filmskega sveta, 4.

56 *Mariborski večernik »Jutra«*, 15. 4. 1939: Tommy Kelly, nov filmski zvezdnik, 9.

57 *Vzajemna svoboda*, 1938, 2, 11: Iz zgodovine cenzure, 191–192.

58 *Slovenski poročevalec*, 20. 7. 1947: Pišite za mladino!, 5.



same year a translation of an article by A. Fadjejev (i.e. prominent Soviet writer Alexander Fadeyev) about Soviet literary criticism was published in *Novi svet*—Twain is one of the authors discussed, and as the following excerpt illustrates, his reception was highly ideologically charged:

*Mark Twain is undoubtedly a realist, who truthfully portrays and criticizes the sanctimony, hypocrisy, greed and ignorance of American society, he truly shows the contradictions of poverty and wealth. At the same time, there is no doubt that Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn and the heroes of the Mississippi have many romantic characteristics, and these figures carry the positive natural ideals of Mark Twain. And it is not a coincidence that these works have survived for so long and that they are children's favourite reading. Everybody knows that this peculiarity of Twain's arose from the liberation struggle of the northern against the southern states. And everybody knows that in the United States such merry and authentic books have never again existed. (Fadjejev, 1947, 633–634)*

A slightly adapted translation of the above passage was published in *Obzornik* in a review of the recently published translations of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*—without Fadeyev being credited.<sup>59</sup> Željeznov (credited as 'PJ') published a review of the newly re-translated *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in *Slovenski poročevalec*,<sup>60</sup> and when shortly afterwards a translation of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was published, he expanded this text for a review in *Mladinska revija*. He asserts that in these novels, Twain addressed slavery, political systems, purism, conventionalism, conservatism, and so on. The reviewer cites part of the above statement by Fadeyev, claims that American publishing houses refuse to reprint some of Twain's works because they are too democratic and progressive, and do not portray the United States in a favourable light. Furthermore, Željeznov alleges that primarily in Western Europe, only pro-American works of questionable quality are being translated; he therefore advocates for Twain's works to be translated into Slovenian. In the concluding remarks, the reviewer poses the question whether the two newly published translations are not more suitable for adult readers than for young people, and

suggests that an adequate introduction be added in order to explain the historical circumstances to younger readers (Željeznov, 1948, 444–445). In a review of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in *Ljudski tednik*, an author with the initials 'S. R.' states that Twain "truthfully portrays and criticizes the sanctimony, hypocrisy, greed and egoism of contemporary American society",<sup>61</sup> while in a review of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* published in the same weekly, an author with inverted initials similarly claims that in this novel Twain "lashes out at the hypocrisy and egoism of 19<sup>th</sup>-century American society".<sup>62</sup> In a lengthy review of the latter novel in *Ljudska pravica*, an author under the pseudonym ALPA asserts that the struggle against slavery is the main theme of the story, and introduces Twain as a critic of contemporary American society:

*Twain writes under the guise of innocent humor. Only seldom does he make use of sarcasm, and only with irony does he successfully expose the iniquities that began to emerge with the increasing advancement of capitalism. He is an expert at describing the aspirations of the petty bourgeoisie and in ridiculing the religious and secular representatives ruling in his homeland.*

When describing the plot, the reviewer states that it addresses the injustice, backwardness, religiosity, sensationalism, etc. of contemporary American society, and in the continuation of the review asserts that the novel will have a positive influence on the morality and humanity of young readers. In the closing remarks, ALPA criticises the illustrations as too comical for this kind of text.<sup>63</sup> An author credited as 'fj' in *Slovenski poročevalec* has a similar opinion about the illustrations, laments the lack of an introduction to the translation, and gives the following assessment of the content:

*The writer wittily makes fun of faults like narrow-minded puritanism and the false morality that is not reflected in actions, especially not in the treatment of black slaves, he ridicules the hypocritical Christianity of Sunday schools, the narrow-mindedness and backwardness of his compatriots, their gullibility and slovenliness, and he also makes fun of the foolish and senseless remnants of the Middle Ages and their customs, such as blood feuds.*<sup>64</sup>

59 *Obzornik*, 1948, 3, 5: Pustolovščine Huckleberryja Finna, 222.

60 *Slovenski poročevalec*, 13. 1. 1948: Mark Twain: Tom Sawyer, 5.

61 *Ljudski tednik*, 29. 1. 1948: Berimo nove knjige, 7. The source of this quote was Fadeyev's article referred to above—the original author is not credited.

62 *Ljudski tednik*, 22. 4. 1948: Berimo nove knjige, 7.

63 *Ljudska pravica*, 15. 4. 1948: Pustolovščine Huckleberryja Finna, 5.

64 *Slovenski poročevalec*, 15. 5. 1948: Mark Twain, Pustolovščine Huckleberryja Finna, 4.

An anonymous author in *Primorski dnevnik* strongly condemns American publishers for allegedly flooding the book market with low quality, anti-Soviet publications, which distort reality and do not allow people to know the truth, while suppressing (i.e. not re-printing) some of the works by Twain, who, according to the author of the article, laid the foundations of American critical realism. In the continuation of the article, the author describes how in a satirical piece entitled “A Defence of General Funston,” Twain criticises American imperialism in the Philippines, while in an essay entitled “To the Person Sitting in Darkness” he “strongly condemns American imperialist policies in Europe, and lashes out against missionaries who are pulling poor blacks and Chinese ‘out of the darkness’ and thereby paving the way for imperialists and their slave civilisation.”<sup>65</sup> A further anonymous article in the same newspaper entitled “From the Literary History of American Imperialism” claims that Twain exposed the vileness of American imperial politics and quotes Twain’s condemnation of President Theodore Roosevelt and General Leonard Wood for the ‘Moro Crater Masacre’—in part, the original quote reads:<sup>66</sup>

*We are by long odds the most ill-mannered nation, civilized or savage, that exists on the planet to-day, and our President stands for us like a colossal monument visible from all the ends of the earth. He is fearfully hard and coarse where another gentleman would exhibit kindness and delicacy. Lately, when that slimy creature of his, that misplaced doctor, that dishonoured governor of Cuba, that sleight of hand Major General Leonard Wood, penned up six hundred helpless savages in a hole and butchered every one of them, allowing not even a woman or a child to escape, President Roosevelt—representative American gentleman, First American gentleman—put the heart and soul of our whole nation of gentlemen in the scream of delight which he cabled to Wood congratulating him on this “brilliant feat of arms,” and praising him for thus “upholding the honor of the American flag.” (Twain, [1906] 2013, 9)<sup>67</sup>*

After the ‘Tito–Stalin Split’ in 1948, Yugoslavia began moving closer to the West; thus, it is not surprising that the criticism of the United States began to be substantially less severe, which is also reflected in the reception of Twain’s works. For instance, in *Mladina*, writer and editor Ivan Potrč asserts that the greatness of Mark Twain’s humour lay in the fact that it was intended not only to entertain, but often also to severely criticise society’s faults, for example its treatment of disfranchised children or black people.<sup>68</sup> *Ljudska pravica* published Ernest Hemingway’s famed statement about the status of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain’s magnum opus, in the American literary system:<sup>69</sup>

*All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn. If you read it you must stop where the Nigger Jim is stolen from the boys. That is the real end. The rest is just cheating. But it’s the best book we’ve had. All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since. (Hemingway, [1935] 2002, 23)<sup>70</sup>*

In *Novi svet*, poet and translator Bogomil Fatur (1951, 648) asserts that Twain fought against “the puritan narrow-mindedness of his country and his era”, and that *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was an epic story from the early American period. He goes on to claim that with Twain an idyllic era of American literature came to an end, and that by the time the next generation of writers established itself, the country had made “its enormous step into the abyss of modern, immense capitalism”. In *Naša sodobnost*, Fatur (1953, 748) rephrases part of the above statement, and in the continuation of the article (Fatur, 1953, 753), he mentions that Ernest Hemingway considered *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* the greatest prose work in American literature.<sup>71</sup>

As Yugoslavia’s relations with the USSR began to normalise after Stalin’s death in 1953, Twain was again used to criticise the West more often, although articles about him and mentions of him are generally not as lengthy and ideologically charged as had previously been the case. For instance, both *Ljudska pravica* and *Primorski dnevnik*

65 *Primorski dnevnik*, 28. 9. 1948: Mark Twain na indeksu, 3.

66 *Primorski dnevnik*, 12. 10. 1948: Iz literarne zgodovine ameriškega imperializma, 3.

67 While Twain used the term ‘savages’ when referring to the Moro people, in the translation *Ljudje* (i.e. ‘humans’ or ‘people’) was used. This is in line with the tendency to censor discourse that could be deemed racist in translations during the socialist period (see Trupej, 2017, 336).

68 *Mladina*, 10. 12. 1949: Mark Twain: pisatelj sonca in smeha, 5.

69 *Ljudska pravica*, 3. 11. 1951: Pogovor o ameriški književnosti, 5.

70 Similarly to the aforementioned quotation from Twain on American atrocities in the Philippines, ‘Nigger Jim’ is translated as črni Jim, i.e. ‘black Jim’.

71 In the same magazine, literary critic and translator Rapa Šuklje (1961, 963–964) later also asserts that Hemingway’s writing was heavily influenced by Twain, especially by *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

condemned Senator Joseph McCarthy's efforts to suppress Twain's works,<sup>72</sup> while in two similar reviews of *The Prince and the Pauper* published in *Slovenski poročevalec* and *Delavska enotnost*, it is stated that the novel portrays the poverty, violence and suffering of the poor in the England of old.<sup>73</sup> *Ljudska pravica* and later—in a slightly shortened version—*Slovenski Jadran* publish a review of the film *The Million Pound Note*, stating that Twain was a satirist and a philosopher, who in the short story on which the film was based, criticised the narrow-minded, greedy bourgeoisie of British capitalist society; furthermore, the reviewer with the initials 'S. K.' laments that the film softened the story's satire.<sup>74</sup> The magazine *Tovariš* describes this film in similar terms.<sup>75</sup> A short review of *Tom Sawyer, Detective* in *Slovenski Jadran* states that the novel is well-written and includes social satire.<sup>76</sup> In *Slavistična revija*, literary scholar Emil Štampar (1958, 79) claims that in the Soviet Union, Twain was perceived as an opponent of the tsarist regime, while in *Slovenski Jadran*, British writer Jerome Klapka Jerome is referred to as a worthy successor to both Charles Dickens and Mark Twain because of his humour and his championing of social justice.<sup>77</sup>

Yugoslavia became one of the most prominent members of the Non-Aligned Movement in the 1960s, and Twain continued to be used to criticise the West, although the criticism was never again as severe as it had been in the first post-War years. In a review of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in *Sodobna pota*, an anonymous author states that this novel addresses the relations between white and black people.<sup>78</sup> An article in the most widely-read Slovenian newspaper *Delo* claims that Twain was not merely a humorist, but also a social philosopher, who criticised American society, European feudalism, war-profiteering, capitalism, etc. It is furthermore stated that in the 1920s, the

Lost Generation did not hold Twain in as high esteem as previous generations, but that this changed later and that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* began to be regarded as one of the greatest American novels.<sup>79</sup> In the same newspaper, someone writing under the pseudonym 'Jaš' laments that the severe social satire of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* got lost in the film based on this novel.<sup>80</sup> *Rudar* publishes a positive review—which earlier also appeared in *Delo* in a slightly shortened version—of *Life on the Mississippi*; the book is described as both a typical travelogue and a typical artwork of Twain's, which includes moral and social satire.<sup>81</sup> In a further article in *Delo*, there is a report on Twain's anti-religious writings.<sup>82</sup> In a review of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, an anonymous author in *Knjiga* states that through the protagonist's eyes, we are witnessing the "dark sides of the American civilizing movement".<sup>83</sup> In *Naši razgledi*, writer Jože Snaj describes this novel as a boys' adventure story,<sup>84</sup> while in *Slovenski Jadran* it is stated that this is one of the works that brought Twain immortality, and Ernest Hemingway's opinion about it is once again mentioned.<sup>85</sup> In *Primorski dnevnik*, writer France Magajna presents Twain as the greatest American humorist and substantiates this claim by anecdotes from Twain's life.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, an article in *Tovariš* recounting Twain's life story focuses on his path as a humorist, but also explains how the tragedies he suffered in his later years affected his worldview.<sup>87</sup> *Ljubljanski dnevnik* publishes a translation of an article by American scholar of Russian literature Edward Wasiolok (i.e. Wasiolek), in which he discusses Twain's canonised status in the Soviet literary system.<sup>88</sup> In a review in *Delo*, film critic and journalist Stanka Godnič criticises a play based on *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, deeming its anti-racist agenda too obvious,<sup>89</sup> while *Dolenjski list* publishes excerpts from Twain's *Autobiography*—in the accompanying note he is hailed as the greatest American humorist.<sup>90</sup>

72 *Ljudska pravica*, 5. 7. 1953: McCarthyjeve grmade, 4; *Primorski dnevnik*, 1. 8. 1953: Kaj bodo tudi v ZDA zagorele grmade?, 3.

73 *Slovenski poročevalec*, 16. 8. 1953: Kraljevič in berač, 6; *Delavska enotnost*, 28. 8. 1953: Kaj bomo brali, 6.

74 *Ljudska pravica*, 3. 2. 1955: Bankovec za milijon funtov, 6; *Slovenski Jadran*, 9. 9. 1955: Te dni bomo gledali „Bankovec za milijon funtov“, 12.

75 *Tovariš*, 4. 2. 1955: Bankovec za milijon funtov, 123.

76 *Slovenski Jadran*, 4. 7. 1957: Tom – mali detektiv, 5.

77 *Slovenski Jadran*, 23. 10. 1959: Jerome Klapka Jerome: Trije možje se klatijo, 5.

78 *Sodobna pota*, 1960, 5, 8: Prigode Toma Sawyerja, 363.

79 *Delo*, 1. 4. 1960: Nocoj Mark Twain, 6.

80 *Delo*, 4. 3. 1961: Pustolovščine Toma Sawyerja, 6.

81 *Rudar*, 1. 2. 1962: Mark Twain Življenje na Missisippiju, 6; *Delo*, 14. 1. 1962: Zbirka mladinske knjige, 4.

82 *Delo*, 9. 9. 1962: Objava antireligioznih esejev Marka Twaina, 5.

83 *Knjiga*, 1962, 10, 11/12: Prigode Huckleberry [sic] Finna, 202.

84 *Naši razgledi*, 22. 12. 1962: O novih knjigah, 487.

85 *Slovenski Jadran*, 1. 1. 1963: Mark Twain: Prigode Huckleberryja Finna, 16.

86 *Primorski dnevnik*, 19. 11. 1963: Burkež Mark Twain, 3.

87 *Tovariš*, 1. 5. 1964: Smeh skozi solze, 88–89.

88 *Ljubljanski dnevnik*, 15. 7. 1964: Rusi imajo svojo podobo o Ameriki, 9–10.

89 *Delo*, 28. 4. 1967: Velika pustolovščina Toma Sawyerja, 5.

90 *Dolenjski list*, 8. 5. 1969: Avtobiografija, 17.

Only a few noteworthy articles about Twain were published in the 1970s. In *Delo*, a writer with the initials 'R. V.' claims that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is one of the books that brought Twain immortality and states that in it, the author addressed the sad truth that slavery was once regarded as something completely legitimate and natural in the United States.<sup>91</sup> In the newspaper *Glas*, Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer are described as classic characters of juvenile literature,<sup>92</sup> while an anonymous article in *Informativni fužinar* claims that Twain's humorous sketches are both funny and educational.<sup>93</sup>

Twain's reception in the last decade before Yugoslavia fell apart is livelier. In an article published in *Delo* commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Twain's death, philosopher Marko Uršič focuses on Twain's life experiences before he married and settled down in 1870. He does, however, proclaim Twain to be the 'American Homer' and asserts Huckleberry Finn to be the author's most well-rounded literary figure.<sup>94</sup> *Primorski dnevnik* reports on a play about Tom Sawyer being performed by the pupils of a local primary school.<sup>95</sup> In the supplement of *Delo*, Rapa Šuklje notes that in the United States, Twain is widely regarded as a major writer, while in Slovenia, his works—even *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, his most important socially critical piece of writing—are considered to be juvenile literature. Šuklje further claims that Twain "discovered a lot of thallium among the gold of European culture".<sup>96</sup> When Jože Snoj reviews a play based on Twain's "Eve's Diary" in *Delo*, he uses the terms conventional, conformist, dogmatic and sentimental to describe the male protagonist.<sup>97</sup> In an open letter published in the same newspaper, actor and writer Dušan Mevlja criticizes Snoj's review of this play, claiming that the reviewer failed to grasp the meaning of the story.<sup>98</sup> The same year, *Delo* reports that there are frequent demands for censoring *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* across the United States,<sup>99</sup> while next year the same newspaper reports on a particular primary school in the United States having forbidden the

reading of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, owing to the relationship between the two protagonists allegedly being 'latently racist'.<sup>100</sup> A further article in *Delo* commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Twain's birth states that that *Life on the Mississippi* is considered to be Twain's best work, but that he is best known for his characters Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. Furthermore, the anonymous author of the article praises Twain's writing style and claims that he described the world and people with considerable warmth and humour.<sup>101</sup> The following year, an article by writer and art critic Tatjana Pregl in the same newspaper states that in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Twain portrayed contemporary American puritan society.<sup>102</sup> In *Slovenski vestnik*, a film based on the latter novel is described as very interesting and exciting.<sup>103</sup> In the academic journal *Acta Neophilologica* (1987), literary scholar Meta Grosman discusses *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: she comes to the conclusion that the protagonist perceives reality differently to his peers and has a pluralistic conception of the world because he grew up without the constant presence of his parents and because he frequently associated with African Americans. In *Delo*, writer and translator Branko Gradišnik describes Twain as the 'father of the American novel' because of the way he employed language in 'The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County' and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.<sup>104</sup> In *Naš čas*, poet and journalist Ivo Stropnik, writing under the pseudonym Toni Prosvik, states that after Twain started to publish satires in which he ridiculed society, some people began to challenge him.<sup>105</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In the last three decades of his life, Twain was sporadically mentioned in the Slovenian press, where he was not primarily presented as a man of letters, but as a humorist, a public figure and a *bon vivant*; there are no major differences in the manner of writing about Twain in left-wing and right-wing

91 *Delo*, 21. 6. 1975: Osem novih BISEROV iz svetovne književnosti za mladino, 31.

92 *Glas*, 23. 9. 1977: Ta teden na TV, 10.

93 *Informativni fužinar*, 1977, 14, 24: Mark Twain, Humoreske, 16.

94 *Delo*, 19. 4. 1980: Mojster peresa in ladijskega krmila, 28.

95 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1. 6. 1980: Naše šolske prireditve, 7.

96 *Delo*, 6. 2. 1981: Mark Twain: Med nami, lažnivci, n.p.

97 *Delo*, 19. 3. 1981: Humor z brado v protokolu, 11.

98 *Delo*, 28. 3. 1981: Humor z brado v protokolu, 18, 30.

99 *Delo*, 12. 8. 1981: Cenzurirani književniki, 6.

100 *Delo*, 16. 4. 1982: Latentni rasizem, 13.

101 *Delo*, 28. 11. 1985: 30. november, 8.

102 *Delo*, 10. 7. 1986: Arhitektonsko stilizirane realistične ilustracije, 9.

103 *Slovenski vestnik*, 23. 12. 1987: Tom Sawyer, 9.

104 *Delo*, 21. 1. 1988: Jezikovna policija postavlja sanitarne kordone, 8–9.

105 *Naš čas*, 31. 5. 1990, Nomen est omen!, 11.



publications. The reactions to his death and the few noteworthy articles published in the first few years afterwards also indicate that Twain was not perceived as one of the preeminent literary figures of his day during the time that the Slovenian territory was part of Austria-Hungary. Further proof of this is the fact that it is only after Twain's death that the first book of his, i.e. *The Prince and the Pauper*, was translated into Slovenian and did not receive many reviews.

After the conclusion of the Great War and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was translated into Slovenian and received some attention in the press, but it would remain the only book of Twain's translated during the inter-war period, when Slovenia was part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Twain was evidently perceived as mainly an author for the young; he was frequently referred to as a great storyteller and a comedic *tour de force*, and most articles about him seemed to lack an ideological agenda. Only rarely were Twain's works discussed in-depth, and the differences between how he was portrayed in left-wing and right-wing publications are not as pronounced as was the case in the serial publications of Slovenian immigrants in the United States from the same period (see Trupej, 2019a, 144–149). However, when the Slovenian territory was occupied by the Axis powers during World War II, Twain was markedly less present in the press than had previously been the case.

After a socialist system was established in Yugoslavia in 1945, Twain became one of the most prominent foreign writers in the Slovenian press. While during the previous periods, relations between the United States and Austria-Hungary / the Kingdom of Yugoslavia did not seem to have substantially affected Twain's reception, in the first post-war years he was presented as a sort of literary *spiritus agens* of anti-Americanism; as a result, reviews of his works were frequently used to condemn capitalism, organized religion, racism, imperialism and other aspects of American society; sometimes this is true even for works that were not particularly socially critical, for instance *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*—a novel painting a rather idyllic picture of the antebellum American South.

Soon after Yugoslavia broke off relations with the Eastern Bloc in 1948 and aligned itself more closely with the Western Bloc, criticism of the West when discussing Twain's works became less severe. After Yugoslavia's relations with the Soviet Union began to normalize in the mid-1950s, criticism of the West again became more pronounced, although the condemnations were never again as harsh as they had been in the first post-war years. The fact that Yugoslavia co-founded the Non-Aligned Movement was probably an additional factor affecting which themes were foregrounded when writing about Twain and his works in the 1960s.

In the 1970s, only a few noteworthy articles on Twain were published in Slovenian serial publications. Perhaps this is partially because—since several of Twain's important works had been translated or re-translated in the previous decades—not many new translations of his works were published in that decade.<sup>106</sup> However, new editions of existing translations continued to appear along with adaptations in which Tom Sawyer is the main character; this indicates that younger readers were increasingly the intended audience for Twain's works; a gradual reversal to the *status quo ante* as far as Twain's perception is concerned thus begins to take place.<sup>107</sup>

In the 1980s, Twain is again discussed in serial publications more frequently and—although he did not enjoy a status nearly as high as in the United States—several statements by prominent literati suggest that he was still held in high regard.<sup>108</sup> Thus, it appears that it is only *after* the socialist period ends and Slovenia transforms its social system and changes its political allegiances<sup>109</sup> that Twain's reception comes full circle, and he again begins to be portrayed primarily as a humorist and an author for youth, which is how he was perceived during the pre-socialist period, when his works were not used to further ideological agendas and not much attention was paid to the socially critical aspects of his writing.

We can therefore conclude that Twain has always had a much higher status in socialist Slovenia than in its pre-socialist era. The substantial differences between his reception during the two periods in question are a testament to the extent to which ideology can influence the perception of a particular *œuvre littéraire*.

<sup>106</sup>Some of Twain's major works, including *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and *The Innocents Abroad*, have not yet been translated into Slovenian.

<sup>107</sup>Three new editions of the translation of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and four short adaptations with Tom Sawyer as the protagonist were published during this decade, while the translation of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was reissued only once—it has not been published since, which speaks volumes about the difference in the status of these two novels in Slovenia.

<sup>108</sup>The *argumentum ad infinitum* between those who hail *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as anti-racist and those who advocate removal from libraries and reading lists is barely acknowledged even in this decade. While this issue is less prominent in Slovenia because of the nation's limited experience with black people, the fact that some racist elements were softened in Slovenian translations of the novel may also have been a somewhat significant factor (see Trupej, 2017, 329–330, 332).

<sup>109</sup>After declaring independence from socialist Yugoslavia in 1991, Slovenia became a parliamentary democracy and did not join the Non-Aligned Movement. Instead, it sought membership in the European Union and NATO, eventually joining both in 2004.

PRIMERJAVA RECEPCIJE MARKA TWAINA V SLOVENIJI PRED IN MED  
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## POVZETEK

V obdobju, ko je bilo slovensko ozemlje del monarhij, tj. sprva Avstro-Ogrske in nato Jugoslavije, ni večjih razlik glede Twainove recepcije. Tako v konservativnih kot tudi v progresivnih serijskih publikacijah je običajno predstavljen kot izjemen pripovedovalec in humorist ter mladinski avtor, članki o njem pa večinoma nimajo jasne ideološke usmeritve in prav tako ni razvidno, da bi na recepcijo občutno vplivali odnosi katere od obeh monarhij z ZDA. Poglobljene razprave o Twainovem literarnem opusu so precej redke, razlike v tem, kako pogosto so bili zapisi o pisatelju objavljeni v desno usmerjenih in levo usmerjenih publikacijah, pa prav tako niso tako izrazite, kot je to npr. značilno za publikacije slovenskih izseljencev oz. zdomcev v ZDA v obdobju med obema svetovnima vojnama (gl. Trupej, 2019a, 144–149). V obdobju, ko je bilo slovensko ozemlje med drugo svetovno vojno okupirano, pa je bil Twain v slovenskem tisku sicer prisoten bistveno manj kot prej. Po vzpostavitvi socialističnega sistema v Jugoslaviji leta 1945 je Twain postal eden najvidnejših tujih pisateljev v slovenski publicistiki. Zlasti v prvih povojnih letih so se njegova besedila pogosto uporabljala za obsodbe organizirane religije, kapitalizma, rasizma, imperializma oz. kolonializma, političnega sistema v ZDA ipd. Ko je Jugoslavija leta 1948 prekinila odnose z vzhodnim blokom in se bolj približala Zahodu, so zapisi o Twainu postali občutno manj kritični do Združenih držav. Po začetku postopne normalizacije odnosov s Sovjetsko zvezo sredi petdesetih let in po tem, ko je Jugoslavija leta 1961 soustanovila Gibanje neuvrščenih, so se Twainova besedila spet bolj pogosto uporabljala za kritiko ZDA, čeprav obsodbe niso bile nikdar več tako ostre kot v prvih povojnih letih, ko je bila Jugoslavija tesno povezana s Sovjetsko zvezo. V sedemdesetih letih je bil Twain v serijskih publikacijah prisoten občutno manj kot dotlej in tudi na podlagi prevodov njegovih del, ki so bila objavljena v tem desetletju, je razvidno, da je bil že v nekoliko večji meri obravnavan kot avtor za mlajše bralce. Vendar se je v osemdesetih letih o njem spet pisalo pogosteje in bolj poglobljeno, iz česar je mogoče sklepati, da je vse do konca socialističnega sistema Twain zavzemal občutno bolj središčni status v slovenskem literarnem polisistemu kot v predsocialističnem obdobju, ko so bile nekatere izmed tem, ki jih je ta ameriški klasik obravnaval, precej manj relevantne.

**Ključne besede:** Mark Twain, recepcija, ideologija, prevodna književnost, ameriška literatura

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