Short Stories

Everyday Use

In the late 1960s or early 1970s, black American life and identity were undergoing a radical transformation. How does *Everyday Use* hinge on the tension created when these two worlds come together?

Alice Walker was a prolific writer of Afro-American literature. Her story ***Everyday Use*** appeared in her short story collection, ***In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women*** (1973). The story is set in the late 1960s or early 1970s. It was a period of **radical transformation for the black community**. During this period, the Afro-American community were trying to redefine and retake the control over their social, cultural and political identities. With President Johnson's signing of **the Civil Rights Act of 1964,** ever type of discrimination based on "race, color, religion, sex, or national origin" in employment practices and public accommodations had been banned. At that time different writers and scholars became interested in exploring **the role of the black community** in the history of the America. Alice Walker was one of those people. She, like, many black Americans, uninspired by **the bleak history of slavery** of the black community in America, tried to reconnect with her roots.

The time during which ***Everyday Use*** is set is characterized with the emergence of many black ideologies, some peaceful and some militant. The groups like the **Black Panther** and the **Black Muslim** were created to resist the white supremacy in the society. After enduring slavery and discrimination for centuries, the Black community had finally attained freedom but the road to equality was still far ahead. During this era, a new generation of the Black community emerged, some of them were eager to break with the horrors of the past while others were unable to emerge from the specter of poverty and inequality. Everyday Use hinges on the tension when these two worlds collide. According to a critic,

"***In the story, Walker examines the intense, serious, sometimes militant rhetoric that characterized some strains of the rising black consciousness movement. But she gives her most intense scrutiny to the often tenuous bonds between family members".***

In *Everyday Use*, Alice Walker portrays **the harmony as well as the conflicts within the Afro-American community**. The story focuses on an encounter between members of the rural Johnson family. This encounter––which takes place when Dee (the only member of the family to receive a formal education) and her male companion return to visit Dee's mother and younger sister Maggie––is essentially an encounter between two different interpretations of, or approaches to, African-American culture. In the story, we come across two different world views in the characters of Mama and Dee**. Race and racial identity** is the center of the story. Mama's idea of racial identity remains unchanged throughout her life. The only deviation to her status-quo comes in the form of her daughter Dee.

The character of Dee in the story is actually an **emulation of the Culture Nationalists** who believed that the promotion of the Black culture was the only way for ensuring the freedom and equality for the community. Dee never accepted her place in the rural America. She was always conscious of her skin being a tone lighter than other Black girls. And therefore, she always had higher expectations than those of others.

"Dee wanted nice things… She was determined to stare down any disaster in her effort".

She rejects her ancestral quilts in order to distance herself from her upbringing. She is always trying to appear different from her family. She went to Augusta school and used her knowledge to assert her dominance over her mother and sister. Walker uses expressive antagonisms:

"She washed us in a river of make-believe, burned us with a lot of knowledge".

Walker goes on with words like "pressed" and "shove" to show Dee's attitude. She is determined to gain knowledge and be different from her ancestors. She uses her reading ability like a weapon to show her family how well educated she is and how minor they are in their ignorance. At college, she tries to legitimize her identity within African nationalism and adopts a Ugandan name, Wangero because she cannot ***"bear it any longer, being named after the people who oppress".*** Unlike Dee's

new take on identity, Mama's sense of identity is rooted in her immediate history and heritage. While trying to better herself by embracing her roots, Dee always subjugates Mama and Maggie by suggesting that they do not know the value of their own culture- one in which they still live.

Unlike Dee, her mother has an intimate relationship with her physical surroundings. She and Maggie have a certain attachment to their home. On the other hand, Dee hated that place. For Mama and Maggie, their yard is ***"not just a yard. It is like an extended living room***". This proves that unlike Dee, Mama and Maggie did not see their heritage and culture as an object of property, but as an expression of their existence. Dee's mother is aware of her surroundings and herself. She ***is "a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands***". In other words, she is familiar with the reality of her body, and even finds comfort in the way that ***her fat keeps [her] hot in zero weather***. She is at home with herself and accepts who she is. On the other hand, Dee goes on a venture to find a new identity.

The biggest irony lies in Dee's rejection of her real heritage for a broader, yet limited, cultural ideal. By juxtaposing Dee with her sister and mother, Walker suggests Dee's new identity is simply a superficial rebranding of herself. She strives to wear her heritage like a unique treasure but ends up shrouded in imitation. Dee's appreciation for items in Mama's home as artifacts of her heritage is similarly misguided. She insists a quilt, once viewed as a symbol of her family's poverty, is now imbued with the spirit of her ancestry. She treats everything as an object of curiosity and fails to realize that the real value of the things comes from their everyday use and not from treating them like an object to be showcased. To Dee the quilts represent not a family but a type of people and history she has long divorced herself from.

The action and physical attributes of Walker's characters show where they stand in relation to their cultural identity. Dee's male companion**, Hakim-a-Barber**, has taken a Muslim name and now refuses to eat port and collard greens, thus refusing to take part in the traditional African-American culture. Walker may have created this character with new, younger, more militant generation in mind. Hakim dismisses the labor-intensive live of other Black Muslims. He is unwilling to commit himself to the hard work of the cause and faith he claims to have embraced. Thus, both Dee and Hakim have misunderstood as well as misapplied the Black ideals being promoted during that time. On the other hand, Mrs. Johnson ***has man-working hands and can kill a hog as mercilessly as a man***. This detail entails a rough lifestyle. The scars on Maggie's body are the inscriptions of her ruthless journey of life. Meanwhile, the quilts which Mrs. Johnson has promised to give to Maggie represent their culture and heritage. These quilts were ***"pieced by Grandma Dee and then Big Dee***", both figures in family history who, unlike the present Dee, took charge in teaching their culture and heritage to their offspring.

In a nutshell, Dee represents a world view which fails to acknowledge the true essence of culture and heritage and she treats her origin in the sense of art objects. She fails to realize that the culture she has long removed herself from is not detached from daily life. She fails to acknowledge the fact that the value of the things like quilts and butter dish comes out of their everyday use and that the cultivation and maintenance of heritage are necessary to each social group's self-identification. After all, culture is nothing but home to its people, just as Mrs. Johnson's yard is home to her. Thus, Walker culminates the conflicts and tension within the Afro-American community in the portrayal of the characters of Mrs. Johnson and Dee.

"A Rose for Emily"

Beyond its lurid appeal and somewhat Gothic atmosphere, Faulkner's "ghost story,"(A ROSE FOR EMILY) as he once called it, gestures to broader ideas, including the tensions between North and South, complexities of a changing world order, disappearing realms of gentility and aristocracy, and rigid social constraints placed on women. Elaborate

The era after the Civil War in America is referred as Antebellum era. This era was marked by the booming plantation and slavery-based economy in the South. And the subsequent ***destruction*** of that economy once the war was over and **Reconstruction** was under way. Bustling cities gained more

bustlers, creating a new urban culture that was shocking to the rural majority of the antebellum American population. The growth of these anonymous metropolitan centers of vice and materialism—as many perceived them—created a great deal of anxiety throughout the period.

Much of the antebellum South was rural and, in line with the plantation system, largely agricultural. By its very nature, plantation life gave rise to a rigid **social hierarchy**—one in which wealthy white farmers were treated like **aristocrats**, middle-class and poor whites like **commoners**, and **blacks** like **property**.

"A Rose for Emily" is set in the South after the Civil War (the **"postbellum"** South), after slavery had been abolished and plantation life had collapsed. With their society in economic ruins, however, Southerners did not give up on their aristocratic culture but rather clung to it nostalgically, and yearned to return to a past more glorious in memory than it ever was in reality.

This historical situation underlies Faulkner's depiction of the Southern town of Jefferson, Mississippi in *"A Rose for Emily."* The very **epitome** of the **Old South** in the short story is Colonel Sartoris, an insidious reminder of the **old social hierarchy** of the South and who in 1894 excuses Miss Emily from paying taxes to Jefferson on a chivalric impulse. In addition, Grierson**'s family** is presented as having been once wealthy and still highly respected in their Southern community; they quite likely belonged to the **aristocratic class** of slaveholders before the Civil War, though their fortune in the postbellum world has since dwindled. Still they ***"held themselves a little too high for what they really were."*** Nonetheless, the family is as proud of its aristocratic heritage as Sartoris is, so much so that Emily's father refuses to let his daughter become romantically involved with anyone of a lower social class. The townspeople of Jefferson not only approve of but seem to protect and uphold such rigid adherence to their old traditions. It is evident through their behavior towards Miss Emily:

"Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town…"

Even after Miss Emily's father dies and Miss Emily comes to think of herself as being socially better than her poverty would justify, the townspeople nonetheless tolerate her haughtiness because she is a living monument to their glorified past, just as significant to them in this respect as the Grierson family house itself, or the cemetery where Civil War soldiers are buried. That's why they all went to her funeral, some out of curiosity and some out of respect.

"When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument".

Through the mysterious figure of Emily Grierson, Faulkner conveys the struggle that comes from trying to **maintain tradition** in the face of widespread, **radical change**. Also, it reflects the **decaying** of the **societal tenets** of the South in the 1930s. Jefferson is at a crossroads, embracing a modern, more commercial future while still perched on the edge of the past, from the **faded glory** of the Grierson home to the town cemetery where anonymous Civil War soldiers have been laid to rest. Emily herself is a tradition, steadfastly staying the same over the years despite many changes in her community. She is in many ways a mixed blessing. As a living monument to the past, she represents the traditions that people wish to respect and honour; however, she is also a burden and entirely cut off from the outside world, nursing eccentricities that others cannot understand.

"She carried her head high enough—even when we believe that she was fallen. It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson; as if it had wanted that touch of earthiness to reaffirm her imperviousness."

She even bizarrely denies her father's death, as though incapable of psychologically surviving the

financial and social change his death entails for her. ***"She told them that her father was not dead. She did that for three days…"***

Emily lives in a **timeless vacuum** and world of her own making. Refusing to have metallic numbers affixed to the side of her house when the town receives modern mail service, she is out of touch with the reality that constantly threatens to break through her carefully sealed perimeters. Garages and cotton gins have replaced the grand antebellum homes. The aldermen try to break with the unofficial agreement about taxes once forged between Colonel Sartoris and Emily. Miss Emily's stubborn insistence that she ***"pays no taxes in Jefferson"*** and her mistaking the new mayor for Colonel Sartoris brings into question whether her acts of resistance are a **conscious act of defiance** or a result of a **decayed mental stability**. This new and younger generation of leaders brings in Homer's company to pave the sidewalks. Although Jefferson still highly regards traditional notions of honour and reputation, the narrator is critical of the old men in their Confederate uniforms who gather for Emily's funeral. For them as for her, time is relative. The **past is not a faint glimmer** but an **ever-present, idealized realm**. Emily's macabre bridal chamber is an extreme attempt to stop time and prevent change, although doing so comes at the expense of human life.

The death of Homer, if interpreted as having been a murder, can be seen in the context of the **north–south clash**. Homer, notably a northerner, is not one for the tradition of marriage. No doubt she belongs to the aristocratic class while he is a laborer from north whom even town people not approve off as a suitable match for Miss Emily. ***"We are glad that Miss Emily would have an interest, because the ladies all said, "Of course a Grierson would not think seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer." But there were still others, older people, who said that even grief could not cause a real lady to forget noblesse oblige—without calling it noblesse oblige."***

In the framework that his death was not an accident, but a murder on the part of Emily, Homer's rejection of the marriage can be seen as the North's rejection of Southern tradition. The South ends its relations with the North in retaliation. Emily continuing to sleep next to Homer's body can be seen as the south holding on to an ideal that is no longer feasible.

Control and its repercussions are treated as a persistent theme throughout the story. Members of Jefferson's Board of Alderman, whether old, gallant and nostalgic for the Old South like Sartoris or young and business-like such as the newer generation of authorities, all have something in common: they are all male and govern over the **exclusion of women**. Faulkner foregrounds this dynamic when he has his narrator recall Sartoris's law requiring all black women to wear their aprons in public, and dramatizes it in Miss Emily's relationships with her father. For even in private life, the men in Jefferson exert **full control** over women's lives, as Emily's father does in telling his daughter which suitors she may and may not allow to court her. ***"None of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such."*** Indeed, social repression, stiff propriety, and a **fetishization** of female virginity characterize the **Southern culture** portrayed in the story.

However, one reason Ms. Emily draws so much attention to herself in town is because she often **resists patriarchal authority**. Even courting Homer Bell is a subtle act of rebellion on Miss Emily's part, against her society's social conventions and, presumably, the wishes of her dead father.

Given how **pre-determined** the course of her life has been—not only by the Jefferson patriarchs but also by the Civil War and its aftermath and the code of conduct enforced on her by her society—it is no wonder that Miss Emily attempts to **take control** of her own life, to live on her terms, to be the **master** of her fate. Her ultimate gesture to this end, of course, is the murder of Homer and her lifelong marriage, as it were, to his **rotting, dust-suffused corpse**—instead of letting Homer leave her, Miss Emily asserts **absolute control** over his life, literally turning him into an object which she can

manipulate at will. ***"The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him."***

The madly desperate, horrific nature of this crime speaks to just how oppressed and stifled Miss Emily is, as well as to the huge **denial of freedom** which her society subjects her to. That her great aunt Wyatt went mad too suggests that Miss Emily's is not an isolated case. Although it would be misguided to insist on this comparison past a certain point, the **subjugation of women** in this story quietly reflects the even more **virulent subjugation of black Americans** at the hands of the **white South**, as Tobe's presence in the story quietly reminds us.

In short, Faulkner's **'ghost story'**, *"A Rose for Emily"* as he once called it, not only deals with the complexities of a changing world order, disappearing realms of gentility and aristocracy but also highlights rigid social constraints placed on women and tensions between North and South.

Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town . . .

This quotation appears near the beginning of the story, in section I, when the narrator describes Emily's funeral and history in the town. The complex figure of Emily Grierson casts a long shadow in the town of Jefferson. The members of the community assume a proprietary relationship to her, extolling the image of a grand lady whose family history and reputation warranted great respect. At the same time, the townspeople criticize her unconventional life and relationship with Homer Barron. Emily is an object of fascination. Many people feel compelled to protect her, whereas others feel free to monitor her every move, hovering at the edges of her life. Emily is the last representative of a once great Jefferson family, and the townspeople feel that they have inherited this daughter of a faded empire of wealth and prestige, for better or worse.

The order of Faulkner's words in this quotation is significant. Although Emily once represented a great southern tradition centering on the landed gentry with their vast holdings and considerable resources, Emily's legacy has devolved, making her more a duty and an obligation than a romanticized vestige of a dying order. The town leaders conveniently overlook the fact that in her straightened circumstances and solitary life, Emily can no longer meet her tax obligations with the town. Emily emerges as not only a financial burden to the town but a figure of outrage because she unsettles the community's strict social codes.

Colonel Sartoris is a gallant Southern gentleman (and former Confederate Army colonel) who chivalrously, if condescendingly, excuses Miss Emily from paying her taxes as though she were a damsel in distress. He knows that Miss Emily is a proud woman of genteel upbringing, though, and that in her pride she would refuse charity, hence he invents the story. It suggests to the reader that not only does Emily's father see her as a masterpiece, but also the entire town views Emily as a naïve daughter of the town. the subsequent generations, following that of Colonel Sartoris, felt no such obligation to Miss Emily, and the town began to demand its taxes. He had never documented this dispensation, and she began to receive tax bills. A committee of townspeople was sent to the house to meet with her and explain her tax debt, but Miss Emily denied this obligation and sent them away, managing to pay no taxes to the date of her death.

Since, there is no coherent social or institutional bond that would lead people to care for Emily Grierson; instead, the town has an ad hoc obligation to her. This causes pity, but also contempt.

"A Good Man is Hard to Find"

What is the ironic significance of the title "A Good Man is Hard to Find" by Flannery O'Connor?

"A Good Man Is Hard to Find" first published in 1953, is among the most famous stories by Georgia writer **Flannery O'Connor.** It is the tale of a vacation gone wrong. The tone of this story is set to be one **irony**. The story is filled with grotesque but meaningful irony.

In this short story, a southern family is taking a vacation to Florida, but the **real** journey takes place inside the **family's lives.** One question that comes up in the story is **what the definition of a good man is** and how there are so few of them left in the world. Many of the characters in the story **think** of themselves as **good people** based on moral codes that they stand by. These moral codes are deeply flawed, however, leaving each character blinded by their self-righteousness.

Also as wildly original as this story is, O'Connor didn't invent the title "A Good Man is Hard to Find." It's the **title lyric of a song** composed and performed by Eddie Greenback during the time of piano rolls (1918). O'Connor probably expected her readers to know the song or at least the lyric that comes next:

A good man is hard to find
You always get the other kind

And that certainly seems to be true in this story. The title is also a line of dialogue; it comes into play when **Red Sammy** and the **grandmother** are talking about how no one is trustworthy anymore. Red Sammy asserts that a good man is hard to find, and the grandma heartily agrees. She doesn't, unfortunately, know that she'll **"get the other kind"** in short order.

The two characters who most believe that **"a good man is hard to find"** as Red Sammy says to the grandmother, are both quite **deceived** about their goodness, and the title helps to draw attention to the *irony* of their misconceptions.

The grandmother applies the label **"good"** indiscriminately, blurring the definition of a **"good man"** until the label loses its meaning entirely. She first applies it to **Red Sammy** after he angrily complains about the general untrustworthiness of people. He asks her why he let two strangers charge their gasoline—he's been swindled—and the grandmother says he did it because he's "a good man." In this case, her definition of "good" seems to include **gullibility, poor judgment,** and **blind faith,** none of which are inherently "good."

She next applies the label **"good" to the Misfit.** After she recognizes him, she asks him whether he'd shoot a lady, although he never says that he wouldn't. Because being a lady is such a significant part of what the grandmother considers moral, the Misfit's answer proves that he doesn't adhere to the same moral code as she does. **The grandmother desperately calls him a good man,** as though appealing to some kind of underlying value that the Misfit wouldn't want to deny. Her definition of "good," however, is skewed, resting almost entirely on her claim that he doesn't have "common blood."

The grandmother's wanton application of the label "good man" reveals that "good" doesn't imply "moral" or "kind." **For the grandmother, a man is a "good man" if his values are aligned with her own.** Red Sammy is "good" because he trusts people blindly and waxes nostalgic about more innocent times, both of which the grandmother can relate to. The Misfit is "good" because she reasons, he won't shoot a lady, a refusal that would be in keeping with her moral code. Her assumption, of course, proves to be false. The only thing "good" about the Misfit is his consistency in

living out his moral code of **"no pleasure but meanness."**

The grandmother also bases her sense of "**goodness**" on her race, her outer appearance, and her sense of religion. She is careful to wear her "white cotton gloves" on this little excursion so that people will know that she is a lady, yet she also **makes derogatory comments** about a **black child** she spies from her car window. Here she reveals her **racist side,** but she continues to ***believe*** that she is a good person, yet all of her actions indicate otherwise.

Thus, the irony lies in the very title of the story and it seemed true by the actions and conversations of the **grandmother** with others. Her definition of **"good"** is in fact what she thinks is being good for 'her' or what is not.

Mark Twain

"Doing everything right does not necessarily lead to success". How far is it true in the context of Mark Twain's stories included in your course?

Mark Twain is acknowledged by many to be one of the most prolific and influential writers in history. Twain revolutionized the writing industry and immortalized his legacy by creating his style of writing that was **whimsical** and **real**. In Mark Twain's short stories, **'The Story of the Good Little Boy'** and **'The Story of the Bad Little Boy'**, the author **mocks** the fiction of romantic writing, portrays the reality that humans are inherent **'evil'** beings, and blatantly reminds us that reality is **cruel** and **brutal** to those who do not necessarily deserve it.

In **"The story of the Good Little Boy"** by Mark Twain is a clear example of how we try out things and how we eventually end up with the unexpected results. The little boy is depicted to be very **obedient** and **respectful** to his parents. The young man follows commands from his parents no matter how inconvenient they are to him. ***"Jacob Blivens always obeyed his parents, no matter how absurd and unreasonable their demands were".*** The young boy makes a lot of sacrifices to attain his course to appear in the Sunday school books. Mark Twain satirizes the story of the little man to show that it is not necessary that our hard work will always bear fruits. The young boy considered reading Sunday school books and was opposed to playing marbles. He points out that, ***"he was so honest that he was simply ridiculous."***

Once he finds a boy who ransacked apples from a tree. He presumed him to be a bad boy. He told him about his misbehaviour and the bad consequences that will come along. But the situation alternated and he was the one who has to pay the price for being righteous. The boy goes on to realize that everything turned out the opposite of the way it was depicted. It was not the good little boys who were rewarded and never broke their legs or had bad things happen to them, but the other way round. ***"They always had a good time, and the bad boys had the broken legs; but in his case there was a screw loose somewhere, and it all happened just the other way."*** The protagonist in the story goes further to make himself appear reasonable to people by assisting a blind man who had been misled by bad boys. This is a good effort as he perceives to be complimented for his acts of goodness but in return the blind man issues a warning to the young boy and he ***"whacked him over the head with his stick and said he would like to catch him shoving him again, and then pretending to help him up"***.

Moreover, once he tried to help a stray dog by giving him food and a place to live but it also turned against him and instead of that dog's '**imperishable gratitude**', ***"the dog flew at him and tore all the clothes off him".*** He saw that when he tried to do good, bad things happened to him. When he tried to help people or animals, they were not grateful or bless him. And as a result, he was the one

who got hurt. By giving the examples of the good deeds done by Jacob Blivens, Mark Twain is implying that, no matter how good you apply philosophical theories of life, it is not apparent that they are going to work your way as you may perceive. It is ironic how the little young man tries to apply what he learns in the books, and to his disappointment, they all turn against him. Many are times that we try all means to define the kind of life that we aspire to live. We strive as much as possible to attain this course despite the hardships we may face along the way.

Once, he ran out on a raft to warn the bad boys who were sailing in a boat because he knew from his reading that boys who went sailing on Sunday invariably got drowned, but a log turned with him and slid him into the river. He caught cold and lay sick abed nine weeks. ***"But the most unaccountable thing about it was that the bad boys in the boat had a good time all day, and then reached home alive and well in the most surprising manner."***

It is just that he desires nothing more than to be absolutely good, just as the "good" characters in the stories he reads. He sees all these characters being good and having amazing things happen to them in their lives, and this is his wish. But, unfortunately, everything in Jacob's life ends in **catastrophe** and **despair**. He tries with all his strength to be good, but the bad children always get the better of him; yet he still believes that he can be like the characters in his books. Finally, one day he is walking by a factory and sees some other children picking on some dogs. When he attempts to help them, he ends up taking the blame for it. Then, the factory explodes, sending pieces of him and the dogs flying. In this way he perished without fulfilling his greatest wish, to be honored as a good little boy, just because he was trying to do good and was caught by an Alderman who thought he was the one perpetrating the bad deed. ***"This boy always had a hard time of it. Nothing ever came out according to the authorities with him."***

However, people who do good deeds don't always have good events occurring for them. Just because someone is very kind and does their best to be **"good"** with all the best citizenship traits, doesn't mean that they'll live a good life. The story explains the **contradiction** between people's views and the world and how the world actually is. Humans make mistakes but still try to do their best in everything, especially in good deeds. However, even those who do wrong often bring success from it.

On the contrary, in Twain's **"The story of the Bad Little Boy"**, Jim was a bad little boy, who inexplicably and persistently got away with causing trouble and being full of vulgar. He did many bad things such as stealing his mother's jam, filling up the vessel with tar, stealing Farmer Acorn's apples, and telling many untruthful lies. Although Jim, not Jacob, somehow led a **charmed life** free of any burden of getting caught in the midst of his deceitfulness, he remained **"the Bad Little Boy"** of the village. Jim, unlike in the Sunday-School books, by no means, drowned when he went boating and never got struck by lightning when he went fishing. ***"He didn't get drowned and didn't get struck by lightning"***. After performing all of these evil acts, the bad little boy neither changes his way nor faces any long-term **repercussions** or **karma** for his actions. No doubt everything about Jim was naughty and mischievous but luck sheltered his being. ***"Jim bore a charmed life --- Nothing could hurt him".*** The moral of this story is simply entitled, **"Not everything in life is fair." Not all good gets rewarded and not all bad gets chastised.**

The good little boy was made a symbol to reflect the people who try to help others and be good but often meet an end, others do not believe they necessarily deserve. This is emphasized when he meets his end while trying to disarm an explosive on a dog. The dream to be a better person, there are always things or conditions that do not favor this route. On the contrary, bad people who are rightfully hated and looked at with disgust, but they still receive the rewards and riches. The bad little boy ends up becoming successful financially. ***"He got wealthy by all manners of cheating and***

rascality --- and belongs to the legislature." Reality has proven countless times that criminals and scam artists can be far more successful and lucrative than 'good' people. Thus, doing everything right does not necessarily leads to success. The honesty of the protagonist in the story reveals that the right people also have failures in their lives. Therefore, young people should not be discouraged in the course of achieving their dreams. Challenges are bound to occur in our efforts to make our ambitions.

However, both of the stories are true **reflections** of the **often-depressing reality.** The two stories depict **irony** in what people in the real world expect. In the story of the good little boy, we anticipate him to receive good things from his right actions. It is important to note that it is not always that our good efforts will draw good things on our way. The sad truth is that good people do not get what they **'deserve'** in life. Whether it be a financial success, a loving family, or general happiness, a lot of **'good'** people simply do not end up with the happy ending that authors often write about. **Reality does not care if you are good or bad**. But this does not necessarily imply that we should cease from doing good, but we should be ready to receive whatever that comes our way.

Twain revolutionized the writing industry and immortalized his legacy by creating his style of writing that was whimsical and real. The pair of short stories followed two boys who lived in the same town and came from similar backgrounds. However, while one boy tries to imitate the good people in the Bible, the other is openly and honestly evil. They both take different paths in life and their endings were not conventional at the time in writing. Twain used the stories to mock and parody the romantic style of writing at times, but the stories have a deeper meaning than it lets on. In Mark Twain's short stories, the author mocks the fiction of romantic writing, portrays his reality that humans are inherent 'evil' beings, and blatantly reminds us that reality is cruel and brutal to those who do not necessarily deserve it.