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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MARK TWAIN AND XUDOYBERDI TO'XTABOYEV'S WORK A STUDY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIGNITY IN "THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER" AND "THE YOUNG MAN WITH FIVE CHILDREN"

Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature student of

Omonova Iroda, Ravshanbekova Asalxon

Scientific supervisor: **Azzamova Nigora Rajabboyevna**

Senior teacher of SamSIFL

Annotations¸

This study explores how Mark Twain and Xudoyberdi To'xtaboyev address social inequality and moral responsibility through different literary approaches. While Twain uses allegory and satire to critique class systems, To'xtaboyev employs realistic narration to honor everyday resilience, both ultimately affirming human dignity.

Keywords

enduring harm, literary devices, symbolism, irony, comparative literature, social criticism, Mark Twain, Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev, moral consciousness

INTRODUCTION

Great literature has always asked difficult questions about how we treat each other. When writers create stories about people facing moral challenges, they give us a chance to think deeply about fairness, responsibility, and what makes life meaningful. Mark Twain and Xudoyberdi To'xtaboyev came from completely different worlds 19th century America and 20th century Uzbekistan yet both dedicated their talents to exploring similar concerns about human worth and social justice. Twain wrote during America's Gilded Age, when extreme wealth existed alongside desperate poverty. He used historical settings and humor to examine how society decides who matters and who doesn't. To'xtaboyev, writing during the Soviet period and Uzbekistan's independence, focused on ordinary people struggling with economic hardship while trying to care for their families. His stories feel contemporary and immediate, showing us lives we might recognize from our own neighborhoods.This analysis examines how these two writers, using very different techniques, arrive at surprisingly similar conclusions about human dignity and moral responsibility. We'll see how Twain's satirical allegory and To'xtaboyev's quiet realism each offer valuable perspectives on persistent social problems.

MARK TWAIN'S THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER The Power of Role Reversal

Twain built his novel around a simple but powerful idea: what if a prince and a poor boy switched places? Prince Edward lives in luxury at Westminster Palace while Tom Canty suffers in brutal poverty at Offal Court. When they meet and exchange clothes, something remarkable happens everyone treats them according to their appearance rather than their actual identity. This experiment reveals Twain's main point: society judges people by external markers like

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clothing and speech rather than by their character or abilities. When Tom wears royal garments, he feels profound unease: "Tom gazed at the fine fabrics and jeweled decorations with amazement and discomfort. These clothes seemed to belong to a completely different world, as if they held a power he could never truly possess"[1].

Tom's anxiety comes not from the clothes themselves but from what society has taught him about his place in the world. Meanwhile, Edward discovers that without his royal appearance, nobody believes his claims to be the prince: "Now dressed in torn rags, the prince encountered the harsh reality of street life. Hunger tormented him constantly, and passersby offered only mockery, unable to see past his dirty appearance to recognize his royal heritage." The irony is sharp Edward remains the same person with the same royal blood, yet society treats him as worthless. This forces readers to question whether our social hierarchies make any real sense.

Symbolism Throughout the Story

Twain uses objects and settings as powerful symbols. The Great Seal of England becomes crucial at the story's climax only Edward knows where it's hidden, which proves his true identity. Yet this object only has power because everyone agrees it represents authority. Twain subtly suggests that all social power works this way, resting on collective belief rather than natural law. Language also functions symbolically. Tom must learn formal courtly speech to convincingly play the prince, while Edward's educated manner marks him as different on the streets. These linguistic differences reveal how class boundaries are maintained through learned behaviors rather than innate differences.

Irony as Teaching Tool

Twain layers several types of irony throughout the novel. We readers know the truth that the beggar is actually the prince while other characters remain ignorant. This creates constant tension as nobles bow before Tom, believing him to be Edward, while guards beat the real prince for claiming his identity. The situational irony cuts even deeper. Edward expects his royal status to protect him but learns it means nothing without visible proof. Tom expects to be immediately exposed but finds that performing royalty is surprisingly easy with the right costume and setting. These ironic reversals aren't just entertaining they sharpen our ability to see through surface appearances to underlying truths about how social systems actually work.

Edward's Moral Education

The heart of the story is Edward's transformation. At the beginning, he understands poverty only as abstract concept. His time on the streets forces him to experience it directly: "Each night Edward found whatever shelter he could, his body aching from hunger and cold. The abstract idea of suffering he'd held while in the palace now became visceral reality. He learned what philosophers meant by hunger not mere discomfort but consuming pain that dominated every thought." This experiential learning proves far more powerful than any book could provide. Edward encounters harsh legal punishments, witnesses how vulnerable people survive, and learns to distinguish genuine kindness from mere politeness. When Edward regains his throne, he immediately implements reforms: "King Edward's first actions addressed the cruelties he had personally witnessed. He reformed the brutal vagrancy laws, reduced excessive punishments,

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and established support for the destitute. Those who had shown him kindness during his exile received recognition and rewards." This ending offers hope that those with power can develop wisdom through experience and use their authority to create fairer systems.

XUDOYBERDI TO'XTABOYEV'S THE YOUNG MAN WITH FIVE CHILDREN

Everyday Realism

Where Twain uses fantastical role reversal, To'xtaboyev grounds his story in recognizable daily reality. His protagonist isn't named, making him a representative figure any man struggling to care for his family under difficult circumstances. The story opens with routine described in careful detail: "Dawn arrived as always, announced by the youngest child's cry. The young man rose immediately, his body responding before his mind fully awakened. He moved through the dark room efficiently, locating the child by sound, lifting her gently, beginning the day's first caregiving task."[2].

This attention to small, repeated actions creates a portrait of dedication performed without audience or recognition. The young man doesn't contemplate his virtue he simply enacts it daily through consistent care.

Interior Life Through Restraint

To'xtaboyev reveals psychological depth not through elaborate internal monologues but through subtle physical responses: "When the shopkeeper informed him that prices had risen again, the young man nodded slowly, his jaw tightening slightly. He recalculated silently, determining what could be eliminated from today's purchases. 'I understand,' he said simply, his voice carrying neither complaint nor blame, only acknowledgment." That tightening jaw suggests anxiety or frustration, but the protagonist doesn't indulge these feelings. He immediately shifts to problem-solving. This emotional regulation under pressure represents its own form of courage maintaining steadiness so his children feel secure.

Children as Living Context

The five children aren't merely burdens but distinct individuals who give meaning to their father's efforts: "The eldest, at twelve, had begun understanding their situation. She helped without being asked, quietly managing her younger siblings. The two middle boys possessed endless energy that exhausted yet sometimes amused their father. The fourth child, a serious girl, worried constantly about small things. The youngest, still an infant, knew nothing of hardship but depended completely on all of them." These characterizations prevent readers from seeing the children as abstract obligations. They're real people with different personalities and needs, each requiring specific forms of attention and care.

Economic Reality Without Melodrama

To'xtaboyev presents poverty through accumulated specific details rather than dramatic pronouncements: "The young man worked six days weekly at the construction site, earning barely enough for rent, food, and basic necessities. There was nothing extra no toys, no treats, no emergency fund. When the youngest fell ill, he spent sleepless nights calculating whether he

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could afford the doctor's visit or whether her illness might resolve on its own." This passage reveals moral complexity. The protagonist isn't perfectly heroic he genuinely considers delaying medical care because of cost. To'xtaboyev refuses to sentimentalize poverty, showing how it forces impossible choices that wealthier families never face.

Humor as Survival Strategy

Despite serious themes, the story includes moments of lightness: "When one boy accidentally spilled an entire pot of rice on the floor, his brother announced seriously, 'Now we're feeding the floor family. They've been hungry a long time.' The young man, about to scold them, found himself laughing instead. The rice could be salvaged. This moment of joy could not." This scene demonstrates resilience through humor finding lightness in frustrating situations to maintain emotional balance. The father's decision to prioritize this shared laughter over discipline shows his understanding that emotional wellbeing matters alongside material provision.

An Ending Without Resolution

Unlike Twain's story, which concludes with restoration and reform, To'xtaboyev's narrative ends with continuation: "The next morning arrived like all others. The young man rose at dawn, began the day's routines, prepared to meet whatever challenges would emerge. Nothing had changed, yet everything continued." This refusal of closure suggests that the protagonist's situation represents ongoing condition rather than temporary crisis. The paradox "nothing had changed, yet everything continued" captures both poverty's static nature and the dynamic achievement of persistence.

Comparative Analysis: Different Strategies, Shared Purpose

Although Mark Twain and Xudoyberdi To沃xtaboyev use different narrative strategies, they pursue the same ethical aims. Twain employs allegorical distance through a historical setting and a fantastical plot, allowing readers to recognize structural injustice without personal defensiveness. By exaggerating class inequalities, he exposes the absurdity of social hierarchies and encourages critical reflection. In contrast, To沃xtaboyev relies on realistic proximity. His contemporary setting and detailed portrayal of everyday life create emotional closeness, making poverty and responsibility feel immediate and familiar. This approach fosters empathy and discourages readers from distancing themselves from social problems. Neither method is superior; each develops a distinct ethical capacity. Twain sharpens critical analysis of unjust systems, while To沃xtaboyev cultivates empathetic awareness of human suffering.

Comparing Key Elements

Aspect	**Mark Twain**	**Xudoyberdi To'xtaboyev**
Method	Allegory and satire	Quotidian realism
Setting	Historical (Tudor England)	Contemporary/timeless
Main Device	Irony and role reversal	Detailed observation
Conflict	Systemic inequality	Economic hardship

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Focus	Justice and reform	Care and endurance
Tone	Critical and humorous	Tender and serious
Character	Symbolic figures	Particular individual
Ending	Resolution	Continuation
Reader Role	Critical observer	Empathetic witness

Transformation in Twain: Edward undergoes profound change, moving from ignorance to understanding to reform. This model appeals to readers with relative power or privilege, suggesting they should use their positions to reduce suffering and increase justice. Twain argues that those who can change systems should do so.

Endurance in To'xtaboyev: The young man doesn't transform dramatically he endures with consistent dignity. This model resonates with readers facing constrained circumstances, affirming that ethical achievement can manifest through sustained commitment to daily obligations. To'xtaboyev shows that moral worth doesn't require dramatic gestures or institutional power. Both models matter. Some readers need encouragement to use their influence for systemic change. Others need validation that their daily persistence carries genuine moral weight.

Both texts affirm human worth but understand it somewhat differently.

Twain emphasizes dignity as essential quality that exists regardless of social recognition. Edward remains equally valuable in rags or royal robes society can acknowledge or ignore this worth but cannot create or destroy it. This essentialist position grounds moral criticism of unjust hierarchies.

To'xtaboyev emphasizes dignity as lived reality that must be performed and maintained through ongoing action. The young man's worth manifests through his patient care, his emotional steadiness, his ability to find joy despite hardship. This performative understanding doesn't diminish dignity's importance but shows it requires cultivation and support. These perspectives complement rather than contradict each other. Essential dignity provides moral foundation, while performed dignity acknowledges lived experience. Together they suggest that humans possess inherent worth that social conditions can either support or suppress.

Conclusion this comparative analysis shows that despite different literary methods, Mark Twain殷 *The Prince and the Pauper* and Xudoyberdi To沫taboyev殷 *The Young Man with Five Children* share strong ethical concerns. Both explore how societies assign value, how individuals preserve dignity in hardship, and what moral responsibilities people owe one another. Twain殷 satirical allegory exposes the artificial nature of social hierarchies, showing that human worth exists beyond social status and that lived experience can awaken moral awareness. In contrast, To沫taboyev殷 quiet realism highlights moral strength in everyday endurance, emphasizing the ethical value of caregiving and unseen labor. Together, the texts offer complementary perspectives: Twain encourages critical questioning of unjust systems, while To沫taboyev fosters empathy for ordinary human struggles. In a world of growing inequality and declining social mobility, these works remain relevant, demonstrating how literature can deepen moral awareness, empathy, and ethical understanding.

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