Timed Writing Four – Huck Finn Test AP Free-Response 12/13/18

In his short essay “The Art of Authorship,” Mark Twain explores how an author forms his style and how it is expressed in his own writing. Twain’s signature style emphasizes the style-forming process he claims authors’ use. His writing reads as a friendly chat with a pal – it has relaxed diction and easy-to-understand metaphors and examples. Twain insists that an author’s style is formed subconsciously via accumulation. Your brain collects noteworthy styles of other authors, and it learns to discard those that you don’t enjoy reading. Thus, your style as an author is formed.

Twain informs us that his style is formed the same way, for “if I had subjected myself to any training processes, and no doubt I have, it must have been this unconscious or half-conscious fashion.” He plays by his own rules, a fact that is evident in his famous novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In “The Art of Authorship,” Twain hints that diction is one of the key parts of his authorship style. He then goes on to explain the importance of finding the perfect word to convey your meaning. Twain’s diction is by no means elevated in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* as he tells the story from the point of view of an uneducated, backwoods boy, but every word was chosen carefully. Twain peruses his vocabulary before picking the exact word he needs at that moment. In an excerpt from Chapter 5 of the book, Pap is described as being all kinds of ghastly shades of white. In using this gross, visual diction, Twain accomplishes his ulterior motive of showing how Pap’s kind of white person is a horrible person. Without this mastery of diction Twain pulled subconsciously from reading other pieces of writing, the underlying meanings in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* would never be recognized by the reader.

Another prominent part of Mark Twain’s style is his use of humor. While this facet of his style is not discussed in his essay, he uses it to boost up his other points about style. In the introductory paragraph of “The Art of Authorship,” Twain babbles about how confusing deconstructing one’s writing is. He says he wouldn’t have trouble with it normally and wouldn’t have had trouble with it today “if [he] had slept last night.” Twain’s humor isn’t laugh-out-loud funny, but his deadpan delivery coaxes a smile or even a giggle from the reader. His unusual humor is evident in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as well. Main character Huck often insults himself without realizes it, provoking a humorous response from the reader.

Twain claims he never plans his style, but that it formed subconsciously in his brain and is automatically expressed through his writing. With his ease of implementing his selective diction and humor, his claim is solidified. Every author nitpicks others’ writing to subconsciously rom a favored style, even a famous author like Mark Twain.