

The virtues of an
outcast: huckleberry
finn and his role in
the adventures of
tom...



Being a pariah, or at least being labeled one, can change a person's life, and not for the better. Huckleberry Finn, the town "pariah," is called and treated as an outcast for many reasons, but mainly, because he's different. Huck Finn is the trouble-maker of the novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, his life described by the author and narrator, Mark Twain. The author makes it known that he enjoys not fitting in and doesn't make an effort to own up to society's standards. Although Huckleberry Finn is judged for living a unique, different lifestyle, being branded an outcast of the small town of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, the sympathetic voice of Mark Twain makes his audience admire Huck's endurance and sense of pride for standing out.

Because of his clothes, attitude, and difference compared to others, Huckleberry Finn is considered the outcast of St. Petersburg. Twain describes Huck's dissimilar appearance, one of the many causes of the hateful and nasty descriptions, painting an image of a neglected, independent boy in the reader's minds. For example, "Huckleberry was always dressed in the cast off clothes of full grown men, and they were in perennial bloom and fluttering with rags" (Twain 43). This creates a clear picture of someone who is different in contrast to society. Huckleberry, in fact, is the definition of different in this story. He doesn't live in a regular home, always moving between abandoned buildings and rundown warehouses. He steals other's belongings and small portions of food. These actions, along with society's knowledge of them, are what create the use of the word, "outcast," to coincide with Huck's name. Huckleberry does what he wants with no disregards or punishments, no rules, and no guidance. Huck doesn't go to church or memorize scripture verses, this is revolting and unacceptable to

the rest of the “respectable” people of the town. Also, on top of the reputation made by only himself, Huckleberry was “son of the town drunkard” (Twain 43). The fact that Mark Twain includes Huckleberry’s father in the description of Huckleberry himself states that when people describe or acknowledge him, they include the relation of Huck’s dad with it. Even though Huckleberry’s divergent way of living costs him friends and affection from most, he prefers the limelight he stands in.

Huckleberry Finn is frowned upon by most mothers and banned to most kids, receiving judgmental stares and disappointed whispers, but still some amount of praise. Huck’s rebel exterior worries mothers’ minds into, or at least trying to, suppress him from their children’s lives. Huckleberry, in other words, was “cordially hated and dreaded by all mothers of the town, because he was idle and vulgar and lawless and bad- and all of their children admired him so, and delighted in his forbidden society, and wished they dared to be like him” (Twain 43). This describes the mothers’ feeling towards Huck, as well as the other boys’ respect and jealousy directed at him. In their minds, everything that Huck had was everything they could ever want, all the things that make life wonderful. Another statement written by Twain that illustrates the picture of an admired, yet detested Huck Finn is, “Tom was like the rest of the respectable boys, in that he envied Huck his gaudy outcast condition, and was under strict orders not to play with him” (Twain 43). Twain briefly mentions the mothers’ disgust and revulsion towards Huck in a subtle way when he mentions the orders of having no association with Huck, but also the boys’ want for his freedom and social stance. In the way of describing Huckleberry’s treatment from others, the main feelings

experienced towards Huck, some being unfair and cruel, were hatred and esteem.

Although Mark Twain created a difficult life for the character of Huckleberry Finn, any reader can see the sympathy he holds and wants his audience to feel for the rebel. When Mark Twain first has Huckleberry make an appearance, he describes Huck's life as rough, yet amazing and free. Twain created an uncomfortable scene with a motherly gesture, a hug, from Aunt Polly, and describes Huck as not used to the affection. This is shown when the narrator says, " And the loving attentions Aunt Polly lavished upon him were the one thing capable of making him more uncomfortable than he was before" (Twain pagebypagebooks. com). The readers are meant to awe and sympathize over Huck's past and lack of a mother figure that causes a very awkward act of comfort. Huck also has no family whatsoever; the family that does, or did, interact with him was his father, who would beat and ignore him. Huckleberry's abusive father treated him extremely poorly and most likely tarnished Huck's image of a loving family. Mark Twain wouldn't have fabricated these hardships and rough past if he didn't sympathize for Huckleberry Finn because of these certain hardships.

Twain shows his pity towards Huck when writing things such as, " Aunt Polly, Mary, and the Harpers threw themselves upon their restored ones, smothered them with kisses and poured out thanksgivings, while poor Huck stood abashed and uncomfortable, not knowing exactly what to do or where to hide from so many unwelcoming eyes. He wavered, and started to slink away, but Tom seized him and said: "" Aunt Polly, it ain't fair. Somebody's got to be glad to see Huck"" (Twain pagebypagebooks. com). Twain not only <https://assignbuster.com/the-virtues-of-an-outcast-huckleberry-finn-and-his-role-in-the-adventures-of-tom-sawyer/>

has Huck noticed, but also has people express their affection towards him in an unfamiliar way. This excerpt shows that Mark Twain cares about Huck's acceptance and wants some parts of the book to contain affection and want for Huckleberry, just like the instance with Widow Douglas. Widow Douglas accepts Huck into her home and cares for him. Also, at the same time, she is introducing him to society. With the help of the widow, Huck learns the ways of a civilized community and how to have manners and be polite. Even with the new found interest and care for Huck, he still loathes everything about it. Through the pitiful words and occurrences of Huckleberry Finn written by Mark Twain, one can easily see the sympathy he feels for the original character he created.

Many outcasts are discovered and produced by Mark Twain in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, but Huckleberry Finn is the biggest and most mentioned in the book. Boys envy him for his defiant courage of being different, mothers hate him for his word choices and influences on their sons, and Mark Twain sympathizes for him, dashing his life story with hints of joy and welcomeness. Everyone is an outcast in their own way, Huckleberry just happens to show it more broadly. After all, every good book needs a unique character.