

# The adventures of huckleberry finn satire

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The author, Mark Twain, uses satire against religion, government, peoples ignorance, and society in general.

Throughout the novel, we meet people whose lives were ruined by alcoholism. Huck's father is a drunken, abusive father and Twain satirizes the consumption of alcohol and the effects it has on people. Huck quotes, " Pap he hadn't been seen for more than a year, and that was comfortable for me; I didn't want to see him no more. He used to always whale me when he was sober and could get his hands on me..." (13) Twain is satirizing drunken adults and what it does to their kids and the people surrounding them. Huck's father also had opinions of his own. " Oh yes this is a wonderful govment, wonderful. Why looky here, there was a free nigger there from Ohio.

.. " (35) Mark Twain quotes Pap to satirize both the government and racism. Pap represents the close-minded, southern whites and how they felt about free blacks. He mocks how the government has outlawed slavery in the northern states and how the southern states couldn't do anything about it. Slavery was another issue that Twain touched on. He enters the bitter realm of social satire and their beliefs on the issue of free slaves, almost to the point where it was unethical.

A moment captured in chapter 16 describes when Huck realized how serious the consequence of the situation was. " Well what's the use of learning to do right when it's troublesome to do right and it ain't no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same? (116) He feels guilty for helping Jim to freedom, but realizes that if he turned Jim in, he would feel just the same. He

mocks the society for believing that it was so evil to help slaves to freedom. After the event with the King and the Duke with the Wilks, Huck is glad to see Jim " Of course when they got to snoring we had a long gabble, and I told Jim everything" (188). Twain shows that Jim should have a better life than to be separated from his wife and children he loves, and to be forced to work for people who humiliate him. Through his use of satire, Twain illustrates the major themes of the novel. People at that time treated servants terribly.

Huck himself was racist when Miss Watson asks if anybody got hurt and Huck replies " No ma'am just a nigger" (34). Finally, the use of racist terminology throughout the book showed how Jim and slaves were treated. The people that they come in contact see nothing more than a servant of Jim. When Tom has a theory as to the meaning of the word ransomed without any doubts, all of the boys agree with this meaning of the word. But per'aps if we keep them till they're ransomed, it means that we keep them till they're dead". (12) In this segment of the novel, Twain uses satire to demonstrate that even though something may be truly wrong, if civilization or society adopts it to be true, then it is believed. Religion is one of the key victims of Twain's satire throughout the novel.

This satire is no more apparent then when Huck's guardian, the Widow Douglas, preaches to him about Moses. Huck didn't think very much of her lecture " Here she was a-bothering about Moses, which was no kin to her, and no use to anybody, being gone, you see..." (3) Twain uses Huck to exhibit his objection to the faith that civilized society places towards religion. During Huck and Jim's journey, they encounter two men who refer to

themselves as the Duke and the King. These characters make their living by swindling people out of their money. When they are eventually caught, they pay for their sins by being tarred and feathered. Huck expresses his thoughts on the subject by saying; it was a dreadful thing to see. “ Human beings can be awful cruel to one another”.

(294) through this event, Twain shows that crooks and criminals aren't the only ones that can be cruel. The crowd that considers themselves to be civilized and opposing cruel acts when actually they commit such acts themselves. The chapters on the Royal Nonesuch are the climax of satire in this story. First Twain presents Hamlet's soliloquy, which even in its first lines, " To be, or not to be; that is the bare bodkin/ that makes calamity of so long life... (pg.

132), clearly shows his readership that though the con-men and townspeople know enough to have heard of Shakespeare and even recognize some lines, , for in reality they are ignorant of high society. Twain uses satire to express ignorance in society when Tom Sawyer says “ Because it ain't in the books so that's why” (9). This shows that people believe everything they read in books when books are most of the time opinionated. Twain fills Huckleberry Finn with satire examples throughout the story.